

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION  
**Demand Side Employment Initiative**  
(DSEI)



**REQUEST FOR INTEREST**  
**Business Contracts**  
**RFI #DSEI-22-01**

**May 24, 2022**

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## I. Authority

The Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) received a one-time appropriation of \$20 million dollars to fund strategic initiatives to increase the employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The DOR has allocated \$10 million dollars for its Demand Side Employment Initiative (DSEI), an employer incentive program for businesses to expand or begin hiring people with disabilities. DSEI staff will provide helpful resources, technical support, and assistance with implementing equitable recruitment, training, and retention practices. The DSEI funding will be distributed to small and medium-sized businesses through contracts beginning August 2022 through June 30, 2024.

### Campaign to Highlight Participating Businesses

Your business will benefit from the \$2 million DOR has earmarked for a targeted media and marketing campaign to support the recruitment and employment of individuals with disabilities. This strategic multi-media marketing campaign will spotlight the DSEI funding recipient businesses who are champions for disability inclusive hiring in California.

## II. Purpose of RFI

Through this Request for Interest (RFI), DOR is striving to reach small and medium-sized businesses interested in performing the Service Activities described in Section III on Pages 4-5. Businesses that respond to this RFI, called Respondents, are encouraged to apply for funding and technical assistance to achieve a mutual agreement to meet the goals of the DSEI program as defined in Section VII, Commitment Goals on Page 8. DSEI funding will be available August 2022 through June 30, 2024.

### Funding Opportunity

DOR has earmarked over \$5 million to incentivize California small to medium-sized businesses to perform the activities described in Section III on Pages 4-5. Available funds per business range from \$20,000 to \$200,000, with the possibility of additional funding in the future.

**Note:** Payment for contract expenses will be in arrears upon submission of a complete and accurate invoice and the required supporting documentation. Receipts will be required when submitting invoices for reimbursement of non-personnel expenses. Staff time will be reimbursed at the rate included in the cost proposal.

### III. Description of Service Activities

Funding is available for, but not limited to, consulting services, equipment purchase and training, new hire of individuals with disabilities cost reimbursement, training, physical location improvement, and barrier removal.

#### Consulting Services

- Businesses may use funding to purchase consulting services, which may include:
  - Training for inclusive practices, such as job analysis, interview strategies, and job descriptions.
  - How to create and facilitate training/learning programs, such as internships and work-based learning activities.
  - Identifying potential placement for employees with disabilities.
  - Making accessible work environments.
- After receiving the consultant's report, DSEI funding recipients must provide the plans to implement the recommended changes and execute action items.

#### Equipment Purchase and Training

- Funding may be used to purchase equipment to expand and/or support business growth. Training on the equipment purchased will be provided to support current and future employed individuals with disabilities, and
- Equipment funding can also be used to purchase accessibility equipment, for employed or future employed individuals with disabilities, such as screen reading or dictation software, braille printers, etc. for onboarding purposes. Training will be provided to employed or future employed individuals with disabilities to ensure success in the job.

#### New Hire Cost

- Reimbursement for costs related to a specific candidate/position being hired and can include advertising, onboarding, training, and 1st month's wages.

#### Training

- Funding for the creation and expansion of a training/learning program, including paid internships, for individuals with disabilities.

### Physical Location Improvement

- Funding for projects to make the workplace accessible, for example modifications to doors or paths of travel, installation of wheelchair ramps, push button door openers, or flashing fire alarms.
  - Further information on making workspaces accessible is available at the following website: [https://www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards\\_index.htm](https://www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards_index.htm)

### Barrier Removal

- Funding may be used to remove the barriers confronted by persons with disabilities in areas that include training, employment, inclusivity, and workspace accessibility. This is an opportunity to get creative and think outside the box while expanding and benefiting your business.

### Technical Assistance

- Free technical assistance is available to DSEI funding recipients for implementation and support of employing individuals with disabilities. We will provide our expertise to support you and lend a helping hand to find solutions. Technical assistance will be tailored to custom fit your business needs and comes at no cost to you.

## IV. RFI Key Action Dates

Listed below are the Key Action Dates for the RFI. DOR will notify Respondents about any RFI Key Action Date changes by posting an addendum with revisions to the DOR website. Please check the DOR website regularly by visiting:

<https://dor.ca.gov/Home/ContractGrantSolicitations>

<b>Event</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Date / Time</b>
RFI Release Date	DOR	May 24, 2022
RFI Question Submission Deadline	Respondent	June 30, 2022
RFI Response Package Due	Respondent	Until December 31, 2023
Funding Period	DOR	Upon Approval to June 30, 2024

## V. Detailed Schedule of RFI Events

### **RFI Release Date:**

The RFI release date is Tuesday, May 24, 2022. Responses and inquiries regarding this RFI must be submitted to the Demand Side Employment Initiative Team in writing electronically via email to: [Contractsinfo@dor.ca.gov](mailto:Contractsinfo@dor.ca.gov).

Submission of electronic responses and inquiries must include the following in the subject line: **RFI #DSEI-22-01 Response Package**

### **Response Evaluation:**

RFI Response Packages can be submitted for funding evaluation until December 31, 2023, or until DSEI funding is depleted, whichever occurs first.

