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**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**  
**WORK READINESS PROGRAM PY24**

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**Release Date:** January 23, 2024

**Due Date:** February 27, 2024

**Submission:**

Proposals will be due by 4:00 pm on 02/27/2024 to the Workforce Investment Board of Will County via email to [pswendholt@willcounty.gov](mailto:pswendholt@willcounty.gov). A receipt will be emailed when a proposal is received. If proposers do not receive an email receipt it is their responsibility to contact the Workforce Investment Board to verify receipt of the proposal.

**Contact:**

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing via e-mail to Patricia Wendholt at: [pswendholt@willcounty.gov](mailto:pswendholt@willcounty.gov) by 4:00 pm on 01/31/2024. No questions will be accepted after this date. Responses to all questions will be posted on the Workforce Investment Board of Will County website [www.willcountyworkforceboard.com](http://www.willcountyworkforceboard.com) by 4:00 pm on 02/02/2024.

**Evaluation and Review:**

Proposals will be evaluated according to the criteria attached in this packet and only in accordance with the written material submitted in the proposal.

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 (HR 803 <https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr803/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf>) authorizes local Workforce Investment Boards with the development and oversight of a local system for the provision of workforce services to employers and job seekers. In Will County, the Workforce Investment Board is made up of private and public sector community leaders who have the responsibility for this system.

The Workforce Investment Board of Will County (Board) oversees and is the policy maker, in partnership with the Will County Executive, for workforce development programs in Will County. The Board makes decisions regarding the type and mix of workforce development services offered in Will County and the use of federal and state funds available for workforce activities.

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## WORK READINESS OVERVIEW

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The Workforce Investment Board of Will County is soliciting proposals to implement a work readiness program for WIOA eligible adults and dislocated workers in Will County. The work readiness program will consist of three separate components: work readiness training; WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) assessment; and NCRC skill building.

All WIOA eligible adults or dislocated workers who want a Career Scholarship for training from the Workforce Services Division of Will County (WSD) must complete the work readiness training and take the NCRC assessment, scoring at the appropriate level for the job they will be training for, prior to beginning training.

The overall goal of the work readiness program is to address the skill gaps related to “soft skills” in the Will County workforce. The Workforce Investment Board of Will County is committed to implementing programs that facilitate the learning of soft skills and produce a recognized work readiness credential for participants.

The Workforce Board of Will County is requesting that a minimum of 12 sessions of the program be offered. Additional sessions may be added during contract negotiations. Proposals should include a budget for the initial 12 sessions and the budget for each additional session.

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## WORKKEYS® ASSESSMENT / NCRC SKILL BUILD OVERVIEW

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The availability of skilled labor is a major factor in helping business executives and economic development consultants identify the best locations for expansion and relocation. The Workforce Investment Board of Will County has chosen the WorkKeys® system and the National Career Readiness Certificate as the foundation of its career readiness initiative to ensure a strong connection between our economic development and workforce strategies. The National Career Readiness Certificate is recognized as the most effective strategy for certifying workplace skills and predicting workplace success.

Information on the assessments is available here: <http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/workkeys-for-educators/assessments.html>

Applicants will be required to incorporate into their program a component that assists and prepares participants to take the NCRC as well as improve their skill levels on the assessment.

No prescribed curriculum is required, and the Workforce Investment Board does not endorse or give preferred consideration to any product. There are several off-the-shelf products that can be incorporated into this component.

This component should be offered in a combination of both classroom and on-line settings depending on the needs of the participants.

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## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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This is not a program whose success is based solely on the percentage of participants who obtain certification, or the average scores obtained by participants on the certification test. The success of the program is based on how well they perform in training and on the job after completion of the program.

The selected service provider(s) will be evaluated on an ongoing schedule to determine whether to continue the contract. The ongoing evaluation will include a review of the quality of services provided, the mandated WIOA performance outcomes, the program costs, the integrity of fiscal systems and administrative controls, and the adherence to the terms of the contract. One or multiple contracts will be awarded at the discretion of the Workforce Investment Board of Will County. The Workforce Board also reserves the right to award no contracts(s).

