

Atlanta CareerRise

Request For Proposals – Round 7

Release Date: February 20th, 2020

Important Dates:

Full Proposal Due Date
April 30 th by 5:00pm
Submit via Google Forms (pdf copy below)

Executive Summary

Project Overview and Goals

Atlanta CareerRise is seeking proposals to establish, scale or strengthen the impact of promising industry partnerships in industry sectors that bring together employers, training providers, service providers, and other key stakeholders.

These partnerships are intended to help pilot or scale promising efforts to move un- and underemployed individuals toward sustainable wage careers in vibrant and growing local sectors to promote economic mobility while meeting employers' needs for skilled talent. Partnerships should incorporate systems change and racial equity goals and offer effective approaches to enable low-skilled incumbent workers and/or job seekers to enter and advance in career pathways leading to family-sustaining wages, and for employers to strengthen and/or advance their existing front-line workforce and cultivate a robust pipeline of entry-level workers.

Award Amount and Eligibility

Atlanta CareerRise is allocating a funding pool of approximately \$400,000 total (dependent on funding availability) for its FY2021 investments for industry partnerships. Atlanta CareerRise will provide funding for a range of activities and work supports that lead to career ladder/lattice advancement, as measured by short term outcomes, that directly benefit both the employee and employer. It is intended that the CareerRise funds will fill gaps or otherwise augment other public or private funds co-invested for implementation, scaling or replication of the efforts.

Individual proposals are expected to not exceed \$75,000 in requested funds for a one-year project, but proposals requesting less or more may be considered depending on the scope, scale, leverage and partners in the project. Awards will be made for one-year term periods aligning with CareerRise's fiscal year. The funding contract period will begin July 1, 2020 and end June 30, 2021.

For-profit and nonprofit organizations, employers and 501(c)(3) organizations with sector knowledge and management capacity may lead an industry partnership and apply for this funding. The partnership must be located in or primarily serving individuals in one or more of the following Greater Atlanta counties: Butts, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale.

II. Overview

A. Background

[Atlanta CareerRise](#) (ACR) is a workforce funders collaborative that increases regional prosperity by creating and strengthening partnerships and systems that meet employer needs for skilled talent and connect metro Atlanta residents to sustainable wage careers.

Launched in 2011, ACR is supported by a collaborative of local community-focused investors. The United Way of Greater Atlanta is the founder, managing partner and fiscal agent. In addition to the local funders, Atlanta CareerRise is affiliated with the [National Fund for Workforce Solutions](#) (NFWS), a national nonprofit advocating for regional collaboratives and employer-led partnerships. Atlanta CareerRise is one of 33 regional collaboratives across the country utilizing the NFWS strategy.

The Collaborative follows the model developed by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions to create industry partnerships, build system capacity, and foster public policy advocacy. The resulting robust and long-lived relationships among employers, workers, and education and training/service providers enhance a cohesive pipeline to front-line jobs and career ladders.

B. Investment Strategy

Over the past seven years, CareerRise has successfully implemented employer-driven sectoral approaches as a core component of local workforce development efforts. The industry partnership or sectoral strategy is defined in Figure 1.

Workforce programs are part of a larger set of actors that influence a region's labor market, and the resulting workforce outcomes are greatly influenced by how these other actors operate. Thus, we define a "sector strategy" as a systems approach to workforce development — typically on behalf of low-income individuals — that:

- ▶ **Targets a specific industry or cluster of occupations**, developing a deep understanding of the interrelationships between business competitiveness and the workforce needs of the targeted industry;
- ▶ **Intervenes through a credible organization, or set of organizations**, crafting workforce solutions tailored to that industry and its region;
- ▶ **Supports workers in improving their range of employment-related skills**, improving their ability to compete for work opportunities of higher quality;
- ▶ **Meets the needs of employers**, improving their ability to compete within the marketplace; and
- ▶ **Creates lasting change in the labor market system to the benefit of both workers and employers.**

Figure 1. The Sectoral Strategy

(Adapted from '[Sectoral Strategies for Low-Income Workers: Lessons from the Field](#)' by M. Conway, A. Blair, S. Dawson and L. Dworak-Muñoz, 2007, p.2.)

CareerRise investments are made for new and innovative workforce projects and have the flexibility to address specific funding gaps that are ineligible for public workforce development funding streams.

