



Request For Proposals

Participatory Research Facilitation, Learning and Evaluation,
Capacity Building and Project Management
Improving Job Quality for Frontline Workforce Providers
Submission Deadline: October 3, 2022

About Rework the Bay

ReWork the Bay envisions an equitable Bay Area where everyone has access to quality, empowered jobs that allow them to benefit from and shape the region's growing economy. We believe it should be possible for everyone to live full lives with security, dignity and agency in our work, home, and communities.

Our mission is to increase the number of people in the Bay Area who have quality, empowered employment. Quality, empowered employment offers the pay and benefits necessary for people to thrive in the Bay Area and have a meaningful say in their work and working conditions.

With this project, Rework the Bay has a unique opportunity to advance these goals for the entire state of California by deepening our partnership with orgs across the state.

Improving Job Quality for Frontline Workforce Providers

This project seeks to advance the workforce development field's understanding of client-facing workforce providers' needs related to job quality and professional development and identify and share practical strategies to better address those needs. As a result, the disproportionately people of color in those roles will feel healthy, supported, and empowered, which in turn can boost job seeker outcomes.

This will be accomplished through a combination of participatory research by client-facing workers, technical assistance/capacity building services to the workforce organizations who employ the worker-researchers, and a learning-focused evaluation that identifies clear learning questions, documents the process, and captures and disseminates key learnings.

ReWork the Bay has selected three California regions for this project: the North San Francisco Bay Area (Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma counties), Fresno County, and Los Angeles County. Three workforce development organizations (public or non-profit) will be selected to participate in this project via a competitive RFP process. Each participating organization will receive a grant and capacity building assistance tailored to meet them where they are at related to job quality.

Three client-facing workers from each organization will be recruited and trained to conduct participatory research at their organizations to better understand client-facing workers' needs and desires related to job quality. The participatory research component will include stipends provided to the workers, as well as an in-person design retreat.

Drawing on the findings of the participatory research, pilot project ideas may be developed in partnership with the participating organizations and workers. The findings of the project will also be shared via a publicly disseminated report and one or more briefing events aimed at workforce organizations and funders.

Context

Client-facing staff in workforce development organizations (including nonprofits, American Job Centers, and community colleges) have difficult jobs. They are often interacting with job seekers at a moment when multiple systems have failed them and are asked to assist those job seekers in overcoming challenges across both personal and professional life. Client-facing staff require creativity and resilience to do their important work, and this work takes its toll.

Compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma are common among workforce providers, yet due to sector norms and funding constraints, workforce organizations often lack the resources to ensure client-facing workers have the support they need to maintain their mental and physical health. This not only impacts the wellbeing of the staff--it can prevent them from achieving their full potential in assisting job seekers in attaining economic mobility.

Viewed through a racial justice lens, this systemic problem takes on even greater urgency. People of color in general, and Black workers specifically, are disproportionately represented in client-facing roles at workforce organizations. In addition, hiring people with lived experience is a common strategy for improving cultural responsiveness of services, which means these frontline workers frequently bring experience with incarceration, addiction, forced migration, mental health challenges, and other traumatic life events.

These factors increase the likelihood that the stressors of providing direct services may contribute to health challenges for these workers. In addition, immigration status, a criminal record, and hiring discrimination may prevent those same workers from feeling empowered to seek support from their current employer in the form of improved working conditions, pay or benefits, or even leaving their current organization in search of one offering improved job quality.

This dynamic creates a paradox in the workforce system: people employed to assist others in attaining economic mobility are themselves typically unable to access that same economic mobility in their line of work.

Goals and Objectives

If successful, this project will:

- Promote job quality for client-facing staff of workforce development nonprofit organizations and public agencies.
- Create better outcomes for job seekers because those serving them are healthy, supported, and empowered.

This will be accomplished by:

- Engaging workers, job quality practitioners and other stakeholders to re-imagine what job quality looks like for their organizational roles and developing pilot program ideas that meet client-facing staff desires.
- Participatory Research
- Translating lessons learned from pilots into next steps for broader, systems-level policy and/or practice change.

