Q: Do you happen to know the estimated funding source or budget for this project?

A: Tennessee Corrections Institute has a budget of state funds of $100,000 for this project. We have access to a $75,000 grant to supplement the research portion of the project, but the grant expires March 31, 2023.

Q: If so, has funding for an RFP been secured?

A: Yes, TCI has our funding in place.

Q: Is this a new requirement? Or is there an incumbent vendor providing these services?

A: This is a new requirement. No vendor has provided these services for TCI previously.

Q: If there is an incumbent, would you be able to provide the contract number, vendor name, and term of the contract?

A: There is no incumbent.

Q: I understand this is not a solicitation, however, hypothetically is there a timeline for an RFP to be released?

A: TCI expects to release either a procurement RFP or a grant solicitation no later than July 31, 2022.

Q: If not, what steps are expected to make a decision on releasing an RFP?

A: Based on the RFI answers, if no vendor can offer research, resource development, consulting/advice, and training development/execution as a single package, TCI will look to offer multiple RFPS by separating the project into separate categories. If multiple responses come in reflecting multiple vendors have the capability to do all facets of the project, then TCI will move forward with the RFP or grant solicitation. We are in discussions with other state agencies that have a vested interest in this subject matter which may impact the final project parameters.

Q: Do you already have someone in mind for the research analysis or should we start looking into that as well?

A: TCI does not have any person or company in mind for any portion of this project. TCI is a small agency with limited staff. We have budgeted funding for the express purpose of hiring a vendor that can do all aspects of this project: interviews of customers (sample size to be suggested by the vendor), analysis of results, research on evidence-based practices originating from various federal, state, and private/non-profit, and academic sources, creation of a tool-kit and action plan for correctional staff to implement, and development of a training or train-the-trainer style program that can be offered in three different regions of the state. TCI has the ability to perform training and
train-the-trainer programs if the vendor does not, but the vendor would collaborate with TCI to prepare our certified trainers to facilitate the program.

Q: Reference 2. Background Paragraph 2 on Page 2: We understand the training provided will be for employees, and we understand that TCI is interested in delivering this program through a Train the Trainer model. Can you please clarify the role of the “Peer Support Team” members and “passionate volunteer employees” who will be delivering the training to fellow peers? Are the volunteer employees a part of the Peer Support Team?

A: Yes, we foresee the volunteer employees would be a part of, if not the leaders of, their local facility Peer Support Team. The role of the Peer Support Team is to be a network of resources for facility personnel.

“Peer support programs provide both critical incident response support and ongoing support systems for officers throughout their service. Specific mental health services such as counseling, support groups, and linkages to ongoing treatment are provided by a combination of options from in-house psychologists or external referrals to services...Additional support services include family and relationship counseling; financial and legal counseling; military deployment and reintegration support; family education about PTSD, suicide risks, and other dangers to officers’ mental health and wellness and ow to support officers; and crisis care for families experiencing illness, death, or other trauma. Most agencies define their programs as available to officers, staff members, and their families” (USDOJ, Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Programs: Eleven Case Studies, p. 4).

TCI has an informal partnership with the non-profit Tennessee Public Safety Network and most law enforcement agencies in Tennessee have a formal agreement with them, for critical incident stress management. We are not looking to provide that service as it is out of scope for this project. We are looking for the other portions of the items above highlighted in yellow. We want to help the Peer Support Team and volunteers to be able to provide referrals to these types of services. This includes helping students learn how to identify resources, and how to create partnerships, especially in regions that are rural and have limited resources nearby.

The highlighted items above give a general idea of what a Peer Support Team might do. Below are some additional specific examples:

- Advocate for employees who have minor to medium level problems that need resolving (e.g. shift conflicts and other non-human resources concerns).
- Provide guidance and advice on personal matters (e.g. Perhaps they want help finding a new pediatrician or a mechanic. Perhaps they are looking for some advice or just someone to vent to, and they don’t want to vent to their supervisor because it’s not really that kind of issue. To use a metaphor, these people are not necessarily people’s “friend”, as much as they are, “that friendly fellow at work you know you can go ask a
question of on just about any topic and they’re always happy to answer you, always make time for you, and if they don’t know the answer to your question they know someone who does” type of person. Oftentimes these people already exist in every workplace. We would like to help build these people up, make them more knowledgeable and even more helpful, and help them improve their working culture to one that lifts up, builds, and supports their employees every day.

- Provide referrals and assist with those referrals as necessary in response to mental health or substance use concerns in collaboration with human resources.

Justice-Involved Individuals have received a lot of focus over the years, and rightfully so, in that they now receive education, programming, and advocacy during and after incarceration. When a JII leaves the jail, they have a release plan, help with finding a job, help with obtaining education, help with finding housing and transportation, and more. Often times employees are encouraged to embrace rugged individualism and figure it out themselves. A Peer Support Team would help remove obstacles for employees similar and help them succeed in their very challenging careers which will positively impact not only public safety, but, in theory, the success rate of justice-involved individuals. Even the strongest person can get burned out when they feel nobody cares. The Peer Support Team must address this need.

Q: Reference End State 3. on Page 3: When referencing “TCI may be interested in a follow-up study at one year after the training to determine training effectiveness” would this be included in the current RFI scope or in a follow-on period of performance?

A: If TCI decides to perform a follow-up study, we’ll issue a new RFP/grant to do so.

Q: Is TCI expecting on site training for the train the trainer sessions? If so, does TCI expect the training to be conducted at multiple sites, one location or through a virtual delivery model?

A: Training would need to be performed on-site. TCI will procure a training site in East, West, and Middle Tennessee for the training to occur. TCI will assist with student registration. TCI envisions three regional training sessions to occur spread over a 90-day time frame, but the vendor can make recommendations. We do not believe virtual is a good fit for this training for multiple reasons: A) Training virtually for more than 4 hours is typically unsatisfying and can be unengaging. B) Many of our customers work in rural areas with limited internet bandwidth. C) Virtual training may limit the types of activities offered. D) We believe networking is an important aspect in making this type of training program work as graduates from the program will lean on their peers in surrounding counties to provide support.

Q: If I am considering partnering with another firm do I have to provide specific information regarding their role in the RFI? Once you receive all the RFI’s from different firms do you know when the RFP will be posted?
A: You do not have to put in another firms/partner’s specific information in the RFI. It is fine to partner with another firm that can fill in areas where your firm may have knowledge or experience gaps. TCI expects to release our RFP no later than July 31, 2022.