

# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: Modernizing The National Career Clusters Framework<sup>®</sup>**

**DATE OF ISSUE: January 12, 2023**

## **OVERVIEW OF NEED**

In December 2022, Advance CTE relaunched a paused initiative to modernize the [National Career Clusters<sup>®</sup> Framework](#) (the Framework). This new initiative seeks to update the existing Framework to better reflect the current and future world of work, serve all learner levels and act as a bridge and common language between education and industry.

To help ensure regular stakeholder engagement, ample industry support and involvement, and alignment with research and labor market information, Advance CTE is issuing an RFP for a firm/contractor to support the development and dissemination of a refreshed National Career Clusters Framework. Specifically, Advance CTE is looking for a firm to:

- Conduct and lead research and stakeholder robust and inclusive engagement efforts to support the updating of the existing National Career Clusters Framework through, but not limited to, the following actions:
  - Reviewing and synthesizing feedback collected to date from diverse stakeholders;
  - Designing and leading input-gathering and engagement efforts including through surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews;
  - Developing and leading Industry Advisory Groups to inform and champion individual cluster changes;
  - Engaging national and state CTE leaders about projected changes to the Framework;
  - Researching labor market trends and the future of the workforce to explore gaps in the existing Framework; and
  - Conducting validation of proposed changes to the Framework.
- Develop a final, modernized and validated National Career Clusters Framework, that includes, at minimum, the Career Clusters and related career pathways and Career Ready Practices.
- Produce a technical report that provides justification of the design of the modernized framework, which, at a minimum:
  - Crosswalks the current Framework to the new Framework
  - Lays out the business rules for how the new Framework was developed; and

- Aggregates and synthesizes all feedback and research to support future development of associated implementation and dissemination assets

The ideal organizational partner will have the following qualifications:

- Familiarity with Career Technical Education and The National Career Clusters Framework;
- A demonstrated focus on education and workforce development;
- A national perspective that can oversee all industry groupings and learner levels across all 50 states and other US territories;
- A demonstrated commitment to equity, including incorporating and leveraging diverse perspectives;
- Experience with managing and synthesizing large quantitative and qualitative data sets
- Experience recruiting for and facilitating stakeholder engagement sessions

## **TIMELINE**

This project restarted in December 2022, with a planned release of a modernized Framework by the end of 2024. This contract would run from March 2023 to July 2024.

If you are interested in bidding on this project, the timeline is as follows:

- Submit a letter of intent by 5:00 p.m. ET on Friday, January 27, 2023 to Dan Hinderliter, [dhinderliter@careertech.org](mailto:dhinderliter@careertech.org). You are welcome to also submit any questions you have about this project or schedule an appointment to discuss this RFP.
- Full proposals should be submitted by 5:00 p.m. ET on Friday, February 10, 2023, and will only be accepted if you submitted a letter of intent by the date above, and respond to all of the questions noted below. Proposals are limited to 10 pages, not including a cover page, and the budget. For further information about Advance CTE, please visit [www.careertech.org](http://www.careertech.org).

## **QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE PROPOSAL**

1. Please describe your overall approach to meeting Advance CTE's needs, including your proposed project statement, a project plan, and project outcomes and metrics.
2. Please describe the unique perspective and experience your organization offers, including your commitment to equity as it relates to this project.
3. Describe your organization's knowledge and/or past performance related to work in Career Technical Education, education or workforce development, including any specific work related to the National Career Clusters Framework. Please provide specific examples to support this knowledge and experience.

