

Request for Proposals (RFP)

**RFP #2023-11-30-D - WORKPLACE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION AND SOFT SKILLS INSTRUCTOR
(A.C.C.E.S.) ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY COUNSELLING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (“ACCES”)**

**RFP Issued Date: November 30, 2023
RFP Closing Date: December 22, 2023 (17:00 EST)**

RFP Objective

ACCES is requesting proposals from prospective proponents to qualify as a potential vendor for the provision of Workplace Business Communication and Soft Skills Instruction.

The goal of this RFP is to identify a potential vendor that meets the requirements of the service, which include quality of service and commercial conditions, such as price and payment terms.

The successful proponent will be invited to enter a Services Agreement from January 22nd, 2024 to March 31st, 2025.

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SECTION 1 - ACCES OVERVIEW

ACCES is a leader in connecting employers with qualified employees from diverse backgrounds. Over 40,000 job seekers are served annually at seven locations across the Greater Toronto Area. As a not-for-profit corporation, ACCES receives funding from all levels of government, corporate sponsors, various supporters, and the United Way Greater Toronto.

For more information about ACCES, please visit www.acesemployment.ca.

SECTION 2 - DELIVERABLES AND EXPERIENCE

ACCES is requesting proposals from prospective proponents to qualify as a potential vendor for the provision of Workplace Business Communication and Soft Skills instruction as described below. The successful proponent will be invited to enter a Services Agreement from January 22nd, 2024 to March 31st, 2025. At ACCES's discretion, the Services Agreement may be extended.

2.1. Project Overview

Connecting to Careers in Advanced Manufacturing is an upskilling program that will permit mid-skill workers to enter the advanced manufacturing sector or advance within it. The program responds to the advanced manufacturing sector's urgent need for skilled technicians and will position program participants at the forefront of a high-demand, dynamic industry. This industry-informed program will include technical training, future proofing, mentoring, coaching, personal branding, and employment placement to ensure that program participants complete training and effectively transition into demand driven occupations.

2.2. Scope of Work

This training aims to help participants of the Advanced Manufacturing program master the required business communication and soft skills to succeed in the advanced manufacturing workplace. The participants of this training are adult learners in their mid-career who want to upskill or reskill to merge into the advanced manufacturing sector.

By the end of the training, participants should be able to:

- Communicate effectively in a business setting
- Work collaboratively in a team environment
- Analyze and solve problems using critical thinking skills
- Make informed decisions based on data and information
- Tolerate ambiguity and adapt to change

The training will be offered online over five days, running four times between January 22nd, 2024 and March 31st, 2025.

Topics to be covered:

- Effective communication

- Teamwork and collaboration
- Analytical skills
- Decision making
- Tolerance to ambiguity and adaptability

2.3. Skills and Qualifications

- A degree in a relevant field such as communication, business communication, business administration, or a related discipline.
- Experience in delivering business communication and soft skills training.
- Practical experience applying effective communication strategies in a workplace setting.
- Ability to design and deliver effective courses on business communication.
- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written, to effectively convey business communication concepts and principles.
- The ability to model effective communication behaviors.
- Understanding of the specific business communication needs and challenges within the advanced manufacturing industry.
- Strong interpersonal skills to engage with students or participants and create a positive and collaborative learning environment.
- Ability to provide constructive feedback on communication skills development.
- The ability to adapt teaching strategies to the diverse backgrounds and learning styles of students or participants.
- Skills in developing curriculum and instructional materials that align with the specific business communication needs of the target audience.
- Proficiency in addressing common communication challenges in the workplace and guiding others in developing effective solutions.
- Ability to assess and evaluate students' or participants' communication skills and provide constructive feedback for improvement.

2.4. Demonstration of Experience

Please provide three recent examples and three recent references (*APPENDIX C – References*) demonstrating experience in the areas listed below:

- Provide examples of your work with organizations whose customers represent the full spectrum of a community with Toronto's diverse demographic.
- Experience with the non-profit, public sector, higher education, and/or employment organizations is an asset.

