



Request for Proposals

Labor Market and Educational Landscape Assessment for the Growth Opportunities Program: Empowering Justice-Involved Youth for Workforce Success

International Youth Foundation

January 2026



Background

The International Youth Foundation® (IYF®) stands by, for, and with young people. Together with local community-based organizations and a network of corporate, foundation, and multilateral partners, we connect young people with opportunities to transform their lives. We believe that educated, employed, engaged young people possess the power to solve the world's toughest problems, and we focus our youth development efforts on three linked objectives: unlocking agency, driving economic opportunity, and making systems more inclusive.

IYF recently launched Growth Opportunities: Empowering Justice-Involved Youth for Workforce Success through local implementing partners in two U.S. regions—New York (NY) and North Carolina (NC). The Growth Opportunities (GO) program, funded 100% by a \$5.1 million grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)'s Employment and Training Administration, seeks to bridge the gap between at-risk youth and the workforce, equipping them with the skills, experience, and support needed to secure stable and decent work opportunities.

To inform implementation, IYF seeks to better understand the current labor market dynamics in each region. This assessment will identify labor market opportunities, employment barriers, employer needs, and the current training and education landscape ultimately strengthening our program's ability to connect young people with meaningful pathways into employment.

Scope of Work

IYF is soliciting proposals from qualified consultants or firms to conduct a comprehensive labor market assessment in Oneida County, New York, including the surrounding areas of Madison and Herkimer Counties, as well as Robeson County, North Carolina.

The assessment will examine supply- and demand-side employment factors, identify barriers and opportunities for justice-involved youth, gather employer insights, and produce practical tools to support employer engagement and job placement under the GO program.

Responsibilities

The consultant will:

1. **Identify employment barriers on the supply side**, including skill gaps, credentialing challenges, transportation or geographic barriers, legal or administrative obstacles, and youth perceptions or expectations about work.
2. **Identify employment barriers and opportunities on the demand side**, including industry hiring needs, entry-level pathways, employer constraints or concerns related to hiring justice-involved youth, and regional labor market trends.
3. **Develop and provide Focus Group Discussion (FGD) protocols** for partners to gather insights from potential employers and workforce stakeholders,



4. **Complete a desk review** of relevant labor market data, workforce development reports, the DOL's Career OneStop website, economic trends, and youth employment resources in both regions.
5. **Review partners' employer databases** and contact sheets, identifying and addressing information gaps based on assessment findings.
6. **Develop practical tools and materials** to help IYF staff and implementing partners effectively "pitch" the GO program as a pre-employment training pipeline to employers, including recommended talking points, value propositions, and communications templates.
7. **Recommend employer incentive options** (financial or non-financial) that could increase employer willingness to hire GO participants.
8. **Consolidate all findings and tools** into a final report and resource package, including:
 - Summary of supply- and demand-side findings
 - Identified barriers and opportunities
 - Approved research protocols
 - Pitch tools and supporting materials
 - Clear, actionable recommendations for NY and NC partners
9. Provide capacity-building support (e.g. 1-on1 meeting, a presentation during a quarterly meeting, or workshop) for IYF and partner staff to ensure effective understanding and utilization of LMA findings and information.

Materials

- Access to program background materials and supporting documents.
- Access to a shared external SharePoint Channel for exchange of resources and collaboration with program team.

Budget - \$30,000 (ceiling)

- Note: this opportunity is contingent on funding availability.

Preferred Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- Previous experience conducting labor market assessments, workforce analyses, or sectoral research in the U.S.
- Demonstrated experience working with NGOs, workforce development agencies, and youth-serving organizations.
- Strong analytical skills with the ability to translate data into clear, actionable insights and recommendations.
- Excellent writing, communication, and presentation skills, with experience producing high-quality reports for non-technical audiences.
- Familiarity with justice-involved youth populations and an understanding of the barriers they face in accessing education and employment opportunities, a plus.



How to Apply

Please submit a proposal outlining the proposed activities for the project, implementation plan, deadlines, a detailed budget, and the firm's qualifications (including samples of similar work) no later than February 25th, 2026 to a.caceres@iyfglobal.org. Please use the following email subject line: **Labor Market Assessment – [Insert Consultant/Firm Name]**.