Supportive services are a permissible cost associated with this program. If supportive services are to be provided, a supportive services strategy must be detailed in the proposal.

Adults and dislocated workers who will be referred to this program will meet the following criteria:

- Eligible for training services and enrolled in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs by the Workforce Services Division of Will County; and
- Either received a high school diploma or GED/HiSet; and
- Attend an orientation to the program (to be conducted by the contractor).

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## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

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### ***Eligible Applicants***

All types of entities are eligible to submit proposals, including public, not-for-profit, and for-profit organizations. The applicant must be able to demonstrate previous experience, the capacity and the commitment to implement a work readiness assessment, certification, and training program. All applicant entities must have been a legal organization for a minimum of one year prior to the start of the contract.

The procurement of proposals is being undertaken in compliance with the federal guidelines set forth in the "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards Final Rule" (also known as the Super-circular or Omni-circular). The contractor selected under this RFP must follow the guidelines set forth in this circular. This final guidance supersedes requirements from OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A-110, and A-122; Circulars A-89, A-102, and A-133, and the guidance in Circular 1-50 on Since Audit Act Follow-up. This final guidance is located in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This link provides additional information on this guidance:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards#h-33>

The Workforce Investment Board of Will County reserves the right to award grant funds to proposers as they deem to be in the best interest of the residents and employers of Will County.

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## CONTRACT, AWARD NOTIFICATION AND FUNDING

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A portion of the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers allocation will be used to accomplish the purpose of this RFP, up to \$425,000. Every effort will be made to award contracts deemed as meeting the intent of this RFP within reasonable WIOA program budgetary limits. In the event that the total amount of successful projects exceeds the amount of funding initially set aside for this purpose, the successful bidder may be asked to negotiate the cost of the project.

Applicants must be prepared to deploy services immediately following the award of a contract/grant. Contract/grant awards will be made for up to an initial 12-month period with the possibility of being extended for up to two additional years depending upon the availability of funds, the contractor's performance, and the needs of the workforce area.

Final contract amounts will be negotiated based upon WIOA funding allocations, Workforce Board priorities, and other factors at the discretion of the Workforce Board and County of Will.

The contract will be cost reimbursement. The total contract amount will be reimbursed based on actual costs incurred according to approved budgets. Any awarded contract will conform to the terms required by the WIOA/TAA and OMB circulars. Payment for services rendered will be made only when costs have been incurred and documentation of all costs will be required.

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## PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

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### Proposal Content

The proposal content requirements follow. Proposals will be selected for funding based on the information provided and funding will be contingent on successful negotiations with the applicant and the provision of supplementary information.

#### 1. Organization Background and Experience

- Briefly describe the purpose, activities, and services of your organization.
- How this proposal connects to your mission and organizational goals.
- Indicate the number of years your organization has been in business.
- List the group/populations you serve.
- Identify your target audience or customer base
- Describe your organization's experience and performance in providing proposed services.
- Include your organization's history in providing similar or related services and related performance outcome data supporting your experience.
- Explain experience or activities previously conducted that demonstrate the organization's capability to successfully implement the proposed project.

#### 2. Narrative Description of Project

- A detailed description of the program and all components for the participants including but not limited to description of instructor-led instruction, computer-based instruction, and materials to be used for instruction.
- Unique instructional methods or materials that may improve the outcomes of participants involved in the program.
- A description of the training facility, including:
  1. Location
  2. Hours of operation
  3. Availability of public transportation
  4. Compliance with the Americans with Disability Act
- A description of the program model that ensures that the program will be delivered in a way that is most authentic to the real work world.

#### 3. Outcomes

- The outcomes for participants who will attend your program including how these outcomes will positively impact WIOA performance measures and future employment success (be specific).
- How participant progress will be measured and reported.
- How your program design will produce the outcomes you have identified.

#### 4. Staffing Plan and Qualifications

- List all staff and their role/position with respect to this program.
- Provide an organizational chart (Attachment 3) of the staff to be included in this program (include resumes and job descriptions as part of your proposal in Attachment 4). Job descriptions may be substituted for positions not yet filled.