CareerRise is committed to continuing its support of sectoral strategies and leveraging them to improve economic mobility in the metro Atlanta region while simultaneously developing a regional workforce development strategy.

III. Project Guidelines

A. Guidelines and Requirements

All proposals will have the same requirements irrespective of the industry sector of its partnership:

- **Partnership Lead.** The lead organization should be clearly identified and the applicant for CareerRise funding. The lead organization must have management capacity to lead an industry partnership, complete reporting activities and have sector knowledge that demonstrates the need for their partnership from both the employer's and worker's perspective.
- **MAIP.** [Metro Atlanta Industry Partnerships](#) (MAIP), a collaboration of Atlanta CareerRise and the five metro Atlanta workforce development boards, is focused on understanding regional workforce needs and collaborating with partners to develop solutions that fulfill the needs of both employers and workers. The applicant should be a partner in MAIP ([Join here](#)) and identify how their work will contribute to at least one service line listed within the [MAIP Roadmap](#). For additional information about MAIP, please visit their website <http://www.atlantacareerrise.org/ipartnerships.asp>, or contact Helen Slaven, hslaven@unitedwayatlanta.org.
- **Systems Change.** Job training and employment programs are vital solutions to fulfill workforce needs. In addition to these programs, long term sustainable solutions will be needed to shift the structures and obstacles that low-income workers face. Systems will begin to shift after a series of small changes occur. Adrienne Maree Brown, the author of Emergent Strategy, compares this to how small tremors lead to earthquakes. CareerRise expects that each applicant will be able to describe the small change or tremor that they plan to cause that may ultimately lead to larger systemic change.
 - **Racial Equity and Economic Mobility.** CareerRise supports solutions that contribute to increasing economic mobility and reducing racial inequities. A recent study by Raj Chetty demonstrated that children in Atlanta have a 4.5% chance of moving from the bottom quartile to the top. In order to improve this outcome, workforce strategies should intentionally incorporate racial equity goals that can serve as small changes to practices and norms that may lead to shifts of systems. Each applicant should identify at least one racial equity goal that is embedded into their project. See the Resources section below for examples of [REI strategies](#) in workforce development.
- **Employer Engagement.** Documented involvement of employers in the project and a description of their role in defining the project need, support, and their commitment. See Figure 2 below as examples of how employers are expected to engage in the work. An employer association can count as one of the required employer partners. Please note that general advisory roles are generally not considered sufficient involvement.

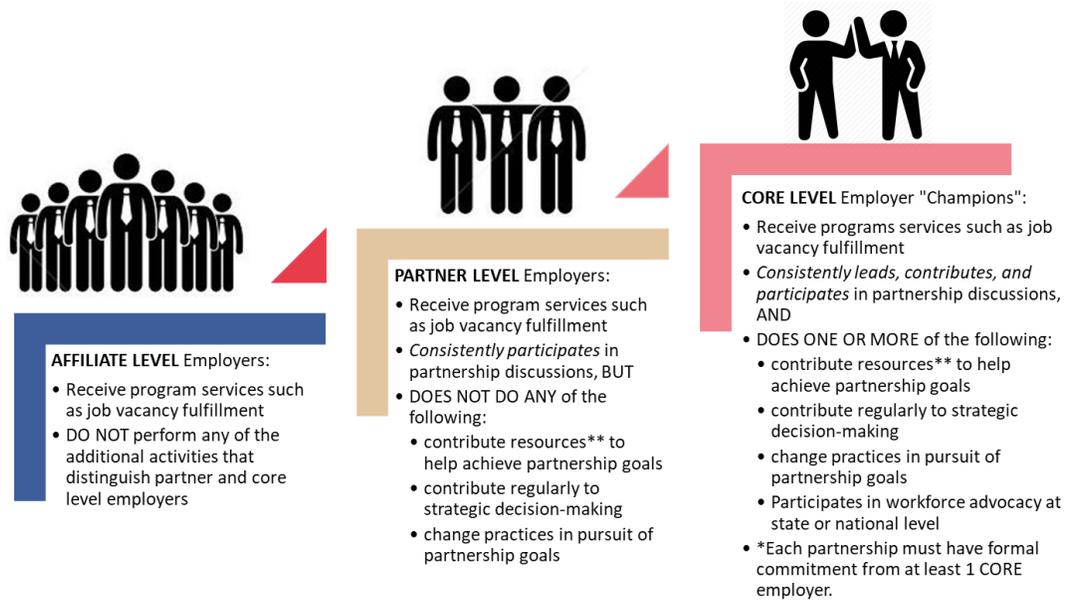


Figure 2. Levels of Employer Engagement

- **Geography.** The partnership must be located in or primarily serving individuals in one or more of the following Greater Atlanta counties: Butts, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale.
- **Industry Sector.** The partnership should have a focus on at least one industry sector and should provide data and information demonstrating the industry’s stability and growth trends.
- **Co-investment.** Although there is not a match requirement, the project should leverage additional funding or co-investment that is commensurate with the maturity of the project.

