

RFP 1001251155
Early Intervention Technical Assistance and Training

PLEASE NOTE: PROPOSAL DUE DATE EXTENDED
TO SEPTEMBER 13, 2010

All questions received by the New York State Department of Health (Department) by the July 16, 2010 deadline are included. The Department is not responsible for any errors or misinterpretation of any questions received. The responses to questions included herein are the official responses by the State to questions posted by potential bidders and are hereby incorporated into RFP 1001251155, Early Intervention Technical Assistance and Training, issued on July 2, 2010. In the event of any conflict between the RFP and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.

QUESTION 1. Could I please ask for an estimated value or budget information for a contract resulting from this RFP?

RESPONSE: The Department is seeking a best value price from each contractor as defined in Section IV. C., of the RFP.

The Department evaluates the Technical Proposal based on each bidder's ability to complete the performance requirements as described in this RFP. The Financial Proposal is evaluated based on the lowest total bid (price) for all contract activities.

QUESTION 2. In the RFP, page 28, Section V. Administrative, Paragraph F. Payment and Reporting, first paragraph, the balance of the sentence(s) in this paragraph was left out. Please provide correction.

RESPONSE: The sentence should read: "Failure of the contractor to meet the deliverables outlined in this contract may also result in vouchers not being processed until the deliverables are met."

QUESTION 3. On Page 4, A. you include a wide audience in the target population for the converted courses. Is the expectation that all of these people will have access to the NYLearnsPH.com Learner Management System (specified elsewhere as the delivery system) in order to take the courses? If not, should bidders provide an alternate system for those users who do not have access?

RESPONSE: All audiences included in Section I. A., (page 4) of the RFP will have access to the NYLearnsPH.com Learner Management System.

QUESTION 4. On page 4, A. you state: "Payment will be made based on each training course converted to an online distance learning format that is acceptable and that is easily accessible." Please explain what you mean by "easily accessible" in this sentence.

RESPONSE: Accessibility can be described in two ways:

- 1) Accessible in the sense that learners can get to the course, participate/use the course materials, and complete the course; and
- 2) The course meets the standards that allow web content to be accessible to people with disabilities, as described in Section V. M. (in compliance with Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act and NYS Accessibility Policy).

QUESTION 5. Section III, A (Page 8) - The RFP describes that currently, some training is delivered in real time using various web-based tools. Providing synchronous training is very different than non-synchronous, online training. Does DOH intend on using synchronous training in the future, and if so, to what degree? What are the decision criteria regarding the use of synchronous training for the Early Intervention Program?

RESPONSE: Yes, DOH intends on using synchronous training in the future. For the purpose of this solicitation, several courses (Introduction to Service Coordination; Evaluation, Assessment and Eligibility Determination; and To Be Determined Under Development) may have sections or modules that would be delivered synchronously due to their complex content and need for interactivity. Certain content will require some synchronous training. DOH intends to use such training as appropriate in relation to the subject matter and longer length training (Type 2 and 3 Training Sessions as described in Section III, A.1.).

QUESTION 6. On page 10, in the first paragraph describing conversion of courses to distance learning format, you state: The successful bidder will consult with the Department on which conversion format will be used for each course, on an individual basis. Depending on course length and content, some courses may be converted and presented as modules for completion.” Is the expectation that the proposal (and corresponding budget) will include a proposed format for delivery of each course (i.e. self-paced online vs. WebEx)? If so, should there be an assumption that the 6 additional TBD courses will be delivered via a certain format?

RESPONSE: Yes, the bidder should propose a format for each course. If proposing combined formats, briefly describe each course format at its first mention in your proposal and its corresponding pricing.

QUESTION 7. Section III, A.1 (Page 10) - The RFP indicates that organizations applying for Category A must make Continuing Education Units (CEUs) available. May companies bidding on Category A partner with a CEU-provider like a community college, etc. to provide the CEU's?

RESPONSE: Yes, partnering with a CEU provider is acceptable. Proposals should include verification from the proposed “entity” of their willingness to partner with the applicant.