**5. Financial Management Plan: Budget and Narrative**

- Provide a narrative of your financial management plan.
- Fund accounting is required for projects funded under this request for proposals. Describe how you will assure that this is done (separate bank accounts are not necessary).
- If you are going to utilize other funds to supplement this program, indicate the source of the funds, the period funded, the dollar amount, the funding purpose, and any restrictions.
- A statement of the capability of your organization to assume financial liability for disallowed costs resulting from an audit of this program.
- Indicate your inventory control process for this project for any equipment purchased with WIOA funds.
- A description of the accounting system and fiscal reports and controls that will be used to safeguard program funds.
- Previous experience with federally funded programs and compliance with OMB circulars.
- If you are requesting funds to cover indirect costs, provide a copy of your approved indirect cost rate document or applicable cost allocation plan.

All costs reflected in the budget must be necessary and reasonable. Costs may include, but are not limited to, staff salaries and benefits, equipment expenses, travel expenses, other costs associated with the provision of training, and facilities and supplies.

Provide an operating budget for funds requested to support the project and an explanation of the costs. Use the form provided as Attachment 1 for this item. The budget must include a “per class” cost and a breakout and narrative to back-up the per class cost. The total budget should include costs associated with offering the program a minimum of 12 times in the first year. A per class cost must also be provided for additional classes beyond the 12 per year.

A budget narrative must be submitted for the program. This narrative must include a detailed description of each line item. Use Attachment 2 for this item.

**PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

All proposals will be evaluated by the RFP Review Committee. The Committee will rate proposals independently and score each proposal using a standard proposal review instrument. The Committee will make funding recommendations to the Workforce Investment Board of Will County and all contracts will then be forwarded to the Will County Board for approval.

All proposals received in accordance with the time and content requirements identified in this request for proposals will be evaluated and scored based on the criteria outlined below. The maximum number of points for any proposal can receive is 100.

<b>POINTS</b>	<b>PROGRAM COMPONENT</b>
10	<b>Organization Background and Experience</b> - experience of Organization in providing the same or similar services or ability to replicate a successful model provided elsewhere
35	<b>Program Description</b> - completeness of program overview and incorporation of program activities that lead to successful completion of a work readiness program and NCRC plus assessment.
20	<b>Outcomes</b> - likelihood of obtaining outcomes identified and how the program will positively affect participants while meeting or exceeding WIOA performance measures.
15	<b>Staffing Plan and Qualifications</b> - the experience and qualifications of staff identified to provide services, staff to student ratio, and reasonableness of staffing plan.
20	<b>Financial Management Plan and Budget</b> Cost of services - overall cost and cost per participant Fiscal Capacity - evidenced fiscal capacity, experience with grants, absence of previous audit findings.
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>	
<b>100</b>	<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>

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## SELECTION OF CONTRACTOR

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The selection of contractor shall be in accordance with federal, state, and local standards. The primary consideration in selecting agencies or organizations to deliver services shall be the effectiveness of the agency or organization in delivering comparable or related services based on demonstrated performance in terms of the likelihood of meeting performance goals, costs, quality of training, and characteristics of participants. Proposals must be for a single organization and proposals that include subcontracting part or all of the services to be provided will not be considered.

Funds provided under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act shall not be used to duplicate facilities or services available in the area unless it is demonstrated that alternative services or facilities would be more effective or more likely to achieve the performance goals.

