Issue Date: May 30, 2023

RFP Questions and Responses: Academic Excellence for All

Q. Section 2(c) ties renewals to participant satisfaction thresholds for professional development. What thresholds will the State use, and how will satisfaction be measured?

A. This will be worked out during the contracting process.

Q. Can Contractors retain ownership of preexisting intellectual property? Intellectual property: Attachment D, Section 2 covers products specific to this contract and to the State. Does the contractor keep ownership of pre-existing tools and frameworks it brings to work, including when adapted for Vermont, if the State receives a license to use them?

A. Contractors retain ownership of their preexisting IP. Only materials developed as a result of the contract become the State's property.

Q. Are resumes required for staff who are bid?

A. Resumes are not required; however, we do ask for a description of the capabilities and particular experiences relevant to the RFP requirements.

Q. Is there a page limit for the Technical Response?

A. Please refer to the RFP, page 9, section 4.

Q. Submission address: Section 5.1 directs bids to aoe.cpteam@vermont.gov, and Section 5.2 directs them to meg.porcella@vermont.gov. Which address should be used?

Q. Please confirm the email address that should be used for submission. There are two different email addresses identified for submission: on p. 10 it states that "Bids must be received by Meg Porcella at aoe.cpteam@vermont.gov" and at the top of p. 11 it states " All bids under this RFP must be submitted electronically via email by 4:30 PM (EST) on November 20, 2026 to Meg Porcella at meg.porcella@vermont.gov".

A. The email address should be aoe.cpteam@vermont.gov

Budget:

Q. Is there a budget range the state can provide for Year 1 and/or the entire project (Year 1, plus the three option years)

A. We're not able to provide that information. Please calculate your cost based on the scope you propose.

Q. Should bidders submit a budget for Year 1 only, or should the budget include the option years? If yes, should we use the same format?

A. We welcome bids that include option years. The format is up to the bidder.

Q. Should the items in the Goal Area column in the Price Quotation form be relabeled to align with the five deliverables listed on 2.2.3? Or aligned with the sub-bullets in each deliverable? Or is it up to the submitter?

A. It is up to the submitter.

Q. Can the categories in the “Price Quotation” column of the Price Quotation form be changed by the submitter?

A. Yes

Q. What, if any, budget information should be included for the three optional years? If budget information for the optional years is required, how should it be structured since the deliverables in the RFP are only for the first year?

A. Budget info is only required for the first year, though we welcome bids that include option years

Q. Budget: Is there an estimated budget or funding ceiling for the base year and for each option year?

A. We're not able to provide that information. Please calculate your cost based on the scope you propose

Q. Funding source: Section 1.6 says the project is funded in whole or in part with federal funds. Which federal program(s)? Section 2.2.1(1)(d) also refers to "the grant scope of work." Can the State share that document or its key dates?

A. Those details will be available during the contracting process.

Scoring Criteria:

Q. The scoring criteria indicate that the lowest bid will receive 20 points for cost. How will the state score other bids on cost? Will all other bids receive a zero for cost or will a portion of the 20 points be awarded?

A. Bids will be organized according to the bid scope. The lowest bid receives the 20 points. However, the lowest bid is not guaranteed to receive the contract.

Q. Section 3.6 says the State may award one or more contracts. Will the State accept proposals for a subset of the five deliverables in Section 2.2.3? If so, how will partial proposals be scored against full-scope proposals? Specifically, will "Responsiveness to Specifications" (40 points) be judged only on the deliverables proposed? And how will "Program Cost" (20 points, lowest bid) be calculated when bidders propose different scopes?

Q. The scoring rubric allocates 20 points to Program Cost and references the lowest bid received. Could you clarify how cost scores will be calculated across proposals, including whether points will be assigned proportionally based on the lowest bid or through another methodology?

Q. If the state awards multiple contracts, how will that be translated for the lowest cost criterion?

A. Bids will be organized according to the bid scope. The lowest bid receives 20 points. However, the lowest bid is not guaranteed to win the contract.

Scope of Work:

Q. The RFP states the Agency may establish contracts with one or more companies. Would the Agency consider proposals focused on specific components of the Academic Excellence for All plan, or should respondents address the full scope of work?

