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Standard Bid Request for Proposals – January 16, 2024

Issued by the Vermont Agency of Education

**Advancing Quality
For the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21C)**

Proposals are due on or before March 18, 2024

Please email to:

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Overview: Vermont Agency of Education Goals, 21C Goals, and Request for Proposal Purpose

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21C) program has been funding high quality afterschool and summer learning programs since 1998. Poverty, opportunity gaps, and unmet academic need drive the program's purpose. Vermont's 21C program supports students' learning and interests through diverse and engaging programming using multiple approaches and curricula. Programs serving grades K-12 are delivered through schools and school-community partnerships. On average, approximately 11,000 youth and 5,500 regular attendees are served in 86 high needs communities across the state on an annual basis. Programs are expected to complement, but not duplicate the school day. Annual or semi-annual grant competitions are held to support this vision.

The primary objective of this document is to solicit proposals from potential contractors to assist in the Agency of Education's (AOE) statewide responsibilities in relation to the 21st Century Learning Center's Program. In addition, with the passage of new Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs legislation, deliverables may support similar comprehensive centers as they come into existence to ensure coherence and quality. The successful bidder(s) will provide services that will drive quality within Vermont Supervisory Unions, School Districts, and communities in support of the needs of Vermont's youth. Evidence of success will be rooted in program improvement and positive student outcomes.

Awarded proposal(s) will show the greatest promise of supporting the following overarching goal adopted by the Vermont State Board of Education:

Goal One – Ensure that Vermont's public education system operates within a framework of high standards for every learner and ensure that there is equity in opportunity for all.

The 21C initiative has been designed to support attainment of the following overarching long-term goals, consistent with Vermont's current federally approved state plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act:

By 2025, The AOE expects 100% of Vermont Schools to have:

- 1) Average scores in a proficient range for English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science

- 2) Average scores in a “healthy zone” for physical education
- 3) A 100% 6-year graduation rate
- 4) A 100% of English Learners attain English Language Proficiency
- 5) 67.5% of students to be Career and College ready

For the purposes of this RFP, the [21C Statewide Evaluation Plan](#) including its five statewide goals and results should also be understood to guide and inform proposals. Bidders may also choose to reference the AOE’s [Afterschool and Summer web page](#).

The successful bidder(s) will work with Vermont AOE staff, state-level and local partners, and potentially other providers to enhance a statewide system of professional learning, program assistance and continuous improvement activity that builds capacity in Vermont for these program centers that occur outside of the school day. The AOE’s intention is to develop contract(s) that will provide high quality services to the AOE, inclusive of work with supervisory unions/school districts (SUs/SDs) and all other 21C-funded organizations who work on behalf of the Vermont students they serve. Successful bidder(s) will submit proposals that balance high quality activities with cost efficiency.

Contract Period

The contract period will be from a summer date in 2024 through June 30, 2025, with the prospect, based on satisfactory performance and available funds, for up to two annual renewals. As part of the recently passed legislation for afterschool and summer programs, there may be additional comprehensive centers that require similar supports. As such, the Agency reserves the right to negotiate the scope of this contract to serve those emergent needs, so that any appropriate integration, alignment and efficiencies can be actualized between the two programs.

Proposal Guidelines and Requirements

Timetable

RFP Posted	January 16, 2023
Deadline for questions about RFP	March 8, 2024
Proposal submission deadline	March 18, 2024
Selection notification(s) by	May 3, 2024
Anticipated contract start	Summer, 2024

Submission Deadline

Bidders must submit a copy of their complete proposal (as an attached PDF document) via e-mail to Emanuel.Betz@vermont.gov by March 18, 2024 at 4.30 p.m. Bids received after the deadline will be disqualified from further consideration. The AOE is not responsible for technical problems that may delay receipt of the email attachment. Bidders should plan accordingly.

General Requirements

Single Point of Contact: All communications regarding this RFP shall be in writing and addressed to the contact person indicated on page one of this RFP.

Questions: Any vendor requiring clarification of any section of this proposal or wishing to comment or take exception to any requirements or other portion of the RFP must submit specific questions in writing no later than March 8, 2024. Questions should be e-mailed to Emanuel.Betz@vermont.gov. Any objection to the RFP, or to any provision of the RFP, that is not raised in writing on or before the last day of the question period is waived. At the close of the question period a copy of all questions or comments and the State's responses will be emailed to bidders. Every effort will be made, contingent on the number and complexity of the questions, to have answers available to bidders at the close of the question period.