SECTION 3 – SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

3.1. Key Dates

Description	Date and Time
RFP Issue Date	November 30, 2023
Proponents' Questions Deadline	December 8, 2023
Last Day for Addenda/Responses to Proponents' Questions	December 13, 2023
Proposals Submission Deadline	December 22, 2023 (17:00 EST)
Proposals Review Period	December 27, 2023 to January 9, 2024
ACCES Selection Committee to Meet with Top Proponents	January 10, 2024 to January 16, 2024
Contract Award	January 19, 2024

3.2. Instructions to Submit a Proposal

1. Proposals must be submitted by 17:00 EST via email to procurement@acesemployment.ca. Proposals submitted after the submission deadline will be rejected.
2. The subject line of the e-mail should contain the proponent's name followed by **RFP #2023-11-30-D - WORKPLACE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION AND SOFT SKILLS INSTRUCTOR**
3. Proposals must include all completed forms listed below to be evaluated. Failure to provide all of these documents will result in disqualification.
 - Appendix A – RFP Cover Page
 - Appendix B – Conflict of Interest Statement
 - Appendix C – References
 - Appendix D – GST/HST Registration - Confirmation of Exemption (*if Applicable*)
 - Appendix E – Bid Form

Important Note: The maximum size of an email that ACCES can receive is 10 MB. The proposal may be separated into sections and sent in multiple emails if necessary.

3.3. Amendment or Withdrawal of Proposal

- Changes to the submitted proposal can be made no later than the submission deadline and to be marked ***“FINAL PROPOSAL”*** in the email subject line.
- At any time throughout the RFP process, a proponent may withdraw a submitted proposal by sending a notice of withdrawal to procurement@acesemployment.ca

3.4. Subcontractors (if applicable)

- The proponent must list any subcontractors they will use for delivering the services requested in this RFP. Subcontractors will not be hired without ACCES’s prior written approval.

3.5. Proposal Receipt

- ACCES will send an email confirmation upon receipt of a proposal.

SECTION 4 – EVALUATION AND SELECTION

4.1. Evaluation Process

ACCES will evaluate the proposals based on the following criteria.

Criteria	Weight
<p>Company Profile (or Individual’s Profile):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include the company’s legal name and location (state/province of incorporation); HST number; number of years in business; primary contact details; number of employees/current staffing; financial stability or total revenue previous fiscal year; core competencies, services and products. • where additional companies will be subcontracted, a company profile and company experience must be completed for each firm. 	5%
<p>Company (or Individual’s) Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate a proven track record in delivering business communication and soft skills, especially in the context of the Advanced Manufacturing industry or similar industry. • provide details of previous workshops conducted, including the number of participants, industries served, and outcomes achieved. • possess relevant educational qualifications and certifications in business communication and soft skills development. 	15%
<p>Key Project Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include a description of the knowledge, skills and experience relevant to the deliverables, including any sub-contractors engaged. • any sub-contractors must be denoted and include a description of work history with the proponent, their experience and qualifications. 	10%
<p>Approach and Implementation Methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • articulate the planned and recommended process for conducting the workshops. • describe and/or provide details of how the deliverables (SECTION 2) will be addressed. 	20%
<p>Training:</p>	15%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the approach to customizing workshop content to meet the specific needs and challenges of Advanced Manufacturing learners. • outline engaging and interactive teaching methods to ensure effective learning of business communication and soft skills. • include details on activities, role-playing, or simulations that will be used to reinforce learning. • provide examples of how previous workshops have been tailored to address unique student requirements. 	
<p>Pricing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete Bid Form (<i>APPENDIX E</i>) and attach it to the proposal in .xlsx format. 	35%

4.2. Selection Process

- ACCES reserves the right to accept or reject any proposals.
- ACCES may request further information from the proponent or third parties to verify, clarify or supplement the information provided in the proposal. ACCES may reevaluate the proposal based on any such information.
- Top scoring proponents will be invited to interview with ACCES’s Selection Committee.
- The evaluation process will consider a proposal that offers the best value and solution to ACCES, which may not necessarily be the lowest-priced proposal.
- The proponent that receives the highest score will be invited to enter into a contract with ACCES. If the highest-scored proponent declines the invitation to further participate, ACCES reserves the right to invite the next highest-scoring proponent to enter a contract instead.
- In the event of a tie score, ACCES’s Selection Committee will consider all available tangible and intangible information, including but not limited to the information contained in the proposals, to arrive at the tiebreaking decision.
- ACCES will award the contract in writing.