QUESTION 8. In the second paragraph on page 10 you state: “The successful bidder will convert courses that can be hosted on the Web...” If the answer to the previous question is that some courses may be delivered via WebEx, how does that reconcile with this paragraph?

RESPONSE: A WebEx event is by definition “hosted” on the Web.

QUESTION 9. If a webinar format is approved for some courses, does the Department stipulate the use of WebEx, or may another webinar product be used for delivery?

RESPONSE: See page 11 of the RFP. If proposing a format other than WebEx, provide justification and describe how it meets security, firewall, and accessibility requirements.

QUESTION 10. Please explain what you mean by the following sentence (from page 10, paragraph three), “This may entail using the Department’s NYLearnsPH.com Learner Management System by the successful bidder into each converted course.”

RESPONSE: Features of the NYLearnsPH.com Learner Management System will help trainees to process information verifying completion of coursework that enables awarding of Continuing Education Credits/Units.

QUESTION 11. Section III A.1.b (Page 11) - The RFP mentions pre- and post-tests for each of the courses. Will student scores be kept in the LMS? Will there be minimum passing scores?

RESPONSE: Yes, the Learner Management System (LMS) can store scores. The pre- and post-tests include questions posed to trainees to determine their comprehension of selected learning objectives. Their answers will be scored as pass/fail and they will have the opportunity to answer questions until they pass.

QUESTION 12. Section VII, Attachment 13 – The RFP Attachment 13 provides summary courses descriptions and key learning objectives. Will more detailed syllabuses or curricula be provided prior to the Proposal due date of August 16, 2010?

RESPONSE: The Department will forward draft samples of Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3 Early Intervention Program-sponsored Training Sessions as described in Section III, A.1., and material to bidders who request them.

QUESTION 13. Section VII, Attachment 13 - To what degree would DOH estimate that animation or similar multi-media elements like audio or video be required in the courses?

RESPONSE: Each converted course should include audio and captioned narration. Depending upon course content and length, animation and multi-media may be used to best meet learning objectives, but is not required. At least one training course to be converted includes a 4-5 minute video clip (e.g., NE: Natural Environments).

QUESTION 14. To what extent is it expected that all courses will live in NYLearnsPH.com versus other course management systems?

RESPONSE: It is expected that all converted online training courses will reside in NYLearnsPH.com.

QUESTION 15. How can we access NYLearnsPH.com?

RESPONSE: NYLearnsPH.com can be accessed by registering at www.NYLearnsPH.com

QUESTION 16. How do you define “module” (on page 10, top paragraph, “Depending on course length and content, some courses may be converted and presented as modules for completion.”)?

RESPONSE: A training course module is a portion of an overall course that when combined with other modules on the same topic indicates completion of the course by the trainee. Type 3 training courses as described in Section III, A.1., because of their length and/or complexity, may be segmented into modules for ease of presentation, learning, and completion.

QUESTION 17. Is there an expected facilitator/trainer role?

RESPONSE: It is expected that the converted courses will be delivered and maintained by a training contractor that is separate from this procurement. Some course modules/sections (described above) may require a trainer or facilitator if synchronous interactivity is needed.

QUESTION 18. Is there an expected budget?

RESPONSE: See the RESPONSE to QUESTION 1.

QUESTION 19. In the RFP, page 12, section 2. Payment Methodology, item b, we take exception to this clause. As a private, non-profit educational corporation, we are not in a position to incur the financial liability of having “the payment of the development component of the project reduced by 5% of the total project cost, by topic.”

RESPONSE: In order to comply with the requirements of the contract, for every month or part thereof a contractor exceeds the proposed course conversion completion date indicated in the proposal, the payment of the development component of the project may be reduced by 5% of the total project cost, by topic.

QUESTION 20. In the RFP, Page 31, Section V. Administrative, Paragraph J. Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire, requests completion of the Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire (VRQ) and Attachment 11 Vendor Responsibility Attestation. If we complete the Vendor Responsibility Attestation indicating that we are exempt and provide email correspondence from OSC, advising that our organization is exempt from the requirement to submit the VRQ, will that be sufficient to explain why we have not enclosed the completed VRQ form in our application?

