



April 20, 2015

Via E-mail

Forrest Claypool
President
Chicago Transit Authority
567 West Lake Street
Chicago IL 60661

**Re: Suggestions from Illinois Jobs to Move America Coalition for Scoring the 7000 Series RFP
U.S. Employment Plan**

Dear President Claypool:

We are writing on behalf of Illinois Jobs to Move America, a coalition of organizations from around the region working to ensure that major transit investments, like the Chicago Transit Authority's 7000 series procurement, create good jobs for Chicago area residents. As supporters of public transportation, we applaud the efforts of the Chicago Transit Authority and the City of Chicago to increase investment in our transit system. We also commend the Chicago Transit Authority for requiring bidders to share detailed commitments for quality American job creation on the contract. Our coalition has been working with the foremost experts in workforce training and economic development from across the region to develop guiding principles and best practices that we urge you to keep in mind when scoring the proposers' U.S. Employment Plans.

The Illinois Jobs to Move America coalition is organizing a webinar on how to add value through manufacturing workforce development, to be held the beginning of May, as part of an effort to provide proposers on the Chicago Transit Authority's contract with support for the creation of a robust American jobs program. We will be bringing together a table of leading experts in manufacturing workforce development and reaching out to all railcar manufacturers that have expressed interest in participation on Chicago's 7000 series contract. Last year, Jobs to Move America developed a set of [workforce development tools](#) and background materials for rolling stock manufacturers that will also likely be relevant to this bid.

We strongly urge that the Chicago Transit Authority take note of the factors described in detail below when scoring the bidders' U.S. Employment Plans. It is important for your source selection committee to take into consideration the following.

Commitment to long-term, quality American job creation with career advancement opportunities.

- A robust, detailed training plan with a strong financial investment. Such a plan should focus on increasing and diversifying the skills of the workforce and tie achievements to wage increases and promotions. Training plans should ensure that employees have the skills and flexibility to meet quality and performance standards, and the development of a successful and motivated workforce that earns fair wages. Plans should also identify an internal Training Director and



instructor positions, as well as any partnerships with local labor organizations, workforce development programs and community colleges. Training should promote nationally-recognized and portable industry credentials where applicable. This training should be at no cost to the employees.

- Outline a complete manufacturing career ladder for proposed project with clear pathways for advancement, identifying labor grades and wages that are at or above the industry standard. This organizational structure will help companies recruit, train, and retain employees through internal professional development and promotion.
- Disclose domestic content commitments on proposed vehicle production, and describe in detail their plan to meet such commitments, such as the timeline for any location and job creation, as well as specify what railcar component manufacturing work will be completed in the U.S. Also, the manufacturer should describe efforts to work with local and regional suppliers to meet and exceed Buy America goals, as well as provide supply chain job creation by location.
- Indicate the manufacturer's record and commitment to worker's rights and safety, demonstrating adherence to local and federal labor laws, as well as a clean safety record with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. A plan for continuing safety training should also be included.
- Include a breakdown of the wages and benefits, such as healthcare, retirement plans, paid vacation, sick days, and family and medical leave, which will be provided to employees filling the American jobs created at various skill levels and roles within the company. Wage and benefits packages should meet or exceed the industry standard. Any cost passed on to the employee for such benefits should be revealed. Historical data around wages and benefits at other U.S. locations should also be provided.
- Describe commitment to employee retention, providing historical retention rates and seniority for workers in other operating sites. Outline a plan for employee retention that includes professional development and training, as mentioned above, and support services, ideally with case management. Efforts made to reduce turnover are good for the employees and the company's bottom line.
- Describe a plan to sustain American manufacturing efforts at proposed facility/facilities beyond the length of the contract.

Commitment to job access that will help ensure the success of all workers, particularly disadvantaged workers.

- A customized, pre-apprenticeship program should be developed specifically to prepare workers for employment at the company. Training should provide basic skills remediation as well as advanced skills training. This training should be predominantly hands-on and not only classroom or online courses, in order to reach people of all learning styles. The pre-apprenticeship program



should simulate the workplace environment and provide “soft skills” training and support services with case management to develop and retain reliable employees. The pre-apprenticeship program should be in partnership with labor, workforce development programs, and community colleges. This training should be at no cost to those enrolled.

- Proposers should describe in detail how it will build out its human resources capacity to support outreach, recruitment and placement of disadvantaged workers. Many people lack a robust referral network and skills to navigate online job postings, preventing them from accessing good jobs. Outreach plans should describe how they will reach groups such as women, formerly incarcerated persons, and veterans. The proposer should also describe specific relationships with community organizations that they will partner with on this effort.
- The companies should describe how their hiring practices are not unintentionally discriminating against certain populations. This will afford the employer a greater talent pool, and provide fair access for all qualified applicants. For instance, the Ban the Box initiative removes questions about criminal background from job application forms, which often prevent qualified individuals from getting the chance to interview and explain their situations, as well as convey their skills, work ethic and experience.
- The proposer should describe its bilingual capacities specifically with regard to outreach, recruitment, human resources, shop management, training materials and workplace communications. Training plans should provide English as a Second Language (ESL) learning opportunities, allowing ESL learners to develop and have equal opportunities for career advancement.
- The company should conduct a transportation study to help identify and overcome barriers to site access. Without access to reliable transportation, many qualified people will not be able to seek or keep employment at the company. A strategy for providing transportation access should take into account shift schedules and provide options such as shuttles, ride-sharing programs, or other services to overcome gaps in public transportation. Subsidized transportation cost for eligible, low-income new hires should be considered, such as those receiving public benefits.