B. Outcomes

The intent of this support is to provide short term interventions which result in measurable outcomes that directly benefit both the employee and employer and contribute to meaningful change in existing workforce practices. Outcomes that are achieved within the program can be both qualitative and quantitative in nature.

The proposed activities should clearly lead to outcomes for participants in low-wage jobs. Examples include:



Common sectoral program outcomes should be documented as measured by new credentials, increased wages or benefits, advancement within the employer’s career ladders, or hiring into a new position. These outcomes ideally should accrue to the individual within 12 months or less of program completion.

In addition to the sectoral program outcomes, expected outcomes based on the systems change and or racial equity goal(s) should be clearly documented.

C. Award Amount and Eligibility

Atlanta CareerRise is allocating a funding pool of approximately \$400,000 (depending on funding availability) to its FY2021 investments for industry partnerships. Atlanta CareerRise will provide funding for a range of activities and work supports that lead to career ladder/lattice advancement, as measured by short term outcomes, that directly benefit both the employee and employer. It is intended that the CareerRise funds will fill gaps or otherwise augment other public or private funds co-invested for implementation, scaling or replication of the efforts.

Individual proposals are expected to not exceed \$75,000 in requested funds for an approximately one-year project, but proposals requesting less or more may be considered depending on the scope, scale, leverage and partners in the project. Awards will be made for one-year term periods aligning with CareerRise’s fiscal year. The funding contract period will begin July 1, 2020 and end June 30, 2021.

Many kinds of organizations may lead an industry partnership and apply for this funding. These include but are not limited to:

- Employers (both for- and non-profit)
- Institutions of higher education
- Technical or community colleges
- Industry associations
- Local workforce development agencies
- Community-based organizations
- Other 501(c)(3) nonprofits, given that they have extensive sector knowledge and management capacity

Every applicant must designate a partner responsible for coordinating all aspects of the workforce partnership, collecting outcome data, reporting, and fiscal management.

D. Data Collection and Evaluation

Atlanta CareerRise will provide templates for data collection on demographics and outcome measures through use of an online software tool with training and support on its use provided by Atlanta CareerRise. Awardees are responsible for the collection and entering of participant-level demographic and outcome data into the software tool at participant enrollment, training completion, six months and 12 months after completion. This (staffing and budget) should reflect adequate time for a staff member to track, enter and report the necessary data.

Quarterly, the awardees will report the following to Atlanta CareerRise by 15 days after the quarter ends:

- Brief progress highlights for the quarter;
- Participants served, training enrollment, placement and credential attainment for the quarter and cumulative totals;
- New funding investments secured; and
- A client anecdotal success story and cohort media.

E. Learning and Capacity Building Activities

CareerRise will bring together awardee teams periodically for peer learning and capacity building opportunities. Awardees are expected to seek capacity building opportunities and participate in these exchanges. These exchanges will be guided largely by the participants in CareerRise funded programs and Atlanta Industry Partnerships. These exchanges will provide peer support and may bring in outside expertise to share best practices.

IV. Application Process and Format and Content

Applicants will submit proposals via [Google Forms](#). The 24-question application is divided into four sections:

I. General Organization Questions

- a. Application Questions 1-9: General contact information is requested for the lead organization and partners within the industry partnership including contact names, emails, titles, organization websites and phone numbers. Specifically identify the champions at the employer partners and their level of engagement. Compliance with Atlanta CareerRise data collection requirements and learning and capacity building activities are also confirmed (See II. Project Guidelines sections D and E for more information).