4. Explain how you might secure and synthesize data and feedback and engage diverse stakeholders, including national and state leaders, expert industry groups and learners, to ensure equitable buy-in and commitment to the proposed changes.
5. Describe your project management approach. How do you manage projects to ensure you are on budget, on deadline and meeting the needs of the client, while also ensuring sufficient time for review and creativity to be part of the work?
6. Explain your projected project team's staffing for this project, including demographics and the respective roles of each of the team members. Please also indicate how their qualifications and experience will contribute to the success of this project.
7. Please identify costs associated with this project. The estimated overall project budget should fall between \$150,000 and \$200,000. Cost-effectiveness will be a determining factor in selection. Your submitted budget should include the cost per deliverable. This will be a deliverable-based contract. The budget will not count towards 10-page limit. Please see the appendix for a budget template.
8. Provide three references with contact information describing the work you conducted for them and the project's outcomes.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The following is additional information that you might find useful in the development of your proposal:

- This project is a continuation of the Advancing the Framework initiative started in 2020 and should remain centered around the following purpose statement approved by the Advance CTE Boards of Directors: *"The National Career Clusters Framework provides structural alignment and a common language to bridge education and work, empowering each learner to explore, decide on and prepare for dynamic and evolving careers."*
- Career Clusters will be centered around industry/occupational groupings, and Advance CTE will look to the contractor for new Career Cluster names and supporting pathways embedded in each Cluster.
- The [Career Ready Practices](#) should be updated as a component of the Framework, though neither the Common Career Technical Core nor knowledge and skills statements will be revised.
- Deliverables will be shared to and approved by both a National Advisory Committee, responsible for providing oversight and guidance to this process, and Advance CTE's Boards of Directors.
- A team of Advance CTE employees, including Senior Policy Associate [Dan Hinderliter](#), will be responsible for overall project management, including coordination between Advance CTE,

its Boards of Directors, the National Advisory Committee and the contractor. Advance CTE will also be responsible for the overarching management of project timelines and deliverables. The selected contractor will be expected to (virtually) meet regularly with this team.

### *Additional Selection Criteria, Notification of Selection and Timeline*

Advance CTE will make efforts to utilize small businesses, as well as veteran-owned, woman-owned and/or minority-owned firms/organizations.

RFP Released: January 12, 2023

Proposals due: February 10, 2023

Selection made: February 24, 2023

### *Conflict of Interest*

Applicants agree that they or their employees do not currently have, nor will they have, any conflict of interest between themselves and Advance CTE or between them and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the funders of this work. Any perceived or potential conflict of interest must be disclosed in the proposal.

### *Contractual Agreement*

Advance CTE will issue a contract with the selected applicant, in which the manner and time of payment will be addressed. Advance CTE only processes payments aligned to deliverables.

### *Ownership and Confidentiality*

All intellectual property will become the property of Advance CTE, including all trademarks and copyrights. All data remains the sole property of Advance CTE. The contractor shall further agree to keep information related to any and all contracts with Advance CTE in strict confidence, including, but not limited to, the terms of the contract(s) and any confidential business information or proprietary information learned through its dealings with us.

### *About Advance CTE/The Center to Advance CTE*

Advance CTE: State Leaders Connecting Learning to Work, first established in 1920, is the longest-standing national non-profit that represents State CTE Directors and state leaders

responsible for secondary, postsecondary and adult Career Technical Education (CTE) across all 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

*Mission:* Support state CTE leadership to advance high-quality and equitable CTE policies, programs and pathways that ensure career and college success for each learner.

*Vision:* Advance CTE's vision is [Without Limits: A Shared Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education](#)

View Advance CTE's [statement](#) on equity in CTE.

**APPENDIX - Supplemental Documents (not counted toward page limit)**

**Overall Budget**

Category	Amount	Explanation
Staff Costs		
Travel/ Meeting Costs		
Consultant/ Contractor Costs		
Technology/ Telecommunications Costs		
Additional Costs (please provide details)		
Overhead costs (overhead must be capped at 10% of the overall contract)		
<b>Total Cost</b> (Should be between \$150,000 and \$200,000)		

**Payment Schedule**

Advance CTE will pay this contract based on deliverables. Below, please identify the key deliverables and requested payment associated with them.

Category	Description of Work	Cost Estimate	Estimated Date of Completion
Deliverable 1			
Deliverable 2			
...			
Deliverable n			
<b>Total Cost</b> (should match above cost)			

