

## I. General Information

### A. Purpose of Request for Proposals (RFP)

The Eastern Oregon Workforce Board (EOWB) is seeking proposals for qualified organizations to implement Oregon Conservation Corps programming. Accepted project proposals will center on providing workforce development experiences for youth in wildfire resiliency projects. A contract resulting from this RFP is anticipated to begin May 1, 2024, and completed by June 15, 2025.

The RFP is for services to be provided in any of the following Eastern Oregon counties: Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa.

Entities that are eligible to submit a response to this request for proposal include:

- Private-for-Profit
- Not-for-Profit
- Public agency

### B. Estimated Allocations

EOWB will award up to \$400,000 to each provider awarded a contract. Funding is contingent upon the availability of funds and the number of other proposals.

#### Schedule for RFP submission, review, and awards

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
3/13/2024	RFP will be available on the <a href="#">EOWB Website</a>
4/1/2024	Due date for questions
4/4/2024	Proposals Due
4/11/2024	Recommendation(s) Submitted to EOWB, Provisional Award Notices Announced
4/18/2024	Appeal Deadline
5/1/2024	Contract Start Date

### C. Additional Information

#### Governing Law and Regulations

This RFA is governed by the laws of the State of Oregon. Venue for any administrative or judicial action relating to this RFA, evaluation and award is the Circuit Court of Marion

County for the State of Oregon; provided, however, if a proceeding must be brought in a federal forum, then it must be brought and conducted solely and exclusively within the United States District Court for the District of Oregon. In no event shall this Section be construed as a waiver by the State of Oregon of any form of defense or immunity, whether sovereign immunity, governmental immunity, immunity based on the Eleventh Amendment to the Constitution of the United States or otherwise, to or from any claim or from the jurisdiction of any court.

To be considered, applicants:

- Must not be in violation of any tax laws of the state or a political subdivision of the state, including, without limitation, ORS 305.620 and ORS chapters 316, 317 and 318.
- Understand that any statement or representation it makes, in response to this RFA, if determined to be false or fraudulent, a misrepresentation, or inaccurate because of the omission of material information could result in a “claim” (as defined by the Oregon False Claims Act, ORS 180.750(1)), made under Contract being a “false claim” (ORS 180.750(2)) subject to the Oregon False Claims Act, ORS 180.750 to 180.785, and to any liabilities or penalties associated with the making of a false claim under that Act.
- Will comply with the Pay Equity law, ORS 652.220, if applicable.
- Do not discriminate in its employment practices with regard to race, creed, age, religious affiliation, gender, disability, sexual orientation, national origin. When awarding subcontracts, if HECC allows, except as allowed by ORS 659A.006, Applicant does not discriminate in its employment practices with regard to race, creed, age, religious affiliation, gender, disability, sexual orientation, national origin. If applicable, Applicant has, or will have prior to contract execution, a written policy and practice, that meets the requirements described in ORS 279A.112, of preventing sexual harassment, sexual assault and discrimination against employees who are members of a protected class. See <https://www.oregon.gov/DAS/Procurement/Pages/hb3060.aspx> for additional information and sample policy template. If applicable, Applicant has, or will have prior to contract execution, a written policy and practice, that meets the requirements described in ORS 279A.112, of preventing sexual harassment, sexual assault and discrimination against employees who are members of a protected class. See <https://www.oregon.gov/DAS/Procurement/Pages/hb3060.aspx> for additional information and sample policy template.

Applicant, by submitting an application, certifies it will follow all local, state, and federal guidelines.

## D. Reporting and Monitoring

EOWB utilizes reporting to capture information that supports funding for youth workforce initiatives. Reporting provides a near-term understanding of the funding's qualitative and quantitative impacts, as well as a long-term assessment of the impact of youth workforce programming on underserved populations, especially in relation to post-secondary education and living wage jobs. Programs receiving funds from OWI should expect to be asked for both qualitative and quantitative data and supporting documentation around the following areas:

- Populations served,
- Community benefit,
- Skill development, and
- Career Pathways.