II. Program Plan and Outcomes

- a. Application Questions 10-13: General program information such as program name, type of worker served, metro Atlanta counties served, industry sector(s) addressed and occupations that participants are being trained for are listed.
- b. Application Question 14: Description of Occupations or Jobs
 - i. Describe the jobs or occupations that are targeted and include a career pathway chart showing targeted occupations with average wages and advanced occupations in the pathway with average wages and credential/education requirements. (For examples and tools illustrating career pathways, see [Adult Career Pathways Toolkit](#) reference.)
 - ii. List the credentials or certifications that graduates will receive
- c. Application Question 15: Problem Being Addressed
 - i. Clearly describe the specific employer needs, and ‘pain’ experienced by the employer, and how you came to determine this problem. This should clearly establish the demand for the occupations and skills that drive the formation of the industry partnership.
 - ii. Specifically describe the barriers that exist for hiring or advancement of low-skill individuals into these positions. Why are traditional training/hiring/education programs not meeting the needs of both employers and low-skill individuals?
 - iii. Articulate systems change goals for the project – in addition to positive employment outcomes and wage gains for individuals, what changes and improvements in the way employers, educators, or workforce providers perform their work are expected that will better serve lower skilled jobseekers or incumbent employees?
- d. Application Question 16: Description of Partnership and Activities to Date
 - i. Describe the nature and formation of the industry partnership, including the role and commitment of each of the partners listed in questions 5 and 6. Describe your involvement in MAIP and how your work will contribute to at least one MAIP service line. Identify the fiscal agent (if different from the lead partner). Specifically identify champion employers’ involvement in developing this proposal.
 - ii. Describe how the partnership functions or will function together to achieve its goals, including meetings and decision-making. How will multiple partners serving clients harmonize their processes?
 - iii. Describe any results, outcomes or other achievements to date, including outcomes achieved to date by the partnership, including training and employment outcomes, increased capacity, or changes in the system or practices among partners. What are the key lessons for success or failure learned from any pilot work?

- e. Application Question 17: Project Plan
 - i. List the project goals. Describe what strategies you will take to achieve these goals, and how these strategies will help you expand, scale or replicate your successes. Under each strategy, describe specific activities, key milestones and tasks for the first year, and who is responsible for implementation. (If this is more effectively demonstrated in a table or figure please attach it and list the applicable application question number)
 - ii. Describe your targeted population and your recruitment strategy for eligible participants, and proposed eligibility criteria, including income, methods of assessing eligibility and selection.
 - iii. Describe plans for supporting participants through the training period and into the first 6 months of employment. CareerRise strongly suggests consideration of an employment emergency fund to assist clients in early employment to improve retention.
 - iv. Describe what steps you will take to achieve systems change and racial equity goals in this project.
- f. Application Question 18: Placement Strategy
 - i. Describe plans and strategies to connect program completers to employment. Describe employer commitments to hiring/advancing program completers or strategies to deepen engagement with current employers or to expand to new employers.
- g. Application Question 19: Projected Participant and Project Outcomes
 - i. Describe your outcome goals for job seekers and/or incumbent employees. Include numeric goals such as total # of cohorts delivered, total number of participants served, enrolled, completed (%) and placed (%), average wages and list the industry-recognized credentials earned.
 - ii. Describe other specific and measurable objectives for the partnership such as increased capacity, systems change and racial equity outcomes and practices. How will improved practices be disseminated, adopted, and/or sustained on a broader scale?

(continue to next page)

III. Budget and Budget Justification

a. Budget Form (Completed form must be uploaded as an attachment to the application)

Budget Category	Atlanta CareerRise Funds	Co-Investment	Total Cost
<i>PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT:</i>			
Staff Salaries			
Staff Fringe			
Travel (only if required for project)			
Other (Please list)			
<i>Sub-Total Partnership Management</i>			
<i>RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING:</i>			
Training and Coaching Staff Salaries			
Training and Coaching Staff Fringe			
Travel (only if required for training services)			
Participant Assessment Costs			
Participant Supplies and Training Materials (List individual items)			
Participant Support Services (list)			
Certifications and Licenses			
Contractual (outsourced)			
Other (Please list):			
<i>Sub-Total Recruitment and Training</i>			
<i>OTHER ITEMS:</i>			
<i>Sub-Total Other Costs</i>			
<i>TOTAL BUDGET</i>			

- b. Application Question 20: Total Amount of CareerRise Funds Requested
- c. Application Question 21: Budget Narrative and Justification: Briefly describe the rationale behind the projected expenses utilizing CareerRise funds.
- d. Application Question 22: (If Applicable) Total Amount of Co-investment Funds
- e. Application Question 23: (If Applicable) Co-investment Commitments: Co-investment can be direct support and donated and in-kind support contributed by partners to the proposed program including contributions by employers. These funds must directly support the proposed activities – e.g. wages of participants paid by employer during training; classroom or training space; salary support for coaches, etc. Employers are expected to share in the costs of incumbent worker services and training.