Confidentiality: Bidders should be aware that all materials submitted will become part of the contract file and will be considered public records under the Vermont Public Records Act, 1 VSA Sections 315-320. The Agency of Education (AOE) prefers that vendors *not* file proprietary information with their bids. If the bidder finds it necessary to include material that the bidder considers to be proprietary, a trade secret or otherwise confidential, the bidder must: (1) clearly designate any information in the response the bidder believes is proprietary as "confidential"; (2) provide a written explanation sufficient to justify each exemption from release under the Vermont Public Records Act, including the prospective harm to the competitive position of the bidder if the identified material were to be released; and (3) include a redacted copy of the response for any portions of the bid that the vendor designates confidential. Under no circumstances can the entire response or price information be marked confidential. Responses so marked will not be considered and will be returned to the vendor.

Vendors filing submissions agree that final discretion to release or exempt all material so identified as confidential rests with the Agency.

Acceptance of the Proposal: The State reserves the right to waive minor irregularities in a bidder's proposal, providing such action is in the best interest of the State. Where the State may waive minor irregularities, such waiver shall in no way modify the RFP requirements or excuse the bidder from full compliance with the RFP specifications. The State reserves the right to request clarification or correction of the proposal, reject any or all proposals received, or cancel the procurement at any time prior to an award. A proposal may be rejected for: (1) the failure of the bidder to adhere to one or more provisions established in this RFP; (2) the failure of the bidder to submit required information in the format specified in this RFP; (3) the failure of the bidder to adhere to generally accepted ethical and professional principles during the RFP process; or (4) for any other reason deemed to be in the best interest of the State. In the event that the State is not successful in negotiating a contract with any selected bidders, the State reserves the option of negotiating with another bidder.

Form of Contract: The contract between AOE and the winning bidder(s) will be required to be in the form of the Standard Vermont State Contract, including but not limited to standard provisions, which can be found at:

[State of Vermont Standard Contract Template 12-13-23](#)

All contracts of the State of Vermont have standard provisions, which are included with this RFP as "Attachment C" and can also be found at:

[Attachment C Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants 12-7-23](#)

Exclusive Ownership: Any and all data, surveys analysis, reports, studies and other complete or incomplete work product prepared or developed by the contractor in connection with the contract shall become the exclusive property of the State and will not be copyrighted or resold by the contractor.

Costs of Preparing Proposals: All costs incurred by the bidder during the preparation of the proposal will be the sole responsibility of the bidder. Unless explicitly stated,

the State will not reimburse the bidder for any costs associated with submission of a proposal.

Use of Subcontractors: Bidder is required to provide a list of subcontractors, if any, that bidder anticipates using on the job along with lists of subcontractors' subcontractors and the names of insurers by whom those subcontractors are insured for workers' compensation purposes. Include additional pages if necessary. This is not a requirement for subcontractors providing supplies only and no labor to the overall contract or project.

Award Announcement: Any winning proposal will not be announced until a contract is signed and finalized.

Proposal Format

Use a standard 8.5" x 11" document format, typed single-spaced using eleven-point font. Bidders may select one or multiple deliverable areas for their proposal. The total page count for any one deliverable area proposed should not exceed 12 pages excluding attachments and the price quotation form. The AOE reserves the right to prioritize and select some or all components of a proposed deliverable as part of any final contract. The AOE may select multiple bidders based on the results of the individual deliverable area bids and associated costs. Some or all deliverables may be accepted for implementation depending on cost and need.

Scope of Work

Each Scope of Work requires its own narrative and associated autonomous price quotation as listed in the form.

Deliverable Area	Core Deliverable Summary
1. Afterschool and Summer Program Content Development and Improvement	Proposals to develop high quality program content in afterschool and summer settings in areas such as Literacy, Mathematics, STEM, Youth Leadership or other content areas including associated professional development as needed and appropriate.

