

# DHS CONTRACTOR PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### GENERAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

### HIRING TARGETS

### QUARTERLY REPORTING

#### **GENERAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION**

##### **1. Who is required to participate in the Contractor Partnership Program (CPP)?**

*Current* DHS contractors who have the CPP requirement in the terms and conditions of their agreement with the Department are required to participate in the program for the duration of their agreement. *Beginning in October 2019*, entities who enter into an agreement with the Department through an RFA or RFP for \$5m or more are required to participate. Hiring plans will be submitted during the RFA or RFP process.

##### **2. Who is an eligible job candidate to fulfill the hiring targets for the Contractor Partnership Program (CPP)?**

An eligible CPP job candidate is an individual who currently receives [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families](#) (TANF-cash assistance) in Pennsylvania at the time of hire. Hired individuals do not need to perform work specific to the contract services.

##### **3. If my company or organization has no plans to hire anyone, are we still required to enroll in CPP?**

Yes, all contractors with a CPP requirement in their agreement must still establish a business folder in CWDS and submit quarterly reports in order to demonstrate their awareness of the requirement and preparation to participate if hiring plans change in the future. Subcontractor hiring also counts towards the target. Any contractor submitting a hiring target of zero will be reviewed by CPP staff and the Program Office who maintains contract oversight. Exceptions and hiring targets goals will be reviewed on a case by case basis. **It is important to note that individuals hired do not need to perform work specific to the contract services.**

##### **4. If my organization would like to voluntarily participate in CPP, who do we contact?**

CPP staff are available to assist contractors who are interested in voluntary participation in the program. Organizations will need to establish a business folder, Keystone ID, and password in CWDS to begin the process. Instructions for these steps can be found on the [CPP website](#). Once these steps have been

completed, a PA778 form will be sent to your organization for completion and enrollment. Email the completed document to: [RA-BETPCPP@pa.gov](mailto:RA-BETPCPP@pa.gov)

**5. My organization holds several contracts with DHS. How do we decide on a hiring target for each contract? Do we need to report on each contract?**

Any contract awarded by DHS, that has a CPP requirement listed in the Terms and Conditions of the agreement or negotiated during the RFA/RFP, must establish a hiring target. Since the hiring target is based on 10% of the average Pennsylvania hires over the last 3 years, the goal should be reviewed to reflect how the newly awarded contract may increase hiring capacity. Goals can be revised and split across contracts if the same workforce area is shared. CPP staff are available to work with contractors to discuss goals. Maintaining a business folder and quarterly reporting is contract specific and must be maintained throughout the life of the contract.

## **HIRING TARGETS**

**6. How do I determine a hiring target?**

Contractors will report their number of Pennsylvania hires annually for the past 3 years and calculate the average numbers of hires per year; the target goal should be 10% of that average. The hiring target is the number of Pennsylvania TANF hires an organization committed to working towards hiring during the life of the contract. Any contracts renewed or extended beyond the original terms may require an amended hiring target for any subsequent years of the contract. For current contractors whose CPP requirement was established in the terms and conditions of their agreements (prior to October 2019), the hiring goal (currently referred to as the hiring target) should reflect how many positions may be filled by eligible CPP job candidates over the life of the contract. Beginning in October 2019, for contractors whose CPP requirement is established through the RFA or RFP process for \$5m or more, the hiring target is established by a formula. If the contractor has no plans to hire anyone during the life of the contract, the hiring target can include a plan for anticipated hires by any subcontractors, parent companies or affiliates. If a contractor does not have an established presence in Pennsylvania but has subcontractors, the hiring target can be submitted by creating a hiring plan that will be fulfilled by that entity.

**7. What is the review process of the hiring target? Who approves it?**

The contracting program office and the Bureau of Employment Programs will review all hiring targets during the RFA or RFP process. Exceptions to the hiring target can be requested and will be considered at the discretion of the Department.

