This Letter of Clarification summarizes the main discussion points raised at the NJT RFP Bidder’s Conference on January 10, 2017, and also contains questions that were received throughout the process. While much of this Letter of Clarification simply reiterates information in the RFP, there are some points of clarification and applicants should treat this document as an addendum to the RFP. OWD will be updating the responses to the questions received during the procurement process on a regular basis; it is the sole responsibility of the prospective bidders to check the website for updates and postings. Please read it carefully.

- The single point of contact for questions related to this RFP is Midori Morikawa at midori.morikawa@boston.gov. Please submit questions via email so that a record may be kept of questions and responses. No phone calls will be accepted regarding the RFP.

- Letters of Intent to Bid are due to cindy.chow@boston.gov via email by Tuesday, January 17th by 5pm. We strongly encourage you to submit a Letter of Intent, but a Letter of Intent is not required to submit a full proposal.

- Proposals are due Friday, 01/27/17 at 5pm in one single PDF document; submit on the portal at owd.boston.gov

- The ultimate goal of programs funded under this RFP is full-time (defined as 30 hours a week) work at the current Boston Living Wage ($14.23/hour). Part-time job placements (defined as 20 hours a week) are permissible as a strategic first step, but must be explained and justified in your proposal. Placement into post-secondary programs leading to employment is also a permissible outcome, but must be clearly articulated and justified in your response to the RFP.

- The NJT contract is performance-based with vendors receiving 50% of their grant award upon contract execution and 50% upon reaching placement goals.

- Each proposal will be reviewed by a team of readers. The point values awarded to each section of the proposal are an evaluation tool; they do not dictate which proposals are recommended for funding. Staff will take into consideration such additional factors such as past performance, mix of services, and neighborhood coverage in developing recommendations.

- The Trust has approximately $1.1M in available funding. We are likely to receive proposals requesting, in total, several times that amount, making this a highly competitive procurement in which not all proposals will be funded. Applicants should respond carefully and thoughtfully to each of the questions posed in the RFP.
Questions and Answers:

1. Regarding the living wage and anticipated placement rates and wages; if we give good explanation of why we will not meet the living wage requirements at outcome will we still be considered?
   a. Yes. Full-time employment that meets or exceeds living wage is the goal of the RFP, so you will need to make a compelling argument as to why your program will not be able to meet the living wage requirement upon job placement.

2. If we are receiving other funding from the City, does that play into award decision?
   a. No, it does not. Applicants are encouraged to explore other funding opportunities and apply for them if you think these opportunities are a good fit for your program.

3. Is it necessary to have prior experience running the proposed program or can the proposal be for a new program?
   a. It is not necessary to have prior experience running the proposed program. While the RFP does contain questions regarding prior performance outcomes, you can refer to the demonstrated performance of similar programs or propose another way to address questions regarding program performance.

4. Can the proposal be for a post-secondary program with credits attached to it?
   a. Yes, but please note that applicant must explain why an initial post-secondary educational placement is necessary or desirable for a
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participant is the proposed program. We want to know how the educational placement and attached credits leads a recognized credential in the targeted industry sector, leading to better employment and advancement opportunities.

5. Is there an anticipated cost per participant/placement outcome?
   a. No, this is determined by each applicant.

6. Would an organization be awarded less than requested or would they just be denied if it is determined that they asked for too much money?
   a. Applicants should submit a budget that reflects the actual costs of running the proposed program for the proposed number of outcomes.

7. Who do we submit the Letter of Intent to?
   a. Please follow the instruction in the RFP.

8. Do we include the checklist with the proposal package?
   a. No.

9. Do we have to be registered on the OWD website in order to submit a proposal?
   a. No

10. If I am currently receiving the NJT grant, will my current program performance be considered when making an award decision?
   a. Status as a current NJT awardee does not provide an advantage or disadvantage for potential applicants. If you a proposing a similar
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program or proposing to continue a currently funded program, performance will be considered.

