



To: Members of the Massachusetts Councils on Aging
From: Mary Kay Browne, Director of Special Projects
Date: May 15, 2018
Re: Seeking Requests for Proposals for FY 2019 - Due Date June 22, 2018

MCOA seeks proposals from COAs who want to become a host site for the **50+ Job Seekers Regional Networking Groups program**. MCOA grants invest in projects for several reasons, including: to provide seed grants for starting creative, innovative services; to encourage regional collaboration between Councils on Aging and/or other organizations in delivering vital services not yet available currently; and/or to help COAs meet core administrative and/or programmatic needs.

The program presented in this RFP is the **50+ Job Seekers Regional Networking Groups described below. We will award preference to bids from COAs located in the following counties: Norfolk, Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Hampden, Hampshire, or Franklin County.** [Please note that bids from COAs that are not located in the counties stated above are encouraged to apply and will be considered.]

This Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Direct Grant for the FY2019 service year is contingent upon MCOA's receipt of sufficient funding under the Service Incentive Grant award from the MA Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Please visit our web site periodically at www.mcoaonline.com to find additional grant opportunities during the year.

General Information:

- MCOA will award grants through an open competitive application process.
- Up to 6 new grants will be made for new Regional Networking Group host sites, pending available funding from the FY'19 Service Incentive Grant from Elder Affairs.
- We encourage you to talk with your regional peers and partners about their interest in promoting and/or co-hosting a regional 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group, as the co-hosting model allows you to share the on-site host responsibilities (e.g.

alternating meeting locations) as well as advertising work. Currently, there are 2 co-hosted regional networking groups that have worked out quite well.

- This solicitation is being released now so sites will be ready to begin in September.
- Grant opportunities are available to all eligible COAs or a non-profit that has a formal partnership with local COAs to implement the service.
 - If you are a non-profit bidding on the program, you must describe in detail the partnership that exists now with your local COAs and how the entities will share in program administration and delivery.

Background on the Need for Support and Networking Opportunities for Job Seekers in the 50+ Demographic

Across the nation, seniors are seeking employment in ever greater numbers in order to achieve economic security and maintain an adequate quality of life after retirement. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, seniors between the ages of 65 and 74 are the fastest growing segment of the labor market; in 2022, almost 32% will be working, up from 20% in 2002. Workers age 75 and older will more than double, from 5% in 2002 to 11% in 2022.

There are many reasons for why older people seek employment:

- While half of single adults over age 65 rely upon Social Security as their sole source of income, Social Security alone is insufficient for paying for all of one's household budget
- In addition, an ever increasing number of older people are carrying greater credit card debt than ever before.
- Many older adults' investments lost significant value during the Great Recession of 2008-2015, preceded by the 2001-02' dot-com' crash.
- One of the key factors contributing to a senior's (60+) ability to sustain good health and happiness in life is to continue performing a productive role within society – ensuring a sense of purpose and meaning.

Program Description

MCOA is firmly committed to building a regional network of **50+ Job Seekers Regional Networking Groups**, strategically located throughout the Commonwealth, to ensure job seekers have access to a regular and professional networking opportunity – so essential to making a successful career transition. The groups meet regularly to provide BOTH training on 21st century job search techniques and the opportunity to network with all present.

The groups meet on a biweekly basis from September – June at designated host locations on set dates / times. Studies have shown that regular participation in focused networking groups correlates well with less time between positions and with higher levels of employment and job satisfaction. According to the most recent survey of job seekers completed by LinkedIn in 2016, 85% of all jobs are found through networking.

In addition to providing networking opportunities in a safe, professional and comfortable environment, the program offers resources, materials and training by a professional career coach in job search strategies and techniques which can greatly accelerate the time for finding a new job, new career direction, or a transition into volunteerism. The issue of ageism, and how to address it, is integrated into each session. This is vital for helping this demographic group recognize and overcome this form of discrimination.

The host sites will run two sessions: a 12-week (7 meetings) session in the fall of 2018 (mid Sept to mid-December) and a second 12-week (7 meetings) session in the spring of 2019 (mid-February to mid-May). Ideally, 15-20 people will attend each meeting. Each meeting addresses a different topic directly related to job search. The meetings will run for 3 hours biweekly (twice a month), with 2 hours for training and networking, plus 30 minutes for room set up and pre-meeting casual networking, and then 30 minutes for post-session networking and room clean up.

Program Components

This program provides job seekers with the opportunity to learn new job search skills, strategies and techniques necessary for landing a job in a labor market that continues to be challenging for mature workers. Participants will learn how to develop a 30-second elevator pitch, create a LinkedIn profile, develop a functional resume, interview effectively and learn how to strategically network to a new job -- all unfamiliar to someone who has not searched for a job in a number of years. Typical group members are individuals who have either had a long career gap due to elder care or child care, or an unexpected lay off, or had been employed by one employer for 20+ years.