EOWB recognizes that when working with priority populations, protecting the safety and trust of participants is a critical element. To ensure program participants are protected, EOWB requests the following:

- Information collected and shared by programs comes from a trauma-informed approach;
- Program information aggregates program data rather than sharing the specific details of each individual's program experience;
- The minimal collection of personal identifiable information only as necessary to provide in reports; and
- Individuals are provided with an EOWB release form that allows the individual or their guardian to authorize the release of that individual's image, data, and stories.

EOWB has a responsibility to monitor the programs we fund. Effective monitoring is necessary for compliance with State and Federal regulations and provisions of grant agreements and as well as supporting overall program development. EOWB also views monitoring as an opportunity for determining strengths, areas for improvement, and Training and Technical Assistance.

Monitoring actions are where EOWB, through testing and observation, determines strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for training and technical assistance. Monitoring actions are divided into two types - "All Grantee Monitoring" which will be performed for all grantees and "Grantee-Specific Monitoring" which is done for only a subset of grantees based on results of the Risk Assessment.

Grantees may receive fiscal monitoring, programmatic monitoring, or both types of monitoring. Grantees may receive programmatic and/or fiscal grantee-specific monitoring more than once in a two-year grant cycle if EOWB staff determines it is warranted.

Risk Assessment is a comprehensive tool that measures:

- 1) Organizational and grant-specific risk;
- 2) Programmatic risk; and
- 3) Fiscal management risk.

## II. Background and Scope of Work

### A. Eastern Oregon Workforce Board Overview

The EOWB is a non-profit organization that coordinates and oversees the public workforce system in the eight-county area of Eastern Oregon, which includes Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa counties. EOWB brings together business and community leaders to promote and expand workforce development activities to ensure the long-range economic vitality of the area. The Board is the policy and planning body for the workforce development system in Eastern Oregon's eight-county area. The Strategic Plan for 2024 -2028 can be found on the Board's webpage: <http://www.eowb.org>.

#### **EOWB Vision:**

Eastern Oregon has a qualified labor pool that contributes to a healthy local economy.

#### **Our Mission:**

To connect eastern Oregon employers, individuals, and communities to address shared workforce challenges and leverage opportunities collaboratively.

#### **Our Long-Term Goals:**

**Employer Resources:** Identify employer workforce needs, and coordinate solutions to help area businesses thrive.

**Emerging Workforce:** Encourage youth participation in career connected experiences that engage their interests and connect them to employers.

**Customer-Centric Workforce:** Ensure the workforce system is accessible and effective.

**Qualified Workforce:** Eastern Oregon's workforce is qualified to enter and advance in high-wage high-demand jobs.

**Community Awareness:** Eastern Oregon employers and community members are aware of workforce development programs and services available to help them.

**Organizational Sustainability:** Create long-term organizational sustainability through effective performance measurement, assessment, and accountability.

## B. Oregon Conservation Corps Overview

The OCC Program was created by the 2021 Oregon Legislative Assembly and is authorized by ORS 476.694 to 476.698. Grants will be awarded to eligible organizations, public entities, and sovereign nations across the state to aid in reducing wildfire risk to communities while offering paid work experience, job training, skill development and forest-related or rangeland-related career path training.

### OCC Purpose

- Reduce the risk wildfire poses to communities and critical infrastructure.
- Help to create fire-adapted communities (defined as, “Communities located in a fire-prone area that require little assistance from firefighters during a wildfire”); and engage youth and young adults (ages 16 through 26) in workforce training.

Projects shall take place within the Wildland Urban Interface and shall fall within priority areas set by the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) utilizing the [Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer map](#). The Wildland Urban Interface is the zone of transition between unoccupied land and human development—it is the line, area or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels.