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## PROVISIONS

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1. The release of this Request for Proposals does not commit the Workforce Investment Board of Will County to award a contract.
2. All proposals submitted will be subject to competitive review.
3. The Workforce Investment Board of Will County has the right to reject any and all proposals that do not follow the format instructions set forth by this Request for Proposals.
4. This Request for Proposals does not commit the Workforce Investment Board of Will County to award a grant, to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal, or to procure a contract for services or supplies prior to issuance of a written agreement.
5. The Workforce Investment Board of Will County retains the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received, to negotiate with all qualified sources or to cancel in part, or in entirety, this Request for Proposals if it is in the Board's best interest to do so. The Board may require the selected bidders to participate in negotiations and to rewrite their applications as agreed upon during the negotiations.
6. The Workforce Investment Board of Will County may modify any portion or terms of this Request for Proposals and may solicit additional proposals as necessary. The Workforce Investment Board of Will County reserves the right to modify or change this RFP based on rules, regulations, requirements put forth by the U.S. Department of Labor, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, or other regulatory entities.
7. Proprietary rights to all data, materials, and documentation originated and prepared for the Workforce Investment Board of Will County pursuant to the subcontract agreement shall belong exclusively to the Board.
8. The Workforce Investment Board of Will County retains the right to accept, reject, or negotiate proposals received, as well as to vary or waive any provisions set forth in this request for proposals in the best interests of the Board.
9. All proposals will be subject to negotiation of terms, conditions, and amount.
10. In the event a proposer wishes to file a grievance in connection with the process, a grievance procedure is available and may be obtained from the Workforce Investment Board Office. Grievances related to this proposal must be filed in writing within 10 days of the public Workforce Investment Board meeting at which proposals are selected for award and must comply in all other respects to the information requested and service requirements as stated in the Workforce Investment Board grievance policy.
11. The Contract will be awarded to successful bidder for the period from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. Two additional one year extensions may be awarded based on successful program performance and availability of funds.

## **CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS**

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The applicant's proposal will become part of the contract/grant award. Portions of the proposal may be revised to reflect agreements reached as part of the negotiation process.

The contract/grant includes reporting requirements, to be determined by the Workforce Investment Board of Will County. To some extent, reporting will be dictated by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

Proprietary right to all data, materials, documentation and products originated by and prepared pursuant to the contract shall belong exclusively to the Workforce Investment Board of Will County. The contractor will acknowledge and agree that any Product and/or Deliverable created hereunder shall be considered a "work made for hire" and all rights to said Product and/or Deliverable shall belong exclusively to the Workforce Investment Board of Will County. The contractor further will agree to execute whatever documents are necessary to legally transfer ownership. For any software created under this Agreement as part of the Products and/or Deliverables, the contractor agrees to provide the software source code in both human and machine-readable format upon the request of Administrative Entity. The contractor also agrees to certify in writing that the Products and/or Deliverables have been fully tested in the production environment and verifies that they are fully operational. The contractor will agree to remedy any deficiency found subsequent to delivery that is found to be the responsibility of the contractor.

The contractor will be prohibited from disseminating products and information developed under the grant without the prior written consent of the Workforce Investment Board of Will County.

All respondents must be in compliance, or agree to comply, with the following federal and state laws and related regulations in order to be considered for an award:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Copeland "Anti-Kickback" Act (18 U.S.C. 874 and 40 U.S.C. 276c)
- Davis-Bacon Act, as amended (40 U.S.C. 276a to a-7)
- Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 327-333)
- Rights to Inventions Made Under a Contract or Agreement
- Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.) and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.), as amended
- Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment (31 U.S.C. 1352)
- Debarment and Suspension (E.O.s 12549 and 12689)
- Applicable State of Illinois Laws
- State WIA/WIOA Policies
- Uniform Guidance (2 CFR part 200)
- OMB's approved exceptions for DOL (2 CFR part 2900)
- 20 CFR Parts 667.200 and 667.410

## Cover Sheet

<b>Name of Organization:</b>	<b>Federal Employer ID:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>
<b>Contact Person:</b>	<b>Title:</b>
<b>Email:</b>	<b>Fax:</b>
<b>Total Budget Request:</b>	
<b>Proposal Title:</b>	
<b>Brief Description of Project:</b>	
<b>Legal Status (circle one):</b> Public Agency    Private Nonprofit Corporation    Private for Profit Corporation    Other _____	
<b>Statement of Certification</b>	
<b>The applicant certifies that the information provided in this Request for Proposal including all attachments, is true, accurate and current; and the person signing below is authorized to do so on behalf of the above named organization. The applicant further certifies that the organization will comply with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act rules and regulations should the Workforce Investment Board of Will County fund this program.</b>	
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <b>Authorized Signer (Name Typed)</b>	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <b>Authorized Signature</b>
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <b>Authorized Signer's Title</b>	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <b>Date Signed</b>



