

**Request for Proposal (RFP)**  
**NCWorks Local Innovation Grant**  
**Wilkes County Partnership: Transportation Study**

**Introduction**

The NCWorks Local Innovation Fund provides funding to communities to research local or regional workforce issues and develop solutions with a goal to improve access to opportunities in the community.

The Wilkes County Workforce Partnership consists of various local organizations that share the mission of assisting the community with workforce development. Members of the Partnership consistently identify transportation as a primary barrier to individuals seeking to successfully complete training, enter the workforce, and maintain employment. Led by Wilkes Community College, the Partnership applied for and received a NCWorks Local Innovation Planning Grant to conduct a community analysis of current available and prospective transportation services, to identify opportunities for developing innovative means of improving and expanding these services, and to formulate a plan of action for implementing best practices in providing adequate workforce transportation in our rural environment.

Agencies involved include (but are not limited to):

- Goodwill Industries (Goodwill Career Connections Center/Project Re-entry)
- High Country Workforce Development Board (serving as the Administrative Agency)
- NC Department of Commerce: NCWorks Career Center & Division of Workforce Solutions
- NC Vocational Rehabilitation
- North Wilkesboro Housing Authority
- Wilkes Community College: Workforce Development, College and Career Readiness, Career Services (serving as the Lead Agency)
- Wilkes County Department of Social Services
- Wilkes Economic Development Corporation
- Wilkes County Public Library

**Timeline & Questions**

Interested bidders must submit their proposal in PDF by email to [HCWPartners@gmail.com](mailto:HCWPartners@gmail.com) by June 9, 2019.

May 10, 2019	RFP Released
June 9, 2019	RFP Responses Due
June 10-21, 2019	RFP Evaluation/Interviews
June 24, 2019	Bidder Selection Announced
July 1st, 2019	Implement Contract
July-March 2020	Potential Contract Period

Questions related to the RFP may be addressed to [HCWPartners@gmail.com](mailto:HCWPartners@gmail.com) during the response period and will be posted to an FAQ at [www.highcountrywdb.com](http://www.highcountrywdb.com).

Late applications will not be accepted. The Partnership reserves the right to accept, reject, or repost the RFP.

### **Funding**

Funding for this project is awarded from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) NCWorks Innovation Fund. Submitted applications must include a proposed budget to include hourly rates, fees, and other expenses not to exceed \$67,600. Awards will be based on overall review of submissions.

### **Qualifications**

Desired applicants should have experience related to research and data analysis and an understanding of the needs of rural counties preferably in the area of transportation. Applicants are responsible for any costs associated with preparing this proposal.

This grant is funded through WIOA federal funds and must comply with local/state policies and procedures and be an equal opportunity employer.

### **Scope of Work**

With a population of nearly 70,000 residents, Wilkes County is a rural area encompassing 754 square miles, 13th largest in the state. Previous local and state studies have consistently identified the lack of safe, affordable, reliable transportation as a barrier to successfully attaining and maintaining employment.

This RFP is seeking a qualified consultant in the field of rural transportation who would conduct a thorough analysis regarding transportation in Wilkes County and compile recommendations for improving transportation services so as to serve both town and rural residents. This study would include engagement from local community partners, employers, and community members.

Outcomes include:

- Assess current assets, resources, and barriers
- Examine prior local research and planning efforts
- Explore best practices and innovative approaches in the field
- Identify recommendations/opportunities
- Convene focus groups and conduct surveys of employers, community stakeholders, current/potential public transportation users, and the general public
- Ensure consideration of equity and sustainability in planning and implementation

- Work in coordination with the Project Coordinator and lead/administrative agencies
- Attend, when applicable, partnership and/or other community partner meetings that may pertain to the study/recommendations
- Complete a monthly status report
- Prepare a report and a set of recommendations to be presented to the Partnership and/or other interested parties

The awarded applicant will work in partnership with the Project Coordinator to achieve desired outcomes.

The Wilkes Partnership Group shall have the right to make alterations, eliminations and additions in the scope of work. Exercise of such right shall in no way void the agreement. The value of such extra work shall be agreed upon by the Partnership and the Consultant in writing in accordance with the agreement.

### **Submission and Evaluation**

Evaluation of proposals will be completed by a subgroup of the Partnership. Evaluation criteria will be based on:

- Qualifications/Similar successful projects (40%)
- Proposed plan of work (40%)
- Budget (30%)

The proposal that, in the judgment of the reviewing staff, is the highest ranked with reasonable fee will be selected for award. Contracts will not be awarded based on the lowest bid alone.

### **Interested applicants shall submit the following for consideration:**

1. Describe the applicant's qualifications and experience for completing this project. Include examples of previous similar types of projects and include references.
2. Describe your proposed plan of work. Provide an outline of specific services to be performed and a timeline.
3. Provide a budget and budget narrative to include fee schedule of hourly rates and other fees if any.

Proposals should be submitted as a PDF by email to [HCWPartners@gmail.com](mailto:HCWPartners@gmail.com). Deadline to submit applications is June 9, 2019.

### **Contract**

It is anticipated the contract for this project will be six to nine months and completed no later than March 30th, 2020. The contract will be between the awarded applicant and the lead agency, Wilkes Community College.