Priority will be given to projects that reduce community fire risks, reduce hazardous fuels, provide educational experiences, and promote youth and young adult workforce development.

All projects must meet fuel reduction standards as defined by the local, state or county fire agency such as –ODF, one of the three Oregon Fire Protection Associations and/or in consultation with the Office of the Oregon State Fire Marshall. OCC will provide standards training to all grantees in consultation with ODF.

Workforce training is a component of the programming with the aim to help close employment gaps, particularly for those underserved and underrepresented communities, by providing young Oregonians with valuable work experience that promotes the development of [essential employability skills](#).

## C. Eastern Oregon Workforce Board Oregon Conservation Corps Grant Overview

EOWB was awarded an Oregon Conservation Corps grant to develop fire resiliency projects specifically in eastern Oregon. Our goal is to pass this funding to eligible organizations who are experienced and/or capable of meeting the needs and goals of the original grant as mentioned in the preceding section. EOWB stands by OCC’s commitment to provide equitable access for underserved and vulnerable populations.

### III. Guidelines

#### A. Applicant Guidelines

The Applicant shall:

- Have its principal place of business in Oregon or be otherwise registered to do business in Oregon;
- Be a nonprofit youth development organization, public entity, or tribal nation that provides programs of job training, skill development and forest-related or rangeland-related career path training;
- Have experience operating youth workforce development programming and/or have experience performing wildfire fuel reduction projects;
- Identify current and future community partnerships; including tribal outreach and coordination;
- Have developed safety, work site, orientation, education, and emergency plans in compliance with state and federal law. These plans must be in place prior to operating;
- Meet EOWB's requirements for insurance and background checks, as listed in the agreement; and
- Be required to provide report(s) to EOWB. Report components will be described in detail in the Grant Agreements which will include but not be limited to:
  - First and last names and date of birth for all participants (this information will be treated as Confidential Information by both parties);
  - General participant demographics;
  - Total number of hours worked;
  - Budget details and expenditure report(s);
  - Before and after pictures;
  - Certifications earned;
  - Skills developed;
  - Project/treatment location by ZIP code;
  - Project/treatment outcome;
  - Acres treated, number of sites treated, and number of structures impacted within 100 ft of treatment; and
  - Any other categories requested by EOWB.

## B. Eligible Participants

To be eligible for a Grant under this RFP, applicants shall serve the following eligible participants:

- Youth participants from underrepresented and vulnerable populations, including but not limited to, communities with members who have limited proficiency in English and communities with lower-income members.
- Program participants shall be youth and young adults between the ages of 16-26 who reside in Oregon.
  - Priority may be given to applicants who actively and effectively serve youth from priority populations as defined in SB 1545 (2022):
    - Communities of color
    - Women
    - Low-income communities
    - Rural and frontier communities
    - Veterans
    - Persons with disabilities
    - Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals
    - Members of eastern Oregon's two federally recognized tribes
- Individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment on the basis of age.
- Individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Program participants shall be compensated in the following manner:
  - At least Oregon minimum wage by region according to the current rules regarding Oregon minimum wage established by the Bureau of Labor & Industries; or
  - If a grantee is prohibited by state or federal law from the payment of wages, such as an AmeriCorps program, the following formula is to be followed (as detailed in OAR 715-101-0015): an allowance or stipend, or a combination of an allowance or stipend and postsecondary education and training monetary award, such that the total monetary value of the allowance or stipend and the total monetary value of any other postsecondary education monetary award or institutional credit hour award received by the participant or on behalf of the participant, when totaled and divided by the total hours served in the program, is equal to or exceeds the monetary value of minimum wage.