Since January 2016, MCOA has been working with a small group of COA managers and career coaches to design, pilot and implement the program for older job seekers. MCOA relies upon Susan Drevitch Kelly, a career coach and expert in job search techniques, to manage the program, recruit and hire group leaders, mentor and supervise the group leaders who deliver the services. Serving as the Program Manager (PM), she is also actively building partnerships with other stakeholders who are committed to the employment of older adults, including the Career Centers, SCSEP, the Encore Boston Network (EBN), Chambers of Commerce, ReServe, Empower Success Corps (ESC) and others.

Group Leaders present valuable information, strategies and materials on a new topic at each session. Sample session topics covered by the Group Leaders include:

- Overcoming Ageism, Job Search Stress and Financial Worries are addressed in every session.
- Self-Assessment/Transferrable Skills
- Develop a Winning Resume
- Create an Elevator Speech
- Develop Your LinkedIn Profile
- Networking 101: How, When, Where
- Develop Your Marketing Plan
- Interview Preparation/Strategy

These biweekly meetings are facilitated by a Group Leader (GL) assigned to the host site and a Co-Facilitator (CoF). MCOA staff will recruit and hire the GLs; local host sites will assign 1 staff person to be the CoF. MCOA has developed a full program toolkit to guide the Group Leader in how to deliver consistently top-quality training that provides effective job search skills to the group members, and to provide guidance to the CoF and host site staff on how to make this a successful program offering at your COA.

The host site CoF has 3 main duties: to set up the room; coordinate regular, wide spread regional program marketing; and handle simple administrative chores, including: signing in attendees, registering newcomers, handing out and collecting evaluation forms at close of bi-weekly meetings, and emailing promotional reminders to group participants during the intervening weeks. Evaluation forms should be reviewed by the GL and CoF to make sure that the program content is addressing the needs of the group. Any concerns or issues addressed by a member in the evaluation form must be shared with the Program Manager to insure it is addressed and resolved.

MCOA Responsibilities:

- MCOA's PM will recruit and assign qualified professionals with extensive career coaching or HR experience to work as the Group Leaders at each of the selected program sites.
- MCOA will contract with each Group Leader directly.
- The MCOA PM has developed all of the essential 50+ Job Seekers Regional Networking Group meeting facilitation tools, format and materials in a detailed Operational Kit which will be provided to each host site team and their respective GLs for review prior to the Launch Meeting for each site team. All questions will be addressed during the Launch Meeting.
- The Group Leaders will be supervised by MCOA's PM.
- The Group Leaders will capture program metrics, participate in GL conference calls and meetings, and collaborate with the PM about program format, content and

facilitation issues, and share information on group performance and participant outcomes with the PM.

- MCOA will provide a variety of marketing communication collateral such as program brochures (customized for each site), promo postcards, posters, flyers, ad templates and a program banner table apron to the sites to augment local publicity and outreach methods.
- MCOA will provide a promotional presence on social media (LinkedIn Group, Facebook Page, and the www.mcaoonline.com website.)

Host Site Responsibilities:

Local sites receive \$700 to cover the costs of paper/toner for printing of handouts for meetings and pocket folders for the Welcome Kits (about \$200); the remaining approximate \$500 is to be used to off-set the cost of promotional efforts such as newspaper ads, lawn signs, lobby displays. Note: Newspaper ads in town papers have been the most effective advertising method to date.

Host Sites shall:

- Provide a room (with tables and chairs) for bi-weekly program meetings for the group; the ideal group size is 15-25 people. The bi-weekly programs run for 3 hours, with set up time and casual networking on either end.
- Provide presentation equipment, if needed by group leader. (Screen, projector, and flip chart).
- Assign a staff person to serve as the site's Co-Facilitator. He/she must be a visible regular host for the club meetings, and shall be responsible for carrying out specific administrative duties (listed above) at the start and end of each meeting and during the intervening weeks.
- Collect a suggested donation of \$5 from participants (optional).
- Prepare welcome packets for first time attendees (MCOA will provide program stickers for the packets).
- Arrange for **continuous advertising** of the program meetings in all the following sources: local newspapers, town cable/radio shows, COA newsletters in your town and surrounding towns, local church bulletins, and any other type of media that will reach unemployed or underemployed older workers in your region.
- If the host site wants to offer refreshments, recruit a local business sponsor to underwrite those costs.
- After the formal training program concludes, (and no scheduled meetings will occur during June-August and mid-December – mid February) continue to host biweekly networking meetings, ideally the same room, time, date.