RESPONSE: You must complete Attachment 11, Vendor Responsibility Attestation, indicating that you are exempt and provide documentation of your exempt status and an explanation.

QUESTION 21. RFP page 34, Section V. Administrative, Paragraph O. New York State Tax Law Section 5-a, requests completion of form ST-220-CA and form ST-220-TD Contractor Certification form. As we are not a contractor under Section 5-a of the tax law, we do not fulfill all of the eligibility criteria that requires registration. We are therefore exempt from the law's definition of a contractor that must comply with Section 5-a, which includes completion and

submission of forms ST-220-CA and form ST-220-TD. Is it acceptable if we submit form ST-220 instead?

RESPONSE: No. Do not send in ST-220. You must submit documentation stating that you are exempt and explaining why you are exempt.

QUESTION 22. RFP, page 54, Attachment 6 Contract Boilerplate, references Appendix D General Specifications, Paragraph C, regarding the right to stop the work, we take exception to the last 3 lines. We would like to request that the last 3 lines be revised to read "...as the Department may deem advisable up to the amount of the bid." As a non-profit entity, we are not in a position to incur the financial liability of being liable to the State if the cost exceeds the amount of the bid.

QUESTION 23. In the RFP, Appendix D General Specifications of the Contract Boilerplate, Paragraph J. we take exception to this clause. We request that the words "...or any subsidiary, affiliate, partner, officer, agent or principal thereof" be deleted.

QUESTION 24. In Appendix D, General Specifications of the Contract Boilerplate, Paragraph L. Work for Hire Contract, we take exception to this clause. We request that the phrase "source code and any software which is developed or included in the application software" be deleted and replaced with "deliverables."

QUESTION 25. In the RFP, I take exception to Appendix D General Specifications of the Contract Boilerplate, Paragraph M. Technology Purchases Notification, section 4. A solution for the turn of the century issues referenced in this section seems to be obsolete.

QUESTION 26. In the RFP, I take exception to Appendix D General Specifications of the Contract Boilerplate, Paragraph N. Year 2000 Warranty, section 3 Warranty Statement. I request that the first paragraph be revised to read "Vendor certifies that Product(s) furnished...."

QUESTION 27. In the RFP, I take exception to Appendix D General Specifications of the Contract Boilerplate, Paragraph Z. Confidentiality Clauses as follows, as we had previously negotiated this change with the NYS DOH in a prior contract, C# C022160:

- Section 1. I would like to request that the words "and approved" be deleted from the second sentence and revised to read "Any such materials must be reviewed by the State for conformity...."
- Section 2. I would like to request that the words "written approval" be deleted from the first sentence and revised to read ".....and shall not be published or otherwise disseminated by the CONTRACTOR to any other party unless prior review is secured ..."

- Section 4. I would like to request that the third sentence be revised to read “”....without the prior review secured from the Department of Health or its authorized agents or under circumstances as indicated in paragraph 1 above, with the exception of internal reports.”

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS 22-27: Attachment 6 contains the Department’s Contract Boilerplate language. DOH is not amenable to making the requested changes or otherwise revising its Contract Boilerplate requirements.

QUESTION 28. Will the Department provide access to subject matter experts to answer questions that arise during the conversion process?

RESPONSE: Yes.

QUESTION 29. On page 11, bullet one: Should the timeline specify delivery of the six TBD courses also?

RESPONSE: The six To Be Determined (TBD) courses should be listed on the timeline with a notation that they will be scheduled in collaboration with the Department.

QUESTION 30. Bullet two: Can you be more specific about the meaning of this sentence “Collaborate with Department staff on distance learning conversion, software/courseware, and other related activities before beginning work product.”

RESPONSE: Collaboration with the Department ensures that variables that may be unknown to the bidder are considered and agreed upon before work begins. Discussion may include software/courseware choices and other activities to ensure the content developed will work with the NYLearnsPH.com LMS, and meet the needs of the Department and its target audiences.