Timeline

RFP released: 8/29/2022

Responses due: 10/3/2022

Partners selected: 10/19/2022

Project start date: 11/15/2022

Project end date: 06/15/2025

Opportunity

ReWork the Bay is seeking consultants to play one or more of the following roles for this project. It is ReWork's preference to have a single firm, or a partnership of consultants apply to take on all pieces of the scope listed above. However, **we will accept proposals from applicants who can fill one or more of the roles:**

1) Learning and evaluation:

- Collaborate with ReWork the Bay to determine key learning questions
- Document project
- Conduct qualitative research, identify, and disseminate (in partnership with ReWork) key learnings
- Advise on possible pilots to test job quality improvement strategies at participating organizations
- Provide regular status updates on evaluation progress to ReWork staff.
- Produce a public-facing report of no more than 10 pages plus appendices presenting key learnings from the project.
- Participate in a public briefing to speak about project findings.

2) Participatory research facilitation:

- Design and implement a two-day collaborative design retreat for approximately 20 frontline workforce development staff from across California that results in: 1) clear recommendations for job quality improvement strategies to pilot; and 2) professional development opportunities for participants including learning about different aspects of job quality and approaches to job quality improvement and peer networking/relationship building.
- Capture, record, and synthesize job quality recommendations generated by worker researchers.
- Produce short brief summarizing the design process, lessons learned, unintended consequences and recommendations.

3) Capacity building assistance:

- Assess the current state of participating organizations related to job quality for their client-facing workers.
- Partner with participating organizations to identify areas where capacity building would help advance their goals
- Capture, record, and synthesize the results of engaging participating organizations
- Produce short brief summarizing the process, lessons learned, unintended consequences and recommendations.
- Provide direct capacity building assistance and/or retain outside capacity building providers if necessary

4) Project management:

- Collaborate with Rework staff to flesh out objectives, operating procedures, tasks, decision-making and review process, and timelines for Phase I (project design and re-imagining retreat and phase II (pilot implementation)
- An evolving suite of tools for the selected orgs/cohorts meeting management
- Determine what, if any, supports are needed for full participation of any organizational staff member selected to participate in this project
- Design methods and tools for continuous communications and online participation of participating org staff
- Provide an orientation to participating orgs and establish operating procedures to ensure successful completion of the project
- Convene and facilitate project coordination meetings with other project partners
- Track project progress, proactively provide regular status updates to ReWork staff.

Ideal attributes/experiences

- Demonstrated ability to build and maintain authentic and effective working relationships with people and organizations in diverse communities state-wide

including, but not limited to, grantee partners, nonprofit leaders, youth, and funders. (skill/experience)

- Impeccable integrity, honesty, and ethical standards; a strong sense of pragmatism and professionalism (attribute)
- Existing relationships in the North San Francisco Bay, Fresno County and LA County is preferred but not required (skill/experience)
- Demonstrated experience of effective collaboration, previous experience leading strategy development (skill/experience)
- Good listening skills, and a consultative approach to decision making and problem solving (attribute)
- Awareness of intersectionality with an ability to think across issues and sectors (attribute)
- ReWork the Bay encourages consultants and firms led by people of color, women, and gender non-conforming people to apply.

How to Apply: Submit Application to brogers@sff.org **11:59pm PT, October 3, 2022.**

Application should include

1. Cover letter outlining your qualifications and your approach to working with nonprofits and/or foundation leaders, and the roles you are applying for (project management, learning and evaluation, participatory research facilitation, and/or capacity building assistance).
2. A three-page proposal for how you will tackle this 'field to funder' project/who would be on your team, including your approach to working with Rework Staff, ReWork's advisory board of field leaders, foundation partners, and rework staff. Please include your proposed fee. Decisions will not be based solely on cost of proposal submission.
3. Writing sample (4-10 pages or excerpt) which can a summative report for a project you have spearheaded, publication you have authored.
4. Three references from organizations where you have held similar role(s), and the title of the project you took lead on. We will notify you prior to contacting your references.
5. Please draft a budget. Please note that the total ballpark budget for all roles is 650k with room for flexibility.

For any questions, please contact Brianna Rogers brogers@sff.org.