Once selections are approved, the DSEI Team will work with selected parties to develop the final contract.

### **Contract Period:**

The DOR will award contracts to the most qualified Respondents, subject to funding availability, with the term upon contract approval through June 30, 2024.

## VI. Response Submission Requirements

All eligible Respondents interested in applying for the DSEI funding must follow the instructions outlined below. **Responses must be in accessible formats.**

Further information on making documents accessible is available at the following website: <https://www.dor.ca.gov/Home/Accessibility>

To be considered for funding, responses must comply with the instructions and criteria provided in this RFI.

## **Required Documents:**

Each response packet must include the following:

### **1. Response Checklist (Attachment A)**

The Response Checklist is to be used by the Respondent to ensure all the required documents are submitted.

### **2. Applicant Information (Attachment B)**

The Applicant Information is used to identify each business applying for funding.

### **3. Cost Proposal and Narrative (Attachment C)**

The Cost Proposal and Narrative is used to identify the type of service activity proposed with the estimated cost and cost proposal justification narrative.

### **4. Type of Goal Commitment (Attachment D)**

The Type of Goal Commitment is used to identify the goal(s) that each business is making a commitment to achieve.

### **5. Proof of Business Status (Attachment E)**

Provide proof of business license to conduct business in California.

### **6. Proof of Small Business Certification (Attachment F)**

If applicable, provide printout of Department of General Services (DGS) Small Business Certification. Registration as a small business with DGS is not a requirement to receive funding.

## **VII. Review and Award Process**

The DOR DSEI Team will review each RFI submission to conduct a complete and fair evaluation of the Respondent's request for funds based on availability of funding and impact of hiring individuals with disabilities. The DSEI Team will determine how many businesses will be awarded contracts.

## Definitions

### **Business Size**

Internal Revenue Service (IRS): The Large Business and International (LB&I) Division defines Large Businesses as having assets equal to and greater than \$10 million. All businesses under that mark for IRS purposes are small/medium in size. Small and Medium-sized businesses are eligible to apply for this funding.

You can apply to be a DGS registered small business through the Cal eProcure website: <https://caleprocure.ca.gov/pages/sbdvbe-index.aspx>

Registration as a small business with DGS is not a requirement to receive funding.

### **Workforce Parity Rate**

For the purposes of this RFI, Workforce Parity Rate is the percentage of your business' workforce that represent employees with disabilities. For example, if your business has 20 staff and 2 employees are individuals with disabilities, then your Workforce Parity Rate is 10.0%. Internships do not affect a company's Workforce Parity Rate.

## Range of Award

Available funds per business range from \$20,000 to \$200,000, with the possibility of additional funding in the future.

All funding requested must be itemized to justify cost.

## Commitment Goals

Each DSEI funding recipient must commit to at least one of the following:

- Providing a full or part-time ongoing (rotating) internship experience position(s) where individuals with disabilities could gain work experience.
- Hiring and employing a workforce with individuals with disabilities representing up to or exceeding the parity rate of 16.6%.

## Business Follow Up

Any business requesting and receiving funds/technical assistance is agreeing to be contacted quarterly through June 30, 2024. Contact will be made by email or phone call. The purpose of follow up is to verify use of funds, and to check on hires and work experience participants.



Quarterly reporting from funding recipients will include the following, as applicable.

- Amounts of funding for accessibility provided.
- Businesses' specific plans and activities to support the hiring of individuals with disabilities.
- The number of participants, number of new hires; number of individuals participating in or receiving work experiences; and if the experiences are paid or unpaid.

Quarterly reports are due every three months, dates listed below. Missing two quarterly reports may jeopardize your funding.

Q1: July – September

- Report due by October 14

Q2: October - December

- Report due by January 13

Q3: January - March

- Report due by April 14

Q4: April – June

- Report due by July 14

## VIII. Attachment A

### RESPONSE CHECKLIST

- Response Checklist (Attachment A)
- Applicant Information (Attachment B)
  - Business Information
  - RFI Contact Information
- Cost Proposal and Narrative (Attachment C)
  - Contract Type(s) Selected
  - Cost Breakdown and Information
  - Cost Justification Narrative
- Type of Goal Commitment (Attachment D)
  - Goal Commitment Type(s) Selected
  - Goal Details
- Proof of Business Status (Attachment E)
- Proof of Small Business Certification – If Applicable (Attachment F)

## IX. Attachment B

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

#### **COMPANY INFORMATION:**

Name of Business:

Employer Identification Number (EIN):

Size of Business (Small or Medium):

Address:

Main Products/Services:

Application Date:

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION REGARDING THIS RFI:**

Name:

Title:

Telephone:

Email:

Signature:

## X. Attachment C

### COST PROPOSAL AND NARRATIVE

#### TYPE OF CONTRACT SERVICES REQUESTED (Check All Being Requested)

- Consulting Services
- Equipment Purchase
- Hiring Cost Reimbursement
- Training/Learning Program
- Physical Location Improvement
- Barrier Removal

This worksheet is used to establish the all-inclusive budget for the DSEI program at your business.