11. How does OWD define near homeless individuals?
   a. Our current definition of “near homelessness is below:

     ▪ Has moved because of economic reasons 2 or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding enrolling to the program.
     ▪ Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship.
     ▪ Has been notified within 60 days of enrollment that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 30 days.
     ▪ Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost is not paid for by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals.
     ▪ Lives in an SRO or studio apartment in which there reside more than 2 persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than one and a half persons per room (overcrowded housing).
     ▪ Is exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness.

12. For the post-secondary option, is that a certificate or 2 or 4 year degree?
   a. Post-secondary education must lead to or result in some sort of recognized credential in the chosen economic or industry sector, leading to employment with opportunities for advancement. We leave it up to the applicant to decide on the program design to meet the RFP goals.

13. Are part time jobs considered acceptable job placement outcomes?
   a. Yes. Part time employment (defined as at least 20 hours per week) may be an appropriate first step for certain populations. However applicants proposing such a strategy should clearly explain why the participants should not go directly into full time employment.
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14. Does the job have to be in the City of Boston?  
   a. No – but recognize that the goal of the Trust is to provide low and moderate income Boston residents direct services which prepare them for and connect them to employment close to or in the metropolitan area.

15. If a participant is placed at the current living wage of $14.23, do you also want us to map out what their next steps are in terms of advancement and better wages?  
   a. Yes, we encourage designs that place participants on a career pathway that can lead to higher-paying jobs with career ladders and have access to employer-provided educational benefits and support in further training leading to better jobs.

16. How many awards are anticipated?  
   a. The total available funding is $1.1 million. The average award for the current fiscal year is $70,000 and there are currently 17 programs being funded.

17. Is the residency requirement for 100% of the program participants or can the program be 90% residents with 10% non-residents.  
   a. Boston residency is required for all participants whose training is being paid for with NJT funds.

18. For the NJT’s purpose, what evidence will be required to verify participants’ income after graduating from our program?  
   a. We ask for an authorization release form from each participant indicating that their employer can release their information; then we ask for a
completed employee or student verification form verified by employer/higher education institutions. You can review all of the current documents mentioned on our website: https://owd.boston.gov/partner-forms/

Please note that some of these forms are subject to change in the new funding year.

19. What evidence will be required to verify that participants are residents of Boston?
   a. Please review the page 2 of the Eligibility Packet which can be found on the website: https://owd.boston.gov/partner-forms/

   Please note that some of these forms are subject to change in the new funding year.

20. In order to qualify for the NJT award, would 70% of our participants' hourly income need to be $14.23 or higher, or is it sufficient for participants' median hourly income, in aggregate, to be above $14.23?
   a. Each participant should be placed, minimally, at $14.23 an hour or more but if you are unable to meet this standard, please indicate as to why in your proposal.

21. Along same lines, will we need to substantiate participants’ pre-program income beyond their self-reporting of their income status?
   a. Please review page 5 of the Eligibility Packet which can be found on the website: https://owd.boston.gov/partner-forms/. Please note that some of these forms are subject to change in the new funding year.

   Also, participant self-reporting of their income status is considered a last resort; funded programs will be responsible for collecting documentation to verify participant household income.

22. We have current and relevant MOAs that were signed as part of a different grant proposal (not NJT). Can we submit those MOAs as our MOAs for our NJT proposal, since the content, dates, and players are pretty much the same?
   a. Yes, you can submit those MOAs as long as you can make a case that the employers will play a role in the NJT funded program and its participants.
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23. Is there a CFDA# in the budget or do we leave this blank?
   a. No, CFDA# is not required so you can leave it blank.

24. Is NJT the “Funding Source” under the budget?
   a. Yes.

25. Does the tab A in the budget form need to be signed by the proposed contract for the proposal submission?
   a. No it does not need to be signed for your proposal to be considered complete. We will ask for signature if you are awarded a contract.

26. In prior years, the budget forms included full program cost, and total organization costs – do you want that information anywhere?
   a. No, you do not need to provide this information in the budget form. However, in the proposal cover sheet we ask that you tell us the requested amount from NJT and funding from other sources as well as your total program cost.