**BUDGET**

**The total budget should include costs associated with offering the program a minimum of 12 times in the first year**

<b><i>LINE ITEM</i></b>	<b><i>BUDGET AMOUNT</i></b>
Wages – Staff	
Fringe Benefits	
Staff Travel	
Rent	
Insurance/Bonds	
Supplies	
Communications	
Copying/Printing	
Utilities	
Equipment	
Supportive Services	
Other	
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	

**BUDGET NARRATIVE**  
**(use additional page if necessary)**

**For each budget line item in Attachment 1, provide a detailed justification for the amount requested.**

**ORGANIZATION CHART**

**Highlight staff who will work on this project.**

**ATTACHMENT 4**

**STAFF JOB DESCRIPTIONS/RESUMES**

**Attach the job descriptions and resumes of staff who will work on this project**

**A job description only may be provided for positions not yet filled.**

**PREVIOUS WIA/WIOA GRANTS/CONTRACTS**

<b><u>Granting Organization</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>	<b><u>Year</u></b>
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**REFERENCES**

**(provide 3)**

1. Contact Name:  
Organization:  
Relationship:  
Address:  
Phone:  
Email:
  
2. Contact Name:  
Organization:  
Relationship:  
Address:  
Phone:  
Email:
  
3. Contact Name:  
Organization:  
Relationship:  
Address:  
Phone:  
Email:

## **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the policy of \_\_\_\_\_ (agency) to provide equal employment opportunity to all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Therefore, this organization shall take Affirmative Action to insure that it shall:

- a. Recruit, hire, and promote all job classifications regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, political affiliation, or national origin.
- b. Make promotional decisions that are in accordance with principles of equal employment opportunity by imposing only valid requirements for promotional opportunities.
- c. Incorporate equal employment opportunity policy in all personnel actions such as compensation, benefits, transfers, layoffs, returns from layoffs, company sponsored training, education, and tuition assistance.
- d. Conduct programs without regard to race, color, sex, religion, or national origin.

The success of an Affirmative Action Program requires maximum cooperation between management and its employees.

To obtain this objective \_\_\_\_\_ (name) will be the Equal Employment Opportunity representative for \_\_\_\_\_ (agency). This person shall be responsible for working with the Department of Equal Opportunity for the purpose of aiding this agency in establishing future Affirmative Action goals.

**ATTACHMENT 8**

**CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING  
CERTIFICATION FOR CONTRACTS, GRANTS, LOANS,  
AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS**

The undersigned certified, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

1. No federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of Congress, or any employee or a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, the making of any federal grant, the making of any federal loan, the entering into any cooperative agreement and the extension, continuations, renewal, amendment, or modification of any federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
2. If any funds other than federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, Member of Congress, and officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall completed and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" in accordance with its instruction.
3. The Undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards and tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, Title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each failure.

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of Certifying Official

Date

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Name and Title of Certifying Official

Note: In these instances, "All," in the Final Rule is expected to be clarified to show that it applies to covered contract/grant transactions over \$100,000 (per OMB).



**CERTIFICATION REGARDING  
DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITY  
MATTERS PRIMARY COVERED TRANSACTIONS**

This certification is required by the regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 29 CFR part 98, section 98.510, Participant Responsibilities. The regulations were published as Part VII of the May 26, 1988 Federal Register (pages 19160-19211).

**(BEFORE SIGNING, READ INSTRUCTIONS WHICH ARE AN  
INTEGRAL PART OF THE CERTIFICATION)**

1. The prospective primary participant certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief that it and its principles:
  - (a) Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any federal debarment or agency;
  - (b) Have not within a three year period preceding this proposal been convicted or had civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification, or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;
  - (c) Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a government entity (federal, state, or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1) (b) of this certification; and
  - (d) Have not, within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal, had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause of default.
  
2. Where the prospective primary participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

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Name and Title of Authorized Representative

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Signature

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Date