



Request for Qualifications

City of Tuscaloosa

HOPE Initiative Summer Jobs Program (HISJP)

ISSUE DATE: Friday, April 03, 2026

CLOSING DATE: Friday, April 17, 2026 (BY 4:00 PM)

Proposals are due by **4:00 p.m.** (CST) on Friday, April 17, 2026. Mandatory label required on outside of envelope: “Request for Qualifications for HOPE Initiative Summer Jobs Program (HISJP).”

Hope Initiative Summer Jobs Program

I. BACKGROUND

In 2009, the City of Tuscaloosa developed the Hope Initiative. In recognition of crime statistics identified by the initiative, the City of Tuscaloosa seeks to provide youth educational training and employment opportunities with preference given to youth between the ages of 15 and 21 years of age currently residing in any of the seven HOPE Initiative Zones listed below and low/moderate income areas within the city limits of Tuscaloosa.

1. Rosedale Court
2. Forrester Gardens
3. Downing Place
4. Creekwood Village, John England Manor, and Hay Court
5. Beech Street
6. East Tuscaloosa/including Alberta
7. University Manor
8. Low-Moderate income areas within the city limits of Tuscaloosa

II. PURPOSE AND AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

Through this Request for Qualifications (RFQ), the City of Tuscaloosa (COT) seeks to identify one or more providers qualified to manage the HOPE Initiative Summer Jobs Program (HISJP) during the summer of 2026. This seven (7) week program gives preference to youth residing within any of the identified HOPE Initiative Zones and low/moderate income areas within the city limits of Tuscaloosa.

COT will use the results of this RFQ to select a summer jobs program provider. The programs funded will be subject to monitoring for operations in compliance with contract terms and conditions. COT reserves the right to withhold contract payments in the event of non-compliance or under-performance.

This is a qualifications-based solicitation for proposals. Responses must document the organization's qualifications to run a summer jobs program. We seek providers with demonstrated experience in providing summer jobs for youth. The selected organizations must: conduct recruitment and intake, determine eligibility, input data regarding participants, solicit summer employment opportunities from community-based organizations, non-profits, and public agencies or private businesses, monitor the placements to ensure success, provide work-readiness activities, and report to funding sources on participant outcomes. Providers will be responsible for payroll services, including any associated federal and state wage remittance and reporting.

III. SERVICES REQUESTED

The selected providers will manage and provide payroll services for the HISJP. In addition to providing employment and supervision to participating youth, summer jobs providers must also document work-readiness outcomes. COT seeks to provide youth in need of summer employment with jobs at community-based organizations, non-profits, public agencies, and private businesses in need of summer assistance.

Agencies must be qualified to fulfill the following specific program requirements:

1. Recruitment of eligible youth;
2. Development of positions at community-based organizations, non-profits, public agencies and/or private businesses;
3. Development of a work plan, including assessment of participants at the start of, during, and at completion of summer employment;
4. Job placement either within their own agency or at community-based organizations, non-profits, public agencies and/or private businesses;
5. Monitoring/supervision of youth;
6. Provision of work readiness activities.

Emphasis should be placed on improving critical thinking, problem-solving, financial literacy, and interpersonal and team building skills in the context of job-readiness. Participants must understand the applicability of their work experience so they will be better prepared to meet and adapt to the demands of the workplace in the future. Work assignments should reflect the participant's interests when possible and feature project-based learning to demonstrate the relevance of skills. Respondents must demonstrate they are qualified to carry out a scope of work consisting of the following:

1. Recruitment

An understanding of the population to be served is essential in order to recruit youth eligible for these services. Appropriate youth can be identified via the city's public and subsidized housing developments, community based multi-service agencies, community development corporations, neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, and economic assistance programs, but preference is given to those currently residing in one of the identified HOPE Initiative Zones or low/moderate income areas within the city limits of Tuscaloosa.

Respondents must demonstrate the capability of executing a comprehensive recruitment strategy and must be able to pursue a variety of outreach plans and strategies in order to be effective in reaching the population. Programs must use an appropriate application form as part of their comprehensive intake process. Respondents should include a copy of their proposed application form with their response to this RFQ. Organizations will be responsible for taking referrals of youth already determined to be eligible for HISJP as part of year-round outreach efforts.

2. Assessment

In order to ensure participants are successful and receive adequate services, a thorough assessment of the participant's competencies is necessary. Selected organizations must utilize a work-based plan. Assessments must be signed and dated by the appropriate staff person or work site supervisor. Staff expertise in areas relevant to the target population will add particular value to the assessment process. Termination policies administered by contractors must be clearly defined and publicized in writing. Termination policies must be consistent, and due process must be upheld for all participants. All terminations must be documented by the selected service provided. All policies regarding attendance and code of conduct must be discussed with and signed by participants at the time of the initial assessment.