## C. General Scope of Activities

### Demonstrated Activities and Projects

- Fuel reduction projects must be designed to reduce the risk wildfire poses to communities and critical infrastructure by helping to create fire-adapted communities.
  - Projects may be completed in collaboration with other organizations.
  - Priority will be given to applicants who demonstrate that they actively and effectively engage Tribal partners as original stewards of the land
  - Priority will be given to applicants who include target treatments in high-risk areas.
- Projects shall be identified in consultation with local fire officials (through ODF or Fire Protection District) and Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office to coordinate and avoid duplication of treatment areas and must take place within the Wildland Urban Interface.
  - Applicants are required to submit a "screen shot" from the Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer map showing the Wildland Urban Interface area where project work will be completed.
  - Specific sites within treatment areas should also be coordinated with local fire officials to ensure that their long-term strategy and plans are maintained.
- Site assessments and the determination of project/treatment effectiveness must be done in coordination with local fire officials, ODF, or the designee appointed by ODF.
- Projects shall fall within the Oregon Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) layer, or the Wildland Urban Interface (USFS RDA) layer, both of which can be found on the Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer map under the "Planning and Cadastral" layer.
- Projects may incorporate community awareness and education efforts.
- Fuels to be removed shall include but not be limited to:
  - Fine fuels such as grasses and needles
  - Surface fuels such as shrubs, brush, and tree limbs
  - Heavy fuels, like large bushes, small trees, and downed trees and limbs
- Projects may involve hand and/or mechanical treatments and may include but not be limited to:
  - Invasive species removal
  - Thinning trees
  - Pruning
  - Slash treatment, including but not limited to: Chipping, hauling, pile and burn, biochar, or other small diameter wood utilization
  - Prescribed burning with authorized partners



## OCC Workforce Training Requirements

In addition to having safely completed fuel reduction projects, the objectives of OCC also include making gains in the following areas:

- Learning and practicing [Essential Employability Skills](#) or “soft skills” such as skills like integrity, dependability, work ethic, effective communication, open-mindedness, teamwork, creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking, adaptability, organization, willingness to learn, and empathy.
- Preparing youth with the skills to advance in their careers and educational paths.
- Opportunities to discover career and education pathways.

## Allowable Use of Grant Funds and Budget Narrative

Successful applicants will have to complete and submit a detailed proposed budget, with budget narrative, that clearly identifies reasonable costs associated with fulfilling the RFP (See Attachment A - 2023-2025 OCC Budget Template for EOWB). This detailed budget will be reviewed by the grant review committee. Adjustments may be required during negotiation of the grant agreement. The excel version is linked in the google application.

Details the following allowable costs are required:

- **Program Costs:**
  - Program Personnel Costs/Wages
  - Employer Costs for Taxes/Fringe
  - Transportation
  - Supplies/Materials
  - Program Participants’ Support Services Costs
  - Personal Protective Equipment
  - Equipment
  - Training and Certification costs, etc.
- **Administrative Costs:**
  - Expenditures incurred by grantees in the performance of administrative functions necessary in carrying out activities under the grant agreement. Acknowledging the funds for the resulting grant agreements derive from state funds as opposed to federal funds, administrative costs to administer them should be lower.
  - Administrative Costs will be limited to a rate of 10 percent. EOWB reserves the right to negotiate, in its sole discretion, higher Administrative Cost rates if a successful applicant can justify why a higher rate is necessary.

## IV. Solicitation Process and Clarification Terms

### A. Communication And Clarification Procedures

The EOWB's website is the primary mode of communication between EOWB and potential bidders.

### B. Proposal Review And Evaluation Process

Proposals that fail to include all items will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed. Complete proposals will be evaluated for their content, merit and clarity of language.

Proposals will be screened through the following three-phase process:

**Phase I:** Initial evaluation of each proposal for acceptability, with emphasis placed on completeness and responsiveness to requisite program criteria. The following minimum criteria will be used to determine which proposals will continue on to Phase II:

- All required services for the program for which the applicant is bidding are addressed;
- All requested information and documentation is included in the application; and,
- The proposal is submitted in accordance with the RFP.

**Phase II:** Proposals that have met the minimum criteria, as stated above, will then be reviewed, and ranked by the evaluation team.

