
I. Background and Purpose

EmployIndy is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to select qualified community-based organizations to serve as YES Indy providers for the 2026–2027 program year. YES Indy (Youth Employment System Indianapolis) is EmployIndy’s comprehensive workforce development system for Opportunity Youth—young adults ages 16–24 who are disconnected from school and/or employment.

This RFP is grounded in the program model, priorities, and performance expectations outlined in EmployIndy’s 2026–2027 YES Indy proposal to Lilly Endowment, Inc. Through this competitive process, EmployIndy seeks to strengthen a coordinated provider network that delivers high-quality, equitable, and outcomes-driven services to Opportunity Youth in Marion County.

EmployIndy anticipates awarding multiple contracts under this RFP using a tiered funding structure, with awards from \$65,000 to \$120,000 per provider, based on scope, capacity, performance history, and alignment with YES Indy priorities.

II. YES Indy Program Overview and Provider Responsibilities

YES Indy operates as a unified, countywide system with a “no wrong door” approach. Participants may enter services through any provider location and receive a consistent standard of care across the network. All providers are expected to align with YES Indy’s program model, performance expectations, data systems, and contractual responsibilities described throughout this RFP.

Selected providers are responsible for delivering comprehensive, participant-centered services that support Opportunity Youth from re-engagement through long-term employment retention. Rather than operating under separate scopes of work, providers must demonstrate how their proposed approach integrates the full YES Indy service continuum into a cohesive service delivery strategy.

At a minimum, providers must demonstrate the ability to deliver or coordinate services that encompass:

- Re-engagement and recruitment of Opportunity Youth
- Job readiness and employability skill development
- Education, training, and credential attainment aligned with in-demand careers
- Paid and unpaid work experience and career-connected learning
- Job placement, follow-up, and advancement support
- Ongoing wraparound and barrier-removal supports

These responsibilities are not intended to function as standalone service silos, but as an integrated pathway tailored to participant needs and aligned with Individual Service Strategies (ISS).

Request for Proposals (RFP) 2026-001

YES Indy Service Provision

Release Date: March 3, 2026

Proposal Due Date: March 31, 2026



III. Funding Structure

EmployIndy will award contracts using a tiered funding approach. The funding tier criteria can be found at the following [link](#). Applicants should indicate the tier requested and justify alignment to the requested level in the budget section.

- Maximum award: \$120,000 per provider
- Award levels will be determined based on:
 - Proposed service scope and intensity
 - Target population and geography
 - Organizational capacity and past performance
 - Alignment with YES Indy enhancement priorities

Funds may be used for staffing, participant supports, training costs, work experiences, participant incentives for placement, and other allowable direct service expenses. Administrative costs must be reasonable and clearly justified.

IV. Contract Term

The contract period for this RFP will be:

July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

Continuation or renewal beyond this term is contingent upon funding availability, performance outcomes, and compliance.

V. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include:

- Nonprofit, community-based organizations
- Organizations with demonstrated experience serving Opportunity Youth
- Providers located in or serving high-need Marion County ZIP codes
- Organizations capable of meeting WIOA-aligned youth service requirements

Applicants must demonstrate cultural competency, trauma-informed practice, and a commitment to equity-centered service delivery.

VI. Scope of Services and Expectations

Selected providers will be required to:

- Serve Opportunity Youth ages 16–24 with documented barriers
- Operate within a clearly defined career pathway (e.g., healthcare, construction, IT, logistics)

Request for Proposals (RFP) 2026-001

YES Indy Service Provision

Release Date: March 3, 2026

Proposal Due Date: March 31, 2026



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- Provide job readiness to ALL participants in accordance with the [EmployIndy Job Readiness Framework](#)
 - Co-enroll ALL participants in Project Indy
 - Deliver or coordinate access to all [14 WIOA Youth Service Elements](#)
 - Provide [Talent Bound](#) career connected learning activities.
 - Employ or assign dedicated staff (e.g., Career Navigators)
 - Develop Individual Service Strategies (ISS) for all participants
 - Participate in monthly YES Indy Community of Practice meetings
 - Collaborate with EmployIndy staff, employer partners, and other providers

Integrated Program Priorities and Expectations for 2026–2027

For the 2026–2027 program year, EmployIndy expects all YES Indy providers to incorporate the following priorities as integrated components of their overall service delivery model, rather than as separate or standalone initiatives. Proposals should demonstrate how these priorities are embedded throughout recruitment, coaching, training, employment, and follow-up activities.