- Though bidders are **not required to host a job fair**, those that do have a collaborative partnership with their local Career Center and decide to host one during the year will be given **preference by the selection committee**. An older adult job fair could be a great culminating event for participants, but is not required.

In time, the COA's staff will become strong advocates for older worker employment and against ageism in the workplace and able to speak to these issues with local employers.



MCOA FY2019 DIRECT GRANT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Bidder's Conference Call

The Project Manager and I will host an informational conference call for all interested bidders at **2:30 PM on May 30, 2018** to describe the program and answer any questions. **Please register** to join the conference call via our "Grants" web page for this RFP. Once registered, you'll receive the call in numbers.

Application Instructions

- a. Program Applications must be uploaded no later than **Friday June 22, 2018**.
- b. If you have any questions about your COA's eligibility to bid for this grant, please contact Shari Cox of MCOA by email at Shari@mcoaonline.com or phone at 413-527-6425.
- c. To apply, complete the narrative application (below) and upload the full narrative at the MCOA website, under the "Grants" page. In addition, to ensure your uploading was successful, please email your proposal narrative to Shari Cox at Shari@mcoaonline.com.
- d. Grant awards will be made by **July 6, 2018**. The notice of awards will provide you with copy for your newsletter to promote the program's September start.
- e. A launch meeting with all new host sites will be set up by Susan Drevitch Kelly, Program Manager, to occur between mid-July and mid-August.
- f. All contracts are "Cost Reimbursement" contracts, meaning the COAs must incur costs and submit invoices for reimbursement.

Basic Organizational Questions to answer when you upload your Application:

- Contact Person's Name & Title
- Organization Name and Mailing Address
- Primary Contact Name, Phone and Email Address
- MCOA Membership Status
- Confirmation that you understand grants will be awarded only if sufficient funding is received under the FY'19 Service Incentive Grant to MCOA from the MA Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Operational Questions:

Please prepare the answers to these questions in 1 word document; THEN upload the entire document to the application on www.mcoaonline.com. If you have any questions on how to do that, please call Lynn Wolf at 413-527-6425.

1. Why do you want to host a regional 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group?
2. Who on your staff will you assign to be the CoFacilitator (CoF) during the meeting and perform the administrative duties listed below? The program requires an onsite staff person to serve as a co-facilitator and assume the following duties:
 - a. Room set-up and breakdown;
 - b. Welcome group members as they arrive;
 - c. Sign in all new attendees by ensuring each one completes a Registration Form and receives their Program Welcome Packet;
 - d. Collect participant meeting evaluation forms at the end of the meetings;
 - e. Make copies of meeting forms, articles or handouts for the meeting- the Group Leader will provide guidance;
 - f. Send out a biweekly email to group members about the upcoming session;
 - g. Send out a group email to cancel a meeting, in the event of poor weather.

Please provide their name, position title, and contact information. Also, describe what roles they have done in the past that prepare them to be effective in this role. **Upload a copy of their resume with your application.**

3. Will you be the sole host for the program, or will you have a partner? Please identify partner and history of your relationship.
4. Where will the meetings be held?
Address #1:
Address #2, if applicable:
5. What time of day would you designate to host the networking group for a 3 hour period on a biweekly (2 meetings per month)?

6. Could your site(s) be open for a nighttime meeting?
7. Does the site have a computer lab that job seekers could use during the meeting as well as at non-meeting times?
8. How many cars can park in the proposed meeting location(s)?
9. What type of programming attracts individuals in the 50- and 60- age demographic? Please describe.
10. What is the average age of the people participating in the current programming at your COA?

Experience Promoting Employment:

11. Do you currently encourage older adults to seek paid work? If you do, please describe how you go about doing so.
12. When your center staff helps older adults with economic counseling to help pay household bills, does your staff recommend employment income as a potential solution? Please describe 1) whether they suggest it to all or some people and 2) how they decide who to encourage towards employment.
13. How do you interface with local employers in your community?

Regional Collaborators:

14. Will you partner with another council on aging or other entity (e.g. faith community, civic group, library, etc.) to offer this program at multiple locations by switching between meeting sites? Please identify the agency who will be your partner.

15. All host sites are required to advertise the program through media outlets of abutting and regional towns. In a chart with 3 columns, list 1) all the entities through which you will advertise the program, 2) the media each will use to reach the public, and 3) the frequency each media is issued.
16. Which career center serves your region? Will the Career Center be willing to support your 50+ Job Seekers Networking Group by referring older job seekers to your group, sending staff to serve as a guest speaker, organizing a job fair for older adults, and/or supplying a co-facilitator for the group? **If they are going to be a supporting partner, please ask them for a letter of support that explains the type of support they will offer and upload it with your application.**
17. What else should we know about you, your center, and your interest in organizing this rich civic engagement program?

Thank You!