Proposals will be ranked based on evaluation criteria outlined in the next section. The EOWB retains the right to request additional information from any applicant or request an interview of the bidder. Bidders are solely responsible for attending the interview at their cost. If no response adequately addresses the services and outcomes requested, the committee may recommend that no award be made.

**Phase III:** The recommendations of the Evaluation Team will be presented to EOWB on Apr 11, 2024.

### C. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The Evaluation Team will evaluate each submitted proposal based on the following point system:

<b>Total Points Possible</b>		<b>100</b>
<b>Section</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>
<b>Section I. Applicant Experience</b>		<b>25</b>
	Does experience demonstrate confidence and competence to successfully implement this grant?	
<b>Section II. Populations to be Served</b>		<b>25</b>
	Will participants/corpsmembers be supported and served in culturally and developmentally appropriate ways that empower them to pursue future careers or educational goals?	
	Has the community been intentionally considered in planning and does the proposed project generally support/uplift the community to become more fire-resistant?	
<b>Section III. Project/Treatment Plans</b>		<b>15</b>
	Are described treatments in the WUI and thoughtfully coordinated with partner agencies?	
	Are identified treatment areas very high or high hazard risk areas?	
	Does the proposed project engage community and Tribal stewards	
<b>Section IV. Workforce and Skill Development</b>		<b>15</b>
	Will corpsmember participation support or prepare youth to meet their career and educational goals?	
<b>Section V. Budget</b>		<b>20</b>
	Are expenses reasonable, necessary and an accurate reflection of current cost trends to complete the proposed scope of work and are expenses clearly represented in the budget narrative?	

Grant funds will be awarded based on:

- Available funding.
- The Evaluation Team's best value determinations based on applicants' scores and how the Evaluation Team can best utilize grant funds to meet the purposes of this RFP, including, but not limited to, socio-economic impact and Wildland-Urban Interface.

## D. Appeals And Disputes

Any bidder who wishes to contest the process of the award(s) for funding under this RFP must write to the Eastern Oregon Workforce Board within 10 days of notice of funding award. The EOWB will issue a decision on appeals within 30 days of receipt.

The EOWB encourages the use of informal resolution to address complaints or disputes related to RFP process issues. Written complaints should be addressed to:

Eastern Oregon Workforce Board,  
Attn: Erin Carpenter  
1215 Adams Avenue, Suite B  
La Grande OR 97850.

## V. Provisions & Disclaimers

1. This RFP is for a period ending June 15th, 2025.
2. EOWB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received.
3. EOWB reserves the right to waive informalities and minor irregularities in offers received.
4. This RFP does not commit EOWB to award a contract.
5. This RFP is for OCC funding.
6. EOWB may accept any item or group of items of any offer, unless the bidder qualified its offer by specific limitations.
7. EOWB may select a service provider based on initial offers received, without discussion of such offers. Accordingly, each offer should be submitted on the most favorable terms from a price and technical standpoint that the bidder can submit to EOWB.
8. EOWB reserves the right to request additional data or oral discussion or documentation in support of written offers.