2. Afterschool and Summer Program Quality Assessment System	Implementation of an afterschool quality improvement system for comprehensive afterschool centers.
3. Statewide Evaluation Analysis and annual report creation	Analysis and creation of an annual evaluation reports inclusive of all 21C statewide evaluation data.
4. Afterschool and Summer Program Quality Advisor(s)	Project and site-based program advising and mentoring matched to consultant expertise for specific project types and site needs.
5. Afterschool and Summer Program Leadership Trainings	Develop and coordinate a year-round sustained leadership training system for afterschool center directors and other leaders.
6. Other unique strategies that complement and/or extend the above	Develop and implement other statewide strategies that support the goals and outcomes of the 21C statewide evaluation plan including aligned needs identified in the Universal Afterschool Taskforce Report , not to exceed one per proposal.

1. Statewide Program Content Development and Improvement

Core Deliverables for #1 at a minimum should include:

- a) A description of the content outcomes and for what ages and number of sites to be served.
- b) Description of direct service youth outcomes at sites to be achieved as a result of the development and implementation.
- c) Description of how content is delivered at sites.
- d) Description of associated trainings or methodologies used if appropriate.

Considerations for bidders

- *Any trainings need to be appropriate to the capacity and scale of local personnel.*

- *Program approaches may vary within a PreK-12 system dependent on age.*
- *Limited sub-granting system in support of outcomes could be considered; all applicable federal rules would apply.*

2. Afterschool and Summer Program Assessment System

The successful bidder will implement and advance an intensive and sustained model of quality assessment for local projects and their sites to advance program efficacy and quality.

Core Deliverables for #2 at a minimum should include:

- Implement a site-based assessment system with precision including: materials, technical assistance, external observation, coaching, training (if needed) and technical assistance components.
- Options for projects with details, methods, and approaches including those in start-up and/ or advanced dispositions, if different.
- Materials and framework used or needed.
- Explanation of continuous improvement process.
- Provide the details of the observation component.
- Details should include: a summer program option, hours of service by project/site, expected outcomes.
- Rationale that the process is scaled to local staffing capacity with fidelity.

Considerations for bidders

- The Agency desires the most efficient system that results in demonstrable program improvement.
- The Agency is open to a process that may serve all or a subset of projects annually.

3. Statewide Evaluation Analysis and annual report creation

The successful bidder will generate a high quality annual statewide evaluation report using the 21C statewide evaluation plan components.

Core Deliverable for #3 at a minimum should include:

- A synthesis from various information sources (e.g. Federal and State Reports) into a concise annual report analyzing outcomes as outlined within the 21C Statewide Evaluation Plan

- b) The report shall include an executive summary and shall highlight strengths and recommendations with specific emphasis on both statewide, site, and project-specific indicators and progress made to reach targets.
- c) Method by which the bidder will regularly communicate with AOE to implement a shared iterative evaluative process and understanding and use of the data at the state level.
- d) Proposal may optionally include efficient activities to engage project leaders in statewide and local data-based decision making using specific report data.

Considerations for bidders

- Bidders shall have no personal knowledge, strong relationships, or contractual connections with any Vermont 21C funded program in order to maintain strict objectivity.
- The evaluation plan and indicators have already been identified and will be collected by AOE with data points available each November; the job is analysis focused.
- The report is expected to not exceed 30 pages in length.
- Bidders shall indicate their ability to organize and report data in formats that allows for aggregation and disaggregation of data between multiple afterschool grant programs as well as the ability to cross-coordinate data set needs with multiple agency staff.

4. Program 21C and Other Center Quality Advisors

The quality advisor role will include coaching, facilitation, and could include on-site program assessment and continuous improvement analysis, review, and assistance. Advisors shall also execute specific projects or local trainings based on project need, and as determined by the AOE and contractor(s), as part of the quality advisor role on an on-going basis.

Core Deliverables for #4 at a minimum should include:

- a) A description of the activity and outcomes to be achieved.
- b) Baseline numbers of targeted hours of consultations, training and coaching details for each assigned project or site.
- c) Details of the implementation plan and connection to sites' continuous improvement and needs.
- d) On-site external observations or training options.

- e) Evidence of alignment of advisor experience and skill to project or site needs.

Considerations for bidders

- Advisors shall communicate directly with AOE on a regular basis.
- Each selected advisor shall manage a project or sites based on matched expertise.
- There is a potential need for elementary, middle or high school specific afterschool/summer program knowledge and specific 21C program experience.
- Focus and expertise on new program center development during program start is an on-going identified need.