Providers should clearly articulate how their approach:

- Aligns education, training, and credentials with in-demand career pathways that lead to livable wages
- Embeds work-based learning and employer engagement into training and career preparation activities
- Supports job placement, retention, wage progression, and advancement over time
- Leverages strong employer and education partnerships to create clear pathways from training to employment
- Provides comprehensive wraparound and barrier-removal supports that promote persistence and stability
- Uses data, performance metrics, and continuous improvement practices to strengthen outcomes

These priorities reflect YES Indy’s commitment to quality, equity, and long-term impact for Opportunity Youth and should be evident throughout the proposed program design, staffing approach, partnerships, and performance strategy.

VII. Performance and Data Requirements

All providers must:

- Use EmployIndy’s Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) data system
- Track enrollment, services, outcomes, and follow-up
- Meet established performance benchmarks related to:
 - Job Readiness completion
 - Engagement and retention
 - Training completion

Request for Proposals (RFP) 2026-001

YES Indy Service Provision

Release Date: March 3, 2026

Proposal Due Date: March 31, 2026



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- Job placement (with priority on \$18+/hour jobs)
 - 30-, 60-, 90-, 180-, and 365-day retention

Performance-based contracting elements may be incorporated.

VIII. Proposal Requirements

To support a fair, consistent, and high-quality review process, respondents must structure proposals using the sections below. Each section includes a brief description of what EmployIndy is seeking. [Using the provided fillable template](#), respondents should provide sufficient detail to demonstrate alignment with the YES Indy model and expectations without exceeding what is necessary.

1. Proposal Cover Sheet

2. Organizational Overview & Capacity

Describe your organization's mission, experience, staffing capacity, and administrative readiness to effectively serve Opportunity Youth and manage YES Indy funds and reporting requirements.

3. Program Design & Integrated Service Delivery

Describe how your organization delivers YES Indy services as an integrated participant journey from engagement through follow-up, including the role of Career Navigators and use of Individual Service Strategies. Include your target population and geographic focus within Marion County (e.g., ZIP codes/neighborhoods served) and your outreach/recruitment approach.

4. Employer Engagement, Training, & Career Pathways

Describe how participants are connected to education, training, work-based learning, and employment opportunities aligned with in-demand careers and long-term advancement.

5. Participant Support, Retention, & Barrier Removal

Describe how your program supports participant persistence, addresses barriers, and promotes retention and advancement before and after job placement.

6. Equity, Trauma-Informed, & Culturally Responsive Practice

Describe how equity, trauma-informed care, and cultural responsiveness are embedded into your organization's operations and service delivery approach.

7. Performance Measurement, Data, & Continuous Improvement

Describe how your organization tracks performance, ensures data quality, and uses data to monitor outcomes and support continuous improvement.

8. Budget & Funding Tier Request

Provide a budget and narrative that aligns proposed costs with the service model and funding tier requested, demonstrating fiscal responsibility and cost effectiveness.

9. WIOA 14 Service Elements Plan

Using the required WIOA Service Elements Delivery Plan template, respondents must describe how all fourteen (14) WIOA Youth Service Elements will be delivered to participants as part of an integrated service strategy.

10. Projected Performance Outcomes

Using the required Projected Performance Outcomes template, respondents must provide proposed numeric performance targets for the contract term.

11. Attachments

Attachments (as applicable): organizational chart; most recent audit and letters of commitment/MOUs for key partners.

IX. Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be evaluated for responsiveness, completeness, and alignment with YES Indy priorities. EmployIndy reserves the right to request presentations from top-ranked applicants and to adjust scores based on clarifying information provided during interviews or presentations.

Proposals will be scored on a 100-point scale using the rubric below, adapted from the prior YES Indy RFP to reflect updated program goals and funding structure.