SECTION 5 – TERMS AND CONDITIONS

5.1. Inquiries

- Proponents should e-mail all questions to: procurement@acesemployment.ca by the “Proponents’ Questions Deadline” (Section 3.1.). ACCES will not respond to questions after this deadline.
- Inquiries deemed appropriate will be answered via addenda by the “Last Day for Addenda/Responses to Proponents’ Questions” (Section 3.1.). The addenda will be available online via the same bidding platform(s).

5.2. Blackout Period

- From the issuance of this RFP until the selected proponent executes an agreement, any contact regarding this RFP (other than as permitted in this RFP) with personnel employed by

or contracted by ACCES is prohibited. During this time, proponents should not approach any ACCES personnel or contractor concerning this bidding, the contracting process, or their proposal.

5.3. Acknowledgment of Non-Binding Procurement Process

- This RFP is not intended to create any contractual or other legal obligations or duties whatsoever owed to any proponent or potential proponent by ACCES. Without restricting the generality of the foregoing, no contractual relations shall exist between ACCES and any proponent until the execution of an Agreement/Contract with that proponent.

5.4. Sample Services Agreement

- A sample Services Agreement (*APPENDIX F – Sample Services Agreement*) has been provided to outline ACCES’s standard terms and conditions, and it is not intended to be signed.

5.5. Insurance

- Even though ACCES does not identify any specific insurance requirements in this RFP, this shall not be construed as a waiver of the successful proponent’s responsibility to carry insurance that would be considered appropriate for a prudent person or business to carry while engaged in the activities and providing the Services, including liability insurance. For additional information on the insurance requirements, refer to *APPENDIX F – Sample Services Agreement*.

5.6. Incidental Expenses, External Factors and Proposal Outcome:

- ACCES receives funding from various sources; therefore, all contracted services are subject to budget availability.
- ACCES as a non-profit organization under the *Broader Public Sector (BPS), Act 2010* is unable to reimburse the proponent for any incidental expenses such as food, hospitality, mileage, parking, photocopying, printing, etc.
- ACCES shall not be liable for any expenses incurred by any proponent, including the expenses associated with preparing the proposal.
- ACCES reserves the right to withdraw this RFP or terminate the resulting contract within the terms of the contract without penalty.

5.7. Conflict of Interest:

- Proponents may not have any personal or business interest that would present an actual, potential, or apparent conflict of interest with the performance of the contract to be awarded (*APPENDIX B – Conflict of Interest Statement*).

5.8. Publicity:

- Proponents should not use the award of a contract as part of any news release or commercial advertising without ACCES’s prior written consent.

5.9. Disclosure of Confidential Information:

- Proposals should mark any confidential information. The confidentiality of such information will be maintained by ACCES, except as otherwise required by law or by order of a court or tribunal. Proponents are advised that their proposals will, as necessary, be disclosed on a confidential basis, to ACCES's staff to advise or assist with the RFP process, including the evaluation of proposals. If a proponent has any questions about the collection and use of personal information pursuant to this RFP, questions are to be submitted as per section 5.1, "Inquiries."

5.10. Notification and Debriefing

- Once the contract has been awarded, the other proponents will be notified of the outcome of the RFP process via e-mail.
- Proponents may request a debriefing after receipt of notification of the outcome of the RFP process. All requests must be sent to procurement@acesemployment.ca and must be made within sixty (60) days of such notification.

5.11. Bid Dispute

- Any bid disputes should be submitted to procurement@acesemployment.ca within five (5) business days of receipt of the notice of award.
- The Selection Committee will review a bid dispute and take the appropriate remedial action, including, but not limited to, reinstating the proponent into the competition or cancelling the RFP.
- The RFP award may be delayed because of a bid dispute.