9. No costs will be paid to cover the expense of preparing a proposal or procuring a contract for services or supplies for OCC.
10. All data, material, and documentation originated and prepared by the bidder pursuant to the contract shall belong exclusively to EOWB and be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.
11. Formal notification to award a contract and the actual execution of a contract are subject to the following: receipt of OCC funds anticipated, results of negotiations between selected bidders and EOWB staff, and continued availability of OCC funds.
12. Any changes to the OCC program, performance measures, funding level, or board direction may result in a change in contracting. In such instances, EOWB will not be held liable for what is in the bidder's proposal or this Request for Proposals package.
13. Proposals submitted for funding consideration must be consistent with, and if funded operated according to all applicable federal regulations, State of Oregon policies, and EOWB policies and procedures.
14. The Service provider(s) selected for funding must also ensure compliance with the following, as applicable: U.S. DOL regulations 2 CFR 200.
15. The service provider(s) will be expected to adhere to EOWB procedures to collect, verify, and submit required data as required and monthly invoices, at minimum, to EOWB.
16. Additional funds received by EOWB may be contracted by expanding existing programs or by consideration of proposals not initially funded under this RFP, if such proposals were rated in the competitive range. These decisions shall be at the discretion of EOWB.
17. EOWB may decide not to fund part or all of a proposal even though it is found to be in the competitive range. If in the opinion of EOWB, the services proposed are not needed, or the costs are higher than EOWB finds reasonable in relation to the overall funds available, or if past management concerns lead EOWB to believe that the bidder has undertaken more services than it can successfully provide.
18. EOWB has a right to fund a lower ranked proposal over a higher ranked proposal because of valid policy considerations, including but not limited to, geographical considerations, leveraging of outside resources, and target populations.
19. Any proposal approved for funding may be followed by a pre-award review conducted by EOWB staff. This site visit will establish, to EOWB's satisfaction, whether the bidder is capable of conducting and carrying out the provisions of the proposed contract. If the results of the site visit indicate, in the opinion of EOWB, that the bidder may not be able to fulfill contract expectations, EOWB reserves the right not to enter into contract with the organization, regardless of EOWB approval of the bidder's proposal.

20. EOWB is required to abide by all applicable federal and state regulations and policies. Therefore, EOWB reserves the right to modify or alter the requirements and standards set forth in this RFP based on program requirements mandated by state or federal agencies.
21. All bidders must ensure equal opportunity to all individuals. No individual shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any OCC-funded program or activity because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status and gender identity), national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, or against beneficiaries based on either citizenship status.
22. All bidders must ensure access to individuals with disabilities pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act.
23. Bidders must accept liability for all aspects of any OCC program conducted under contract with EOWB. Bidders will be liable for any disallowed costs or illegal expenditures of funds or program operations conducted.
24. Reductions in the funding level of any contract resulting from this solicitation process may be considered during the contract period when a bidder fails to meet expenditure, participant, and/or outcome goals specified in the contract or when anticipated funding is not forthcoming from the federal or state governments.
25. The contract award will not be final until EOWB and the bidder have executed a mutually satisfactory contractual agreement. EOWB reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposal submitted. No program activity may begin prior to final EOWB approval of the award and execution of a contractual agreement between the successful bidder and EOWB.
26. EOWB reserves the right to cancel an award immediately if new state or federal regulations or policy makes it necessary to change the program purpose or content substantially, or to prohibit such a program.
27. EOWB reserves the right to determine both the number and the funding levels of contracts finally awarded. Such determination will depend upon overall fund availability and other factors arising during the proposal review process. Bids submitted which are over the maximum amount of funds specified for this RFP will be rejected.
29. The proposal warrants that the costs quoted for services in response to the RFP are not in excess of those that would be charged any other individual for the same services performed by the bidder.
30. EOWB reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received and to negotiate with all bidders on modifications to proposals.
31. EOWB reserves the right to accept proposals with minor clerical errors such as misspellings, incorrect page order or similar non-consequential errors.

32. Each party shall be responsible for the negligence of its own employees or agents in the performance of this contract. All contracts warrant that the contractor will maintain coverage sufficient to cover contracting activities. At the request of EOWB, the contractor will provide certification of third-party insurance or self-insurance and bonding. Insurance and bonding coverage will be effective for the term of the contract.
33. Bidders are advised that most documents in the possession of EOWB are considered public records and subject to disclosure under the State of Oregon's Public Records Law.

## VI. Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted using [this form](#) by 4/4/2024. If you can't access this link, you can email us at [info@eowb.org](mailto:info@eowb.org) to request a pdf version of the form. Be sure to put "Request PDF OCC Application" in the subject line.

**Attachment A - 2023-2025 OCC Budget Template for EOWB**