3. Employment and Supervision

Respondents must be capable of providing employment opportunities with proper supervision, ensuring a safe and educational work experience. Programs must provide safe environments for all participants and adhere to all Child Labor Laws. Participants receiving employment through this program must earn \$13.25/hour. **COT will fund 20 hours per student per week for 7 weeks for a total not to exceed 45 students.**

Summer jobs providers must offer meaningful jobs. Work is meaningful when it reinforces work readiness skills like attendance, punctuality, leadership, responsibility, completing tasks, financial literacy, and recognizing quality performance. Best efforts must be made to place students in jobs which reflect their interests. Supervisors should be instructive and supportive, providing a mentoring relationship which enhances the learning experience. Supervisors must be available to answer the youth's questions pertaining to his/her job. Additionally, they must plan on meeting with the youth once per week, either individually or in a group, to discuss accomplishments and challenges. Employee assessments and progress should be documented.

The selected Summer Jobs Program provider must reach out to community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, public agencies, or private businesses capable of serving as job sites. Project staff will be required to provide assistance to youth in obtaining address documentation, work permits, education certificates, and medical examinations.

4. Work Readiness Activities

One of the main goals of this program is to ensure that youth have access not only to an income, but also to valuable skills that can help them gain and manage future employment, such as resume preparation and financial management. Selected providers must also assist youth to develop life skills through workplace-based learning and workshops. Such life skills include attendance, punctuality, relating to supervisors, appropriate workplace behavior and dress, leadership, carrying out responsibility, completing tasks, financial literacy, and recognizing quality performance.

5. Expected outcomes for each participant in the Summer Jobs Program:

- Completion of 7 weeks of summer employment
- Income of \$13.25 per hour, not to exceed 20 hours per week
- Job coaching and life skills Monday through Thursday in addition to their work schedule
- Documentation of increased skills development as explained above in the “Work Readiness Activities Section”

IV. ELIGIBLE RESPONDENTS

Eligible Respondents must have demonstrated prior experience administering a Summer Jobs program or similar related program. Respondents must have the ability to provide summer employment opportunities for participants at community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, public agencies and/or private businesses. Respondents must be able to provide required program components, as well as perform all payroll functions including, but not limited to, generating paychecks, paying appropriate payroll taxes, and generating and distributing 2026 W2s no later than January 31, 2027.

Other qualifications necessary to submit a proposal:

- 501(c)(3) determination letter
- DUNS number
- EIN number
- Compliance with all OMB Circulars pertaining to federally funded programs including 2 CFR Part 200, 24 CFR Part 84, 24 CFR Part 85, Circular A-087, Circular A-122 and Circular A-133.
- Business license (if applicable)

V. PROGRAM MONITORING/REPORTING

The COT Office of Community and Neighborhood Services will conduct site visits to monitor for:

- Operations in accordance with application and contract
- Achievement of objectives
- Integrity of administrative systems, program, and financial and eligibility determination
- Quality assessment through observation and informal interviews

These monitoring activities may take the form of administrative record reviews, interviews of staff and/or participants, and general observations of the facilities and operations. Staff interviewed should be prepared to discuss how the program is delivering the work-based learning experiences discussed in this RFQ.

Participant files must contain the following:

- Copy of the student's application (see attached suggestion)
- Appropriate working papers (work permit or education certificate)
- Weekly time sheets
- All assessments, pre and post program
- Record of attendance and documentation of work-based learning activities where appropriate (workshop or activity attendance record, etc.)
- Please note that any participants encountering children or elders in their employment must have an appropriate background check, pursuant to Alabama state law. Certain types of background issues may prevent youth from holding certain jobs.

VI. AWARD PAYMENT

The Respondent selected will enter into a contract with the City of Tuscaloosa. All funds will be disbursed by the City of Tuscaloosa Accounting & Finance Department upon approval for payment. Please note that payments may take up to 45 days from receipt of an invoice that includes all required source documentation (including, but not limited to, proof of paychecks, timesheets, and activity reports.)