A. Bidders are welcome to bid on part of the RFP's scope.

Q. Am I correct in understanding since "one or more bidder(s)" are mentioned in the document language, an organization is encouraged to submit a proposal addressing only a portion of the scope?

A. Bidders are welcome to bid on a part of the RFP's scope.

Q. The state indicates that it "is seeking to establish contracts with one or more companies"; therefore, can an offeror bid on specific work strands from the scope of work, or are offerors required to bid on the full scope of work in the RFP in order to be eligible?

A. Bidders are welcome to bid on a part of the RFP's scope.

Q. Are all deliverables listed in the RFP due in Year 1, or is the scope of work and set of deliverables included in the RFP the full scope of work across the 4 years (Year 1 and the three option years)?

A. The deliverables are for year 1.

Q. Re: deliverable 4c. “Student Information System Guidance”- what is the current standing of the SIS in place for the AOE? Is the system currently being redesigned or is a redesign planned soon? Our understanding is that this RFP deliverable does NOT include a redesigned SIS- please confirm if that is accurate.

A. This does not include redesigning an SIS. The deliverable is to create guidance for LEAs to accurately code the learning experiences they are offering so that the SEA can effectively monitor the implementation of graduation requirements statewide

Q. Approximately how many HQIM programs does AOE anticipate reviewing in ELA, mathematics, science, HHB prevention, and Comprehensive Health Education during the initial contract year?

A. We will begin with reviewing the 10 most commonly used programs (5 in ELA and 5 in mathematics) and then proceed to additional reviews of additional HQIM in these areas, as well as in Science and Social Studies.

Q. How many ELA, math, and science programs does the State expect to review? Should external reviewer stipends be included in the bidder's price, and if so, is there a set stipend amount or number of reviewers?

A. Stipends may not be paid to external reviewers and should not be calculated in the budget.

Q. Will the State select the 8-12 pilot SU/SDs, or is the contractor expected to recruit them? To support the work related to the SIS recommendations, is the expectation that the bidder has technical software product management capacity or that the bidder is creating policy requirements to hand over to another contractor or internal technical team?

A. The AOE will assist with recruitment of the 8-12 pilot SU/SDs. See above for the SIS question.

Q. Does the reference to “codify the implementation guidance/expectations/processes related to the graduation requirements” mean the state intends to engage in a formal regulatory process and issue regulations to accompany the new graduation requirements?

A. The AOE will be supporting the implementation of and monitoring of the statewide graduation requirements once the State Board of Education finalizes its decision on what these are.

Q. Can you further define “criteria for proficiency in the standards for each content credit”? Does this relate to proficiency scales?

A. Proficiency scales may be one methodology used to determine these criteria. We also would like to establish strong criteria for performance assessments. These final products will be co-constructed with our state education partners, and with the expertise of the selected vendor

Q. Does the agency expect the winning applicant to assume full responsibility for the creation of the performance assessment tasks and assessment banks or to develop a process informed by best practices to guide the responsible agency office/s as they seek to create those items or issue another RFP to secure an assessment vendor for that responsibility?

A. The winning applicant will lead the creation of the performance assessment tasks and banks by convening educators by content area to develop these

Q. Does the state have a target number of PBATs and assessment bank items they are seeking to create through this contract? What are specific examples of cross-content PBATs aligned to AOE’s vision? What are the five most commonly used curricula that the AOE found for each of the 3 content areas (as referenced in the pre-bid meeting)?

A. We plan to work with the selected vendor to make these decisions.

Q. Is the EQS self-evaluation the current version of the annual curricular materials inventory? How are they different, or how does AOE want the new process to look similar or different?

A. Yes, this is the current method for collecting information on curriculum. We are open to the selected vendor’s review and advisement on improving these systems.

Q. Does the annual curricular materials inventory design include a data collection tool to support analysis?

A. We currently use Cognito to collect the information. We are open to the selected vendor’s review and advisement on improving these systems.

Q. The title references PreK-12, but no deliverable names pre-K specifically. Is pre-K in scope? If so, for which deliverables?

A. There are no PreK-specific deliverables in the Year 1 scope

Training & Coaching Sessions:

Q. Section 2.1.2 references training sessions for AOE staff and partners. Could you please clarify
   a. What delivery formats are expected (in-person, virtual, hybrid)?
   b. What is the anticipated frequency and duration of these training sessions?
   c. Are these trainings intended to be integrated with the broader professional learning activities and cycles referenced in sections 2.4 and 2.9?
      A. We will work with the selected vendor to make these decisions.