**8. The RFA mentions a “good faith effort” for meeting hiring targets. What does that mean?**

A good faith effort means that a contractor is actively working towards meeting their hiring targets by following their implementation plan and completing the required quarterly updates in the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS). Contractors who are not able to meet their CPP hiring targets or need assistance in doing so must be able to demonstrate contact with CPP staff and their local TANF employment and training programs to find qualified job candidates who meet the CPP

eligibility criteria. Contractors can also post open job positions on the PACareerLink website to match with CPP eligible candidates. Pennsylvania's Employment and Training (E&T) Providers can support CPP hiring efforts by pre-screening job candidates, hosting job fairs as well as creating upskilling job candidates to support workforce needs.

### **9. Do I have to ask my new hires if they receive TANF?**

No. As long as you provide the required data in CWDS, the system will confirm TANF status. The information needed to enter hires in CWDS includes: Name, Social Security Number (SSN), Rate of Pay, Job Title, County of Employment and Date of Hire. Note: partnering with local TANF employment and training programs will facilitate connections to TANF recipients and create an easy way to be aware of TANF status.

### **10. Who can help me find employees who meet the CPP requirement?**

There are several employment and training providers that can help connect employers with CPP-eligible hires. DHS has Employment and Training (E&T) contractors statewide that work with TANF clients who are seeking employment. The EARN network is comprised of 22 Workforce Development Boards serving all Pennsylvania counties, and Work Ready programs are operated by 11 Community Action Agencies, serving 15 Pennsylvania counties, who work with individuals looking for employment opportunities. In addition, our 14 KEYS providers work with students enrolled in community college who are looking for employment after graduation. These programs can pre-screen job candidates and host employer recruiting events. The CPP staff can help with providing contact information and connections to these programs.

### **11. Are employee or employer retention services available?**

Yes, both the EARN and Work Ready E&T programs offer retention support for both the employee and the employer. Employers and E&T providers are encouraged to share workforce retention challenges and collaborate to develop supports needed to address employee retention. EARN and Work ready offer retention services to participants following their hiring through regular check-ins and services designed to address the needs of working families.

## **QUARTERLY REPORTING**

### **11. How will my organization receive credit for hiring "CPP-eligible" individuals?**

Once your newly hired employee information is entered in CWDS with their full Name, SSN, Date of Hire, Rate of Pay, Job Title and County of Employment, click "add employee." CWDS will do a cross match with the DHS benefits database and will validate all CPP-eligible hires with a "Yes" or "No." Quarterly reports can be submitted by the prime contractor, prime contractor on behalf of a subcontractor or subcontractor of direct contractor.

### **12. Is a Quarterly Report still required even if my organization did not have any hires during the reporting period?**

Yes, a quarterly report is still required even if no hires were made during the reporting quarter. This report communicates to the Department that your organization continues to be aware of, and working towards, the hiring goal established.

**13. What date do I use in the “reporting quarter” section?**

Quarters are based on the state fiscal year (beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>). Quarterly reports will always begin with the first day of the quarter you are reporting upon. For example, if entering information for all hires made for the quarter from July 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>, then July 1<sup>st</sup> is the date that will be entered in the “reporting quarter” section.

**14. What if I receive the error “insufficient privileges” when attempting to enter my organization’s quarterly report?**

Each organization is encouraged to maintain a primary user as well as a backup user if the primary user is not available to enter updates in CWDS. Contact the CPP help desk either by phone **866-840-7214** or [RA-BETPCPP@pa.gov](mailto:RA-BETPCPP@pa.gov) for assistance.

**15. What if I receive the error “The date hired must fall in same reporting quarter entered in the CPP form”?**

Contact the CPP help desk either by phone **866-840-7214** or [RA-BETPCPP@pa.gov](mailto:RA-BETPCPP@pa.gov).

**16. Why was my organization’s quarterly report rejected?**

The most common reason for rejection is missing or incomplete new hire demographic information. Quarterly reports submitted that indicate hires have been made during the reporting period must contain the employee’s Name, SSN, Rate of Pay, Job Title and County of Employment to receive credit for any potential CPP eligible hires and to also remain compliant with the CPP program requirements. If you are still unsure why the quarterly report was rejected, please contact the CPP helpdesk either by phone **866-840-7214** or [RA-BETPCPP@pa.gov](mailto:RA-BETPCPP@pa.gov).