VII. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All proposals should be submitted in 8 ½" x 11" paper size. Each proposal shall be prepared simply and economically, providing straightforward, concise delineation of the firm's capabilities to satisfy the requirements of this RFQ. Fancy binding and color displays other than those necessary are highly discouraged. Respondents must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Mandatory label required on outside of envelope: "Request for Qualifications for HOPE Initiative Summer Jobs Program (HISJP)"
2. All attachments are required at the time of submission, and no supplemental documentation shall be accepted.
3. All text must be typed in a minimum 12-point font (this size).
4. Applications must provide information in the order listed in this RFQ.
5. Answers to the "Narrative Questions" MUST be numbered. Please attach additional pages as needed.
6. Facsimiles and E-mailed applications will not be accepted.
7. The Application Cover Sheet must be included as the first page of the Respondent's Application.

Provide four (4) copies of Proposal to:
Latonya Braggs, Federal Program Technician
Office of Community & Neighborhood Services
City of Tuscaloosa
Post Office Box 2089
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35403-2089

Courier address:
Office of Community & Neighborhood Services
2201 University Blvd.
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

Hand-delivery is highly encouraged.

Contact Person for Questions:

Ms. Latonya Braggs

Telephone: (205) 248-5081

Email: latonya.braggs@tuscaloosa.com

****IMPORTANT INFORMATION****

VIII. SCHEDULE AND DECISION PROCESS

Responses to this RFQ are due and must be received no later than **4:00 p.m. CST on April 17, 2026.**

Your responses should answer the questions laid out in the section of this RFQ titled “Request for Qualifications”: “Narrative Questions”. Once submitted, applications cannot be altered in any way.

It is important to follow the instructions carefully.

A review panel will score and rank Respondent applications on the basis of:

- Responsiveness to the Request for Qualifications; and,
- Qualifications and experience in providing the requested services.

The City reserves the right to interview a firm or multiple firms as it deems necessary. There is no guarantee that a contract award will be made pursuant to this RFQ.

City of Tuscaloosa

HOPE Initiative Summer Jobs Program (HISJP)

Application Cover Sheet

Name of Agency _____

Agency Director _____

Name of Program _____

Program Director _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Request for Qualifications: Narrative Questions

1. Has your organization managed a youth program in the past? If yes, please discuss your prior specific experience including the size and nature of that program, when, where, and title of program(s); etc.
2. Has your organization managed a summer jobs program in the past? If yes, please discuss your prior specific experience including the size and nature of that program (number of participants; number of staff; cost-per-participant; number of job sites, when, where, and title of program(s); etc.).
3. Has your organization managed a youth summer jobs program in the past? If yes, please discuss your prior specific experience including the size and nature of that program (number of participants; number of staff; cost-per-participant; number of job sites, when, where, and title of program(s); etc.).
4. If you are selected to manage the HISJP, how will you recruit youth for this program? Explain your process for obtaining background checks. How will you ensure that all necessary documents (working papers, education certificates, background checks, residency verification, and medical information) are obtained prior to participant start date? Also, please attach your Summer Jobs Application Form.
5. How will you assess participants for your program(s)? (Please include a copy of a learning plan, assessments that you will use to train the participants.) What concrete procedures (tests, interviews, interest assessments, etc.) will you use to determine whether the youth and the job are an appropriate match? Who will be responsible for documenting these procedures?
6. Discuss how you will document eligibility determination, data inputting, and outcome reporting.
7. Describe the types of jobs you will offer participants. What opportunities exist for exposure to technology? How will your program address barriers such as limited English skills? How will you ensure the youth are appropriately and safely supervised?

8. Describe your program's proposed work readiness and life skills activities. Explain how participants will be exposed to the concepts of work readiness and financial literacy through their jobs or through other means.

9. Discuss staff qualifications for delivering the training component. Explain the staff reporting structure and attach a program organizational chart. Indicate whether positions are full-time or part-time. Attach a job description and a resume for each direct service and program management position involved in your proposed program. Label the job description with the name of the staff person or indicate if the position is vacant. Label the resume with the current job title for the staff person.

10. Please include your line-item itemized program budget. **Please note:** The agency selected for the administration of this program will employ a maximum of 45 participants at \$13.25 per hour, for 7 weeks at 20 hours per week, plus all applicable taxes. (45 youth x \$13.25 per hr. x 7 weeks x 20 hrs. per week, plus 7.65% FICA). The total award is \$100,000.00. Funding includes job coaches, life skills instruction and administration of the program. Under no circumstances can these funds be used to offset other operating costs. Providers will be responsible for payroll services, including all associated federal and state wage reporting.

11. Provide documentation of your agency's 501(c)(3) Determination letter, DUNS number and EIN number.

**PLEASE NOTE: SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION DOES NOT
GUARANTEE ACCEPTANCE INTO THE PROGRAM**