Q. Could you please clarify the vendor's responsibilities under this section? Specifically, is the vendor expected to:
   a. Provide all professional development directly?
   b. Develop a comprehensive plan and approach for professional learning?
   c. Deliver training on conducting continuous improvement activities and monitoring?
   d. Or fulfill another role not listed above?
      A. The vendor will provide professional development on the topics described in the RFP and finalized in the final contract. The AOE will approve the final plan and approach.

Q. The RFP mentions the vendor will "provide cycles of professional learning activities." Could you elaborate on what is meant by "cycles"? For example:
   a. Is this referring to recurring sessions over the contract period?
   b. Are there specific intervals or formats the AOE team envisioned (quarterly workshops, coaching cycles, etc.)?
      A. Cycles of professional learning refers to a recurring, structured process in which a cohort of educators and education leaders engage in learning, application, observation, feedback, reflection, and refinement around a specific instructional improvement focus, using shared tools and evidence to strengthen implementation over time.

Q. Regarding Section 2.2.1.2.m (Regional Leader Training Sessions): For the four full-day, in-person learning sessions for SU/SD leaders, is the vendor expected to secure and pay for the physical venues, catering, and AV equipment within their fixed-price bid, or will the AOE provide space and/or cover costs for catering and equipment etc. for these sessions?
      A. The vendor is responsible for those logistical details. The AOE will help with recommendations.

Q. For coaching of the 8–12 pilot SU/SDs, what level and format of support does AOE envision, for example individual SU/SD engagements versus cohort-based coaching, and virtual versus in-person support?

A. This would be cohort-based with both in-person and virtual engagements.

Q. Will the 4 full-day onsite learning sessions for SU/SD leaders on the toolkit be a series of 4 sessions, or the same full-day session repeated for different regions/cohorts?

A. This would be a series.

Q. What are your preferred parameters for duration or mode (in person vs. virtual) for 1) AOE staff training on observations and 2) for the Act 173 working group and AOE leadership planning sessions for the project plan? Or is the plan flexible?

A. Act 173 working group meets virtually biweekly for an hour, but in person and longer meetings are an option. AOE staff can meet in person or virtually for training. Some in-the-field training would be preferred.

Focus Groups & Advisory Committees:

Q. Regarding Section 2.2.1.3.d (Safe & Healthy Schools Focus Groups): Are there explicit minimum targets for the number of student and caregiver focus groups required, or a minimum participant count that the vendor must scope into the stakeholder feedback plan?

A. These logistics will be finalized during the contracting process.

Q. Regarding Section 2.2.1.4.a (Graduation Requirements Working Groups): Will the AOE handle the recruitment and outreach for the national experts, educators, principals, and superintendents, or will the selected vendor be fully responsible for identifying and recruiting these working group members?

A. AOE will assist with this.

Q. To assist with better understanding the scope of work and in making pricing estimates, can the state provide the anticipated number (or a range) of invitees/participants for:

- the two planning sessions with the Act 173 working group and AOE leadership
- the Vermont Academic Toolkit Advisory Committee

- Working Groups supporting the Statewide Graduation Requirements Implementation and number of sessions.
    A. We anticipate 10 participants for the 2 planning sessions, 10-15 for the Toolkit Advisory Committee, and at least 8 monthly work groups that will include varied participants based on the topic.

Q. Does AOE have an anticipated number, cadence, duration, and membership size for the graduation requirements working groups and Vermont Academic Toolkit Advisory Committee?
    A. For the graduation requirements workgroups, we anticipate needing at least 8 monthly work groups, including stakeholders from a variety of audiences, based on specific implementation topics.

Timeline:

Q. The contract is expected to start January 1, 2027, but several deliverables (professional learning, four in-person sessions, pilot coaching) are set for the spring semester of the current school year. Are these spring 2027 deliverables, and will deliverable dates be adjusted if contract execution is delayed past January 1?
    A. The final timeline will be determined during the contract development process.

Q. Is the timeline for the 2027-28 annual plan/roadmap creation process and release date set, or flexible to align with timelines for the scope of work?
    A. The final timeline will be determined during the contract development process.