Cost Proposal:

<u>Program Expense</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Consulting Services	\$ _____
Equipment Purchase and Training	\$ _____
New Hire Cost	\$ _____
Training/Learning Program	\$ _____
Physical Location Improvement	\$ _____
Barrier Removal	\$ _____
Personnel Expense:	\$ _____
Indirect Cost/Administrative Overhead:	\$ _____
<b>All-inclusive Budget Total</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

## Cost Proposal Narrative:

DSEI Providers may be reimbursed for actual expenses directly supporting the Initiative. Use the cost table above to prepare a detailed cost display to establish the all-inclusive total covering initiative expenses.

**Consulting Services:** All costs requested must relate to disability inclusive business practices and objectives.

**Equipment Purchase and Training:** Request for equipment purchase must include specific equipment name and training plan on how employees with disabilities will learn how to use the equipment or how the equipment will support currently employed or future employed individuals with disabilities. Equipment information to provide includes:

Quantity:

Make:

Model:

Price:

Vendor:

**New Hire Cost:** All costs requested must relate to a specific candidate/position being hired. DOR will not reimburse ongoing monthly cost associated with a business' continued talent search budget.

Examples of cost can include advertising, onboarding, training, 1<sup>st</sup> month's wages i.e. (Request for onboarding, wages, and/or training, must include time/hours breakdown per hire.)

**Training/Learning Program:** All costs requested must relate to the creation or expansion of a training/learning program for individuals. Please also include the estimated number of paid and unpaid program participants.

**Physical Location Improvement:** Please attach a complete breakdown of project cost and timeline for completion. Due to the initiative expiration date, June 30, 2024, all proposed improvement projects must have a completion date prior to the initiative expiration.

**Barrier Removal:** This funding expense is for creative and innovative proposals that are not covered under the other activity service types. All requested costs must include a justification that explains how your proposal supports disability inclusive objectives/practices with the estimated and itemized cost breakdown.

**Personnel:** List specific personnel who will be performing the eligible program activities. If more than one staff member will be involved, include names and costs for each separately, and include the total cost on the cost table.

**Example:**

<b><u>Program Activities</u></b>	<b><u>Cost</u></b>
Consulting Services	\$5,000.00
Equipment Purchase and Training	\$20,000.00
New Hire Cost	\$12,000.00
Personnel Cost	\$14,000.00

**All-inclusive reimbursement for program activities** **\$51,000.00**

**Cost Proposal Narrative**

**Consulting Services:** The Example Agency proposes to hire a consultant company for (Example) developing a recruitment campaign to hire disabled individuals to perform (describe the activity here).

**Equipment Purchase and Training:** A new (Product) equipment purchase is anticipated from consultant report. The equipment will cost \$12,000 to purchase two each of make, model of item. \$8,000 is needed for training to use the (Product) equipment.

**New Hire Cost:** Will include recruitment advertising, onboarding, training, and the first month’s wages to hire three disabled employees. Recruitment advertising (Fees) will cost \$2,000, onboarding (Fees) will cost \$1,080, and training (describe the activity here) will cost \$1,000. Each employee will work a 30 hours per week (90 hours per week) for four weeks, earning \$22.00 per hour for the first month wages (\$7,920).

**Personnel Cost:** Will include current staff whose duties will be redirected to initiative activities for eight weeks. Five staff will work 10 hours per week (50 hours per week) earning \$35.00 per hour, totaling \$14,000.

**\*The above cost proposal is an example.** When submitting your proposal, include specific information as opposed to stating Example Agency, Example, describe the activity here, Product, or Fees.

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**Cost Proposal Justification Narrative:**

In one or two paragraphs, describe how receiving this funding benefits the growth of your business.

In one or two paragraphs, describe how receiving this funding supports hiring an employee or employees with disabilities at your business.



## XI. Attachment D

### COMMITMENT GOALS

#### **TYPE OF GOAL COMMITMENT (Check All of Your Commitment Goals)**

- Full or Part-time Ongoing Internship
- Up to or Exceeding 16.6% Workforce Parity Rate

#### **GOAL DETAILS**

Please provide information based on the type of goal you plan to achieve. Instructions for each type of goal commitment are as follows.

Full or Part-time Ongoing Internship:

Please provide the following information:

Are you creating a new or expanding a current internship program?

- If expanding a current internship program, DSEI will send you a supplemental questionnaire to complete.

What is the estimated duration of each internship? i.e., 6 months, 1 year, etc.

Up to or Exceeding 16.6% Workforce Parity Rate:

Please provide the following information:

Current number of staff:

Current Workforce Parity Rate:

Note: Workforce Parity Rate is defined in Section VII on Page 8.

## XII. Attachment E

### PROOF OF BUSINESS STATUS

(Attach a copy of your California business permit in this section.)

### XIII. Attachment F

#### PROOF OF SMALL BUSSINESS CERTIFICATION

(Attach a copy of your Small Business Status in this section, if applicable.)

**Note:** Registration as a small business with DGS is not a requirement to receive funding.