IV. Attachments

- a. All attachments should be combined into one uploaded file. (Career Pathway Chart, Program Budget, Signed Commitment letter from the Executive Director of the Lead Organization, Support letters from partners and (If Applicable) Project plan table/figure and additional program materials.
- b. Application Question 24: (Optional) Any additional information to briefly share?

V. Review Process and Timeline

A. Review Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using the following scoring rubric:

Section	MAXIMUM POINTS
Analysis of Problem to be Addressed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear description of the problem to be addressed and evidence of employer verification • Career pathway documentation • Analysis of barriers and unmet needs 	20
Partnership and Activities to Date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate breadth, roles and commitments of partners • Partnership management and harmonization plan • Demonstrated commitment to MAIP portfolio of work 	10
Viable Systems Change and Racial Equity Goals for the Project	15
Project Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear goals, strategies and action with appropriate timetable and accountabilities • Project contains innovative programming that is scalable • Appropriate recruitment and assessment plan • Clear work supports, coaching and retention engagement 	25
Projected Outcomes, Placement Strategy and Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate quantitative goals for participants • Specific and measurable objectives for the partnership 	10
Budget, Leverage and Budget Justification	10
Documentation and Extent of Employer and Partner Commitments	10
TOTAL	100 POINTS

B. Review Process

- a. Proposals will be reviewed by the RFP review committee comprised of Atlanta CareerRise Leadership Council members, staff and local workforce experts. An additional meeting or presentation to clarify any outstanding questions may be requested of applicants. Decisions will be made by Leadership Council members.

C. 2020 Application Timeline

- a. March 5th: Informational Webinar at 1:30pm. ([Register Here](#))
- b. April 30th: Proposals due via [Google Forms](#).
 - i. Note: **You will need a Gmail email account to apply.** Google accounts are free and can be created in a few minutes.
 - ii. [Click here](#) to view a pdf copy of the Google Forms Application.
- c. April-May: Review process and final decisions by the CareerRise Leadership Council.
- d. June: Final decisions announced, and Investment contracts are finalized.

VI. Resources for Applicants

<p>Key Organizations and Initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metro Atlanta Industry Partnerships (website) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MAIP Executive Summary ○ MAIP Roadmap ○ Become a MAIP partner • National Fund for Workforce Solutions (website)
<p>Industry Sector Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Partnership Guidance Tool • Sectoral Strategies for Low-Income Workers • Characteristics of High Performing Industry Partnerships • Adult Career Pathways
<p>Systems Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Fund defines systems change as changes in organizational policies, procedures, practices, and culture within or across organizations in a system that improve services or activities aimed at benefitting specific stakeholders, markets, or populations. • Systems Change in the National Fund for Workforce Solutions • Video clip on how small changes lead to large shifts by Adrienne Maree Brown
<p>Racial Equity in Workforce Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Mobility Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interactive Economic Mobility Data. NYTimes. ○ Economic Mobility by Raj Chetty ○ Press: Atlanta is #1 for Income Inequality ○ Changing the Odds 2.0 by Annie E. Casey Foundation Atlanta Civic Site • REI strategies in workforce development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beyond Training and the “Skills Gap” – Race Forward ○ Race-explicit Strategies for Workforce Equity in Healthcare and IT – Race Forward ○ Racial Equity Readiness Assessment for Workforce Development – Race Forward ○ The Roadmap for Racial Equity: An Imperative for workforce development advocates – National Skills Coalition
<p>Employer Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer Engagement in the National Fund for Workforce Solutions
<p>Atlanta CareerRise Contacts for Additional Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlanta CareerRise (website) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2019-2020 CareerRise Investments Overview ○ Informational Conference presentation and FAQs will be posted on the website in March 2020. • Exec. Director: John Helton jhelton@unitedwayatlanta.org • Investments: Natania Carter ncarter@unitedwayatlanta.org 404-527-3501 • MAIP: Helen Slaven hslaven@unitedwayatlanta.org