



MEMORANDUM

TO: Workforce Development Board

FROM: Christopher Donnelly

SUBJECT: RFP #10976 Sole Source Recommendation

DATE: April 23, 2026

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Monterey County Workforce Development Board (MCWDB):

1. Approves the Executive Committee's April 16, 2026, recommendation to execute an agreement with Arbor E&T, doing business as Equus Workforce Solutions, to provide WIOA One Stop Operator services in Monterey County for the period from July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, for an amount not to exceed \$135,000; and
2. Forwards the recommendation to approve Equus Workforce Solutions to the Board of Supervisors for final approval.

BACKGROUND:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) contemplates that the One-Stop service delivery system will be managed by a One-Stop Operator responsible for coordinating the delivery of services by One-Stop partners and may include coordinating service delivery between a primary One-Stop Center and affiliated sites. WIOA requires competitive procurement of One-Stop Operators and also requires the concurrence of the chief elected official of the Local Area: here, the Board of Supervisors.

Arbor E&T, doing business as ResCare and subsequently as Equus Workforce Solutions, has provided WIOA One Stop Operator (OSO) services to the MCWDB since the 2017 OSO Request for Proposals (RFP) selection committee recommended executing an agreement with Arbor E&T in an amount not to exceed \$125,000 for the period from January 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019, with three annual amendments on substantially the same terms. This recommendation was subsequently approved by the Board of Supervisors on January 9, 2018.

When MCWDB issued a new OSO RFP in 2022, Arbor E&T provided another competitive proposal for WIOA OSO services, was recommended by the RFP selection committee to provide these services for an amount not to exceed \$125,000, and was approved by the Board of Supervisors on September 27, 2022, to sign a new agreement and future amendments on similar terms, provided that the agreement's performance objectives are met and WIOA funding continues to be available. For 2024-25, the annual contract amount was increased to \$135,000.

DISCUSSION:

The WIOA One Stop Operator Services RFP was released on February 12, 2026, with a submittal deadline of March 6, 2026, and a responsive proposal was received from Arbor E&T's Equus Workforce Solutions to provide One Stop Operator services for the America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs) in Monterey County. Equus' proposal was received by the submittal deadline, but no other proposals to serve Monterey County were received.

According to the MCWDB's adopted policy on Procurement Standards, it may procure goods and services without competition under certain limited circumstances. Per the One-Stop Comprehensive Financial Management Technical Assistance Guide issued by the U. S. Department of Labor, the purchase must be unfeasible using other procurement methods and may be used when a competitive process yields an insufficient number of bidders (fewer than two).

MCWDB is interested in providing continuous WIOA One Stop Operator services in Monterey County and believes that if it were to take another three to four months to conduct an additional WIOA OSO RFP process, the interruption to its contracted One Stop Operator services would lead to lower customer satisfaction levels for WIOA participants and the general public with no guarantee of additional responsible bidders.

If the MCWDB approves a sole source recommendation to award a new contract to Equus for One Stop Operator services, it will maintain documentation for the non-competitive, sole source purchase including:

- A WDB staff report providing the reason(s) for selecting the sole source method, explaining why competitive procurement is unfeasible, and which additional sole source condition applies, if any.
- The estimate of the potential purchase price.
- A copy of the unsuccessful RFQ/IFB/RFP and responses submitted.
- A determination of *the responsibility of the selected provider* and cost analysis.
- Why the provider was selected.
- A copy of Monterey County WDB meeting minutes indicating approval of the sole-source procurement.
- A copy of the award documents and resulting contract.

In its Contracts/Purchasing manual, the County of Monterey defines *a responsible bidder* as "A bidder whose bid conforms in all material respects to the terms and conditions, the specifications, and other requirements of the solicitation." Here, WDB staff has provided an analysis of Equus' proposal to determine bidder responsibility and ensure that Equus' proposal materially conforms to the requirements of the RFP.

Contractor Qualifications and Staff Observations

The following information is based on WDB staff's proposal review.

Equus Workforce Solutions has over 50 years of workforce development experience, serving as a contractor and grant recipient for federal, state, and locally funded workforce initiatives. Currently, Equus holds 27 One Stop Operator contracts nationwide, providing a broad perspective on effective system operations across diverse workforce regions. The national footprint enables Equus to identify emerging best practices, adapt innovative service delivery models to local conditions, and implement creative solutions with hybrid and distributed staffing environments.

Quality of Design (50 points)

The proposal narrative is highly detailed and thoroughly discusses most aspects of Equus' comprehensive and responsive approach to providing the OSO services specified in the RFP. The proposal emphasized Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), including ongoing assessment of operational performance, service delivery, and certification readiness.

In addition, Equus' proposal focused on partner education and general workforce system coordination and modernization. Equus integrates innovative, user-centered tools to enhance access, engagement, and service coordination – tools such as Level All, an online training tool that provides career and college guidance, resume development resources, financial literacy training, and information on 135 careers in both English and Spanish. Another tool, EQ Career Connect powered by Employable Me, delivers customized resources to support education, skills development, and employment pathways.

Equus' accessibility Quality Management Tool (QMT) verifies availability and functionality of assistive technologies, auxiliary aids, staff training on accommodations, interpreter service postings including sign language assistance, and direct linkage methods including phone, online chat, and teleconference access to partners.

Finally, Equus' national Operational Excellence (OpEx) Team, composed of experienced workforce development leaders, partners with local operations to implement documented quality review processes, reinforce consistent practices across service locations, and drive improvement based on performance data. Equus is also able to leverage its established OSO Community of Practice, coordinated monthly by a national One Stop Operations leader, to share best practices, disseminate policy updates, support peer-to-peer problem solving, provide mentorship opportunities, and generally ensure consistency across operations.

Agency's Organizational and Financial Proposal (35 points)

With its network of workforce and economic mobility partners, Equus collaborates to advance participant outcomes and the quality of the local workforce system. As OSO, Equus provides ongoing education and technical assistance to promote shared understanding and application of AJCC requirements, such as certification standards, EO and ADA compliance, customer service expectations, data integrity, and day-to-day operational protocols. Partner education includes cross-training sessions conducted at least quarterly, comprehensive standard operating procedures and guidance documents, policy update briefings, and targeted one-on-one technical assistance.

Based on its local experience, Equus supports enforcement of procedural, conduct, and appearance standards governing AJCC operations through monitoring, documentation, and coordination with partner leadership. Standards are reinforced through routine observation and Quality Monitoring Tool reviews to assess adherence to established policies while supporting continuous improvement.

Equus brings national experience leading and supporting CQI programs across AJCC systems. Our system-wide CQI approach is built on standardized tools, scheduled operational reviews, and structured corrective action planning designed to drive system improvement and partner accountability. In Monterey County, customer satisfaction feedback is assessed through quarterly surveys. CQI activities, performance monitoring, customer feedback analysis, and corrective action follow-up are integrated into governance and partner meetings and reported to MCWDB leadership.

Performance Standards and Data Collection (15 points)

Equus has used state and proprietary case management systems comparable to CalJOBS throughout its projects nationwide, including working with America's One-Stop Operating System (AOSOS), maintains a local customer satisfaction rate averaging approximately 95%, and uses various tools to connect program participants and the public with labor market information relevant to their job search.

Based on the information above, staff recommends that Equus Workforce Solutions be approved to provide WIOA One Stop Operator services for 2026-27.

NEXT STEPS:

If the recommendation to execute a sole-source agreement with Equus Workforce Solutions to provide 2026-27 One Stop Services is approved, it will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for final approval.