Scoring Rubric

Evaluation Category	Description	Maximum Points
Organizational Qualifications & Capacity	Experience serving Opportunity Youth; staff qualifications; fiscal, administrative, and data management capacity; past performance with EmployIndy or similar funders	15
Program Design & Integrated Service Delivery	Clear, integrated service model from outreach through follow-up; defined target population and geography; alignment	15

Request for Proposals (RFP) 2026-001**YES Indy Service Provision**

Release Date: March 3, 2026

Proposal Due Date: March 31, 2026



Evaluation Category	Description	Maximum Points
	with YES Indy framework.	
Employer Engagement, Training & Career Pathways	Strong employer partnerships; alignment with in-demand careers; integration of training, work-based learning, and advancement.	10
Participant Support, Retention & Barrier Removal	Effective wraparound supports; barrier removal strategies; retention and advancement planning.	10
Equity, Trauma-Informed & Culturally Responsive Practice	Demonstrated equity commitment; trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices embedded in service delivery.	10
Performance Measurement, Data & Continuous Improvement	Data tracking capacity; performance monitoring; use of data for improvement; ETO readiness.	10
WIOA 14 Service Elements Plan	Clear plan to deliver or coordinate all 14 WIOA Youth Service Elements.	10
Projected Performance Outcomes	Realistic, aligned performance targets; strong connection to staffing and budget.	10
Budget & Funding Tier Request	Reasonable, justified costs aligned to proposed services and funding tier.	5
XBE Status / Leadership Representation	Certified XBE status and/or diverse leadership or board representation	5
Total Possible Points		100

Request for Proposals (RFP) 2026-001

YES Indy Service Provision

Release Date: March 3, 2026

Proposal Due Date: March 31, 2026



X. Timeline

Beginning Tuesday, March 3, 2026, the RFP will be available to download from the EmployIndy website: www.employindy.org. If you are unable to access or download the RFP, please contact Danielle Pamer at dpamer@employindy.org.

Key dates specific to this notification are scheduled as follows:

RFP Issued	Tuesday, March 3, 2026
Required Information Session	Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 10:00a.m.
Deadline to Submit Questions	Friday, March 13, 2026, 5:00p.m.
Response to Questions Posted	Tuesday, March 17, 2026
Proposal Due	Tuesday, March 31, 2026, 11:59p.m.
Bidders Presentations (if needed)	Monday, April 20 & Tuesday, April 21, 2026
Notice of Award (Pending Board Approval) *	Week of May 1, 2026
Effective Date of Contract	July 1, 2026

* Contracts will not be executed until board approval is granted.

EmployIndy reserves the right to modify this schedule at any time as deemed necessary.

A **required information session** will be held on Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at 10:00 am by Zoom meeting. EmployIndy Youth Services staff will present the RFP requirements and accept questions during the bidder's conference to offer technical assistance to respondents. The Zoom information is below, and the PowerPoint presentation will be posted on the EmployIndy website with this RFP after the meeting.

Zoom Link:

<https://employindy-org.zoom.us/j/8810835437?pwd=MxATrjMVLiMEH7fXdGOOn3gzvxy5SQA.1&omn=86044897839>

Meeting ID: 881 083 5437

Passcode: yx2W0U

XI. Submission Instructions

Respondents are responsible for ensuring that proposals are submitted in full compliance with the submission requirements and deadlines outlined in this section.

Respondents must submit proposals using the fillable PDF templates provided by EmployIndy. Templates will include a cover sheet, the proposal narrative response form, and required attachments, including the budget template and narrative, and projected performance outcomes. Proposals submitted in any other format may be deemed non-responsive.

Required Submission Components

A complete proposal submission must include the following components using the required template provided [here](#):

Request for Proposals (RFP) 2026-001

YES Indy Service Provision

Release Date: March 3, 2026

Proposal Due Date: March 31, 2026



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- Cover Sheet
 - Proposal Narrative Response
 - Budget Template and Budget Narrative
 - WIOA Service Elements Delivery Plan
 - Projected Performance Outcomes
 - Required Attachments (no template)
 - Org Chart
 - Audit
 - Letters of Commitment/MOUs

Submission Method

All questions and proposal submissions must be submitted through EmployIndy's Contract Opportunities webpage:

<https://employindy.org/contract-opportunities>

Submissions sent by email, mail, or any other method will not be accepted.

Respondents must ensure all required templates and attachments are uploaded successfully prior to the submission deadline.

Submission Deadline

Proposals must be submitted no later than Tuesday, March 31, 2026, by 11:59p.m. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Responsibility for Submission

It is the sole responsibility of the respondent to ensure that all required materials are submitted accurately, completely, and on time. EmployIndy is not responsible for technical difficulties, incomplete uploads, or failure to use the required templates.

Questions Regarding the RFP

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted through <https://employindy.org/contract-opportunities> in accordance with the timeline outlined in the Proposal Timeline. Responses to questions will be posted publicly and will become part of this RFP.