Commitment to community investment, collaboration and stewardship.

- The Chicagoland workforce development system is one of the most robust in the nation. Many workforce development programs and community colleges in the Chicagoland area have been training, certifying, and placing skilled workers in regional manufacturing companies for years with placement and retention rates above 80%. These job placement and retention services are at no cost to the employer. Numerous groups provide training to incumbent workers and community colleges offer manufacturing specific coursework and certificates. Labor unions also provide relevant training and apprenticeships. Proposals to engage specific groups in this workforce network will provide abundant opportunities for hiring, training and retaining new talent, as well as reach the underserved communities in need of good employment opportunities.



- ILJMA would like to see proposers commit to a local manufacturing facility for the greatest impact on the Chicagoland communities.
- Manufacturers should plan to continue to engage populations not traditionally employed in the industry (i.e. women, African-Americans, formerly incarcerated, veterans, etc.) about the opportunities in manufacturing.
- Manufacturers should propose to engage youth through internships, tours, mentorship, career fairs, and investments in STEM learning programs, etc. The proposer should outline a plan for engaging the K-12 system and other youth-based community organizations to educate youth and their parents about opportunities in manufacturing, and provide them with valuable knowledge and experience to pursue these opportunities. This investment in the community will build a future employment base for the company and the regional manufacturing sector.
- Proposers should demonstrate compliance with environmental laws and associated permits, and commit to being good stewards to the local environment by minimizing waste and pollution, providing a clean environment for people to live and work.
- Numerous grants, tax incentives and business services can be utilized to help the manufacturer meet employment and training goals at a good value. ILJMA and its partners can help companies take advantage of these resources. Proposals should outline any plans for accessing such funds to help augment the cost of training and hiring already committed.

Again, we commend the Chicago Transit Authority for adopting the Employment Plan as a section of the RFP and including it in the competitive scoring process. This additional section adds significant value to the proposal process and provides an opportunity to bring greater success to the Chicago Transit Authority, manufacturers, and the community. By implementing many of the suggestions in this letter, bidders will make clear their ability to carry out the project successfully.

A strong Employment Plan will equal a strong workforce, which will positively impact the project budget, as well as timeliness and quality of the product. Collaboration with the labor, workforce and training community will ensure best practices are adopted and the workers are properly supported. Establishment of pre-apprenticeship programs and fair hiring practices will guarantee that the manufacturer is getting the right people for the job. Continued on-the-job training will bring the workforce to production levels more quickly and effectively, without compromising safety or quality. Advanced training will bring even higher performance, capacity and flexibility, as well as improve communication, quality and safety. Additionally, career paths will motivate employees and reduce turnover, as well as cultivate leadership. A clean, safe, diverse, respectful and accessible place to work with fair wages, benefits and labor practices will strongly impact the manufacturers' ability to recruit and retain the talent they need to succeed.

All of these factors ensure that the project will not only be a valuable use of tax dollars but create good manufacturing jobs for the community. Only bidders with clear, specific structural and monetary commitments in their Employment Plan proposals that address the many recommendations outlined in



this letter should be awarded high scores in this section. *At a minimum*, high value dollar commitments to American job creation and training should be detailed and include plans for recruiting, training and retaining a diverse workforce, specifying efforts to work with the labor, education and community organizations that represent the public interest and can lend their expertise to the company in carrying out such a plan. It is the recommendation of ILJMA that any proposal with vague commitments on jobs, training, workers rights, and diverse hiring is passing on a great opportunity to maximize the success and impact of this project and should be awarded few points if any.

A well-equipped, local facility and a highly trained workforce, with a well-developed pipeline for recruitment and professional development, should ensure success in the long-term and position the Chicago Transit Authority and the manufacturers well for execution of future projects, while providing meaningful and lasting careers to Chicagoland residents. With an estimated \$2 billion in public investment on this 7000 series project alone, our community deserves a commitment to high quality, family supporting jobs, just as they deserve quality transportation from the Chicago Transit Authority that they have relied on for decades.

Yours very truly,
(in alphabetical order)

Regan Brewer
Associate Director- Programs
Jane Addams Resource Corporation

Jack Darin
Director
Sierra Club Illinois

Mollie Dowling
Executive Director
OAI, Inc.

Ana Garcia-Ashley
Executive Director
Gamaliel

Susan Hurley
Executive Director
Chicago Jobs With Justice

Cynthia Jarrold
National Policy Coordinator
Transportation Equity Network



Linda Nguyen Perez
National Outreach Coordinator
Jobs to Move America

Jake Williams
Workforce Development Specialist
Jobs to Move America

Cc:
Ellen McCormack, Chicago Transit Authority
Maria Williams-Baxter, Chicago Transit Authority
Karen Seimetz, Chicago Transit Authority
Alstom, USA
Ansaldo Breda, USA
Bombardier, USA
China South Locomotive & Rolling Stock Corporation Limited
Hyundai Rotem, USA
Kawasaki, USA
Nippon Sharyo, USA
Siemens, USA