QUESTION 31. Bullet three: Can a non-Adobe, off-the-shelf product (i.e. Trivantis Lectora) be used to convert the courses?

RESPONSE: A non-Adobe off-the-shelf product will be considered if the bidder demonstrates benefits, cost-effectiveness, and compatibility with NYLearnsPH SCORM player (Icodeon).

QUESTION 32. Bullet eight: “Ensure a messaging mechanism for trainee/trainer interaction specific to the converted training course (e.g. use the NYLearnsPH.com Learner Management System). We don’t understand this sentence. What is the Department expectation for interaction between trainee and trainer? Does NYLearnsPH.com support a discussion list?

RESPONSE: When a trainee has a questions or comment, they can ask it online and receive a response from the trainer, contractor, or in some cases the Department. The LMS has messaging tools that enable electronic interaction, however it does not support a discussion list.

QUESTION 33. Bullet 10: These appear to be functions of the NYLearnsPH.com system and outside a contractor's ability to determine. Please explain.

RESPONSE: The LMS collects and maintains the following: person's name (when they enroll in a course), day started and last access of a course, and completion/pass/fail/withdrawal from a course. Authenticity of trainees is verified when they create their learner record by choosing a user name, password, and completing a demographic registration including work zip code (home zip code is optional). As the course administrator you will have access to the information maintained by the LMS.

QUESTION 34. Payment Methodology. Distance learning and, in particular, online courses vary greatly in sophistication, the use of media, and level of interactions to engage learners and promote learning. In order to construct an accurate and competitive budget, it would be helpful to have the Department specify whether a high degree of interactivity is expected in the converted courses, as well as multimedia components (e.g. audio narration, video, animations, etc.), or to specify the projected funding level for the project, so that bidders can describe the level of interactivity/complexity they can provide for that amount.

RESPONSE: At minimum, a moderate degree of interactivity and multi-media components are expected. Depending upon the training topic and needs of the audience, some courses will require a higher degree of interactivity than others. For example, Type 3 courses (6-8 hours) would include more interaction and more multimedia components than Type 1 courses (2-4 hours). The best value for the degree of proposed interactivity will be considered by the Department. Also, see the RESPONSE to Question 1.

QUESTION 35. On page 13, under Administrative Services Funding, a fee for a mechanism for a Learning Management System is included. If the Learner Management System is expected to be the NYLearnsPH.com system, why is this included?

RESPONSE: As stated in Section A. 2, the Administrative Services Fee is included as an opportunity to help cover costs that the bidder can justify as associated with project activities.

QUESTION 36. On page 19, under Project Narrative, you specify that we "use no more than three pages for each component." Please specify what you mean by "component."

RESPONSE: In this instance, "component" means the same as "Category." The narrative section of the proposal will be no more than three pages for Category A and no more than three pages for Category B.

QUESTION 37. As there is no mention in the RFP of an indirect cost rate and since the funding is being provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which is federal funding, may we use our federally negotiated indirect cost rate?

QUESTION 38. Is there a cap on the indirect rate? Or will the Administrative Services Fee mentioned on page 13 of the RFP take the place of an indirect cost rate?

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS 37 & 38: There is no indirect rate for contracts awarded under this RFP. The administrative services funding described on page 13, Section A. 2 of the RFP is used to help cover costs of administrative activities.

QUESTION 39. There are several types of online courses that range from PowerPoints that people just click through to narrated PowerPoints to courses with some level of activities and exercises to very sophisticated scenario-based online courses with lots of opportunity for interaction. Depending on the type of course, the development costs can also range widely. What level of course development are you looking for? Do you have a sample of a course you have seen that matches what you are expecting?

RESPONSE: See the RESPONSE to QUESTION 34. We have not seen a sample course that matches what we are expecting; The Department is open to innovative ideas and strategies. See Section III, Detailed Specifications, of the RFP for more information.