#5 Afterschool and Summer Program Leadership Trainings

Core Deliverables for #5 at a minimum should include:

- a) Create, facilitate, and implement four full day in-person statewide meetings for 21C and other center leaders meeting the diverse local needs of projects and sites.
- b) Create, facilitate, and implement eight 90-minute virtual statewide meetings for 21C and other center leaders meeting the diverse local needs of projects and sites.

Considerations for bidders

- Past full-day meetings have met from 8.30-2.30 and used a variety of interactive approaches, not a standard conference format with workshops, keynotes and plenary sessions.
- 21C funded and other center leaders and projects served by this and other deliverables have a broad mandate and experience as brand new to experienced projects in the role and project serving Prek-12 programs in a variety of project configurations.
- Costs should reflect that agendas are developed in close collaboration with AOE.

#6 Other unique strategies that complement and/or extend the above

Core Deliverables for #6 at a minimum should include:

- a) Description of the strategy, staffing, timeline and outcomes.
- b) A rationale as to why the strategy is being proposed tied to need.
- c) How the strategy complements the other deliverables and is tied to the statewide evaluation plan.

Considerations for bidders

- This deliverable was created to receive approaches the AOE may not be aware of that can serve the goals of this RFP.
- The AOE is interested in ongoing new approaches so that the system is availing itself of all options.

Bidders Qualifications and Other Required Proposal Elements

Include a Description of the bidder’s qualifications, background and experience, including resumes of key staff; description of previous work including contracts performed for similar organizations; and/or evaluation data and summaries of that work.

- A. The bidder’s understanding of the RFP requirements, including:
 - a. A coherent outline of the plan for addressing each area of work articulating detailed deliverables for each part.
 - b. Strengths, skills, and approaches that the bidder brings to each submitted deliverable.
 - c. A description of any perceived difficulties in this project, if any, together with potential and recommended approaches for their solutions.
- B. The attached price quotation form (see Attachment 1 to this RFP) includes costs associated with each associated deliverable, including:
 - a. A description of the “person days” attached to each core work areas and associated deliverables including hourly staff costs.
 - b. A description of the number of “person days” required to fulfill the management/oversight of the contract and associated hourly staff costs; and
 - c. A description of other costs associated with each deliverable.
- C. A statement of any financial or other perceived or actual conflicts of interest that might influence the selection of this bid.
- D. Contract Communication with AOE: Any successful bidder will communicate effectively with the AOE and 21C stakeholders to meet the goals of the 21C program and effectively execute the contract through the following means:
 - a. Delivering a concise year-end report including multiple metrics used to assess contract performance.
 - b. Disseminating information about contract activities available through website and e-newsletter, targeted emails, meetings, and social media.
 - c. Sharing of any materials in *MSWord* and *PDF* formats; and

- d. Participating in regular (no more than weekly) meetings with AOE staff as needed
- e. Materials shall meet accessibility requirements of Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (508 Compliance); formatted according to the [State of Vermont Brand Standards](#) and editable for future anticipated changes

Evaluation of Scope of Work CRITERIA FOR SCORING	Total possible points	Applicant Score
A. Quality of Bidder's Experience and Capacity to Perform		
1. Description of the bidder's contracting experience performing similar projects 2. Description of the bidder's experience with conducting similar activities 3. Demonstrated experience with successful implementation and statewide scale-up of work with similar type and high quality 4. Qualifications, skills, and aligned experience of personnel 5. Organizational strength and structure	40	
B. Responsiveness to Specifications		
1. Understanding of the scope of work to be performed demonstrated through the quality of the proposed approach 2. Analysis and detail in proposed plans and strategies 3. Response demonstrates understanding of program need, complexity, and goals and details how the bidder will report and evaluated its performance	40	
C. Program Cost		
1. Total budget reflects the lowest bid received by the State of Vermont; and cost is allowable, reasonable, necessary and allocable in relation to the quality of work proposed	20	
Total	100	

A team of qualified individuals designated by the Vermont Agency of Education will independently evaluate each deliverable area and proposal on criteria A through C. Scoring is intended to clarify strengths and weaknesses of proposals relative to one another and to provide guidance to decision-makers. Composite scores will be calculated based on those evaluations.

Attachment 1-Price Quotation Form*
Submit this form for each deliverable proposed

Deliverable Area and #	Price Quotation	Justification/Details
	Personnel: Management: Materials/Supplies: Contracts: Other:	

*Costs must be reasonable, necessary and allocable
 AOE does not accept unique indirect line item requests.