



**Solicitation Information  
May 23, 2014**

**Addendum #1**

**RFP # 7548713**

**TITLE: PROGRAM MANAGEMENT & SUPPORT SERVICES – PARCC**

**Submission Deadline: JUNE 2, 2014 @ 2:00 PM (Eastern Time)**

**ATTACHED ARE VENDOR QUESTIONS WITH STATE RESPONSES. NO FURTHER QUESTIONS WILL BE ANSWERED.**

**Gail Walsh  
State of Rhode Island  
Division of Purchases**

Vendor A

**Page 2, Paragraph 1 of the RFP states:** *“This document constitutes a Request for Proposals for Services from qualified individuals and organizations to furnish those services as described herein to a multi-state consortium (“consortium”) called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). This solicitation is being issued by the Rhode Island Department of Education on behalf of the consortium and would be made available to other states outside the State of Rhode Island to leverage requested services in accordance with the requirements of those individual states.”*

Question 1: Will the vendor be contracting with PARCC or RIDE on behalf of the consortium or RIDE and other states that might choose to join?

**ANSWER: Rhode Island will be contracting with the selected vendor directly. Other states will enter into contracts separately based on the agreements specified in the Rhode Island contract.**

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**Page 30, Paragraph 1 of the RFP states:** *“The total cost of the contract is not to exceed \$5.5 Million per year based upon projected state participation and allowable fees across years.”*

Question 2: What states are projected to participate within the 5.5 million dollar annual budget?

**ANSWER: Arkansas, Colorado, DC, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Rhode Island**

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Question 3: What role will PARCC Governing Board, PARCC Executive Committee and/or PARCC Advisory Groups play in directing and approving the work plan as well as the implementation of work plan?

**ANSWER: The Governing Board will approve the contract’s scope of work. The Executive Committee will make decisions that affect the PMSC’s ability to keep work moving in a timely manner. Day to day implementation will be managed within the PMSC.**

Vendor B

Question 1: The RFP states that *“This solicitation is being issued by the Rhode Island Department of Education on behalf of the consortium and would be made available to other states outside the State of Rhode Island to leverage requested services in accordance with the requirements of those individual states.”*. Other portions of the RFP seem to allude that the resulting contract may be intended to cover the cost of services for all PARCC states within the \$5.5million annual budget.

Please clarify if the resulting contract for this RFP intended to cover only the cost of the scope of work for Rhode Island and that other states would leverage the agreed upon scope of work as a basis for contracted services and costs for each of the other PARCC states individually.

**ANSWER: The resulting contract for this RFP is intended to cover Rhode Island’s financial contribution to the scope of work. Other states would leverage the agreed upon scope of work as a basis for contracted services. The \$5.5 million represents the sum of all PARCC states’ contracts.**

Question 2: What person or entity will be overseeing and managing the vendor selected in this procurement?

**ANSWER: The PARCC Governing Board will be overseeing and managing the vendor selected in this procurement.**

Vendor C

- 1 Transmittal Sheet - Bottom third of page 1 - States that bonds are not required. However, on page 44, Article 28 incorporates, by reference, the RI State's General Conditions of Purchase that do include bonds.

Please confirm that bonds are not required for this RFP.

**ANSWER: Rhode Island will not require bonds for this RFP.**

- 2 Transmittal Sheet - Bottom third of page 1 - States that bonds are not required. However, on page 44, Article 28 incorporates, by reference, the RI State's General Conditions of Purchase that do include bonds.

**Is the expectation that all states will waive their bond requirements? If not, can the costs of securing bonds be charged to the state in the Other category of Appendix A.**

**ANSWER: This is state specific and will be determined as part of contract negotiations.**

- 3 Request for Proposals (RFP) - Instructions and Notifications to Vendors – Page 2 - Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this procurement are solicited. However, proposals which depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this Request will be rejected as being non-responsive.

**Please clarify these contradictory statements.**

**Is RI looking for alternative approaches and methods or is it RI's intent to declare a proposal non-responsive if the proposal offers alternative approaches and methods?**

**Specifically, how far can the alternatives go before they will be declared a material alteration of the terms, requirements, or scope of work?**

**ANSWER: Responses should propose alternative approaches that do not materially change the requirements outlined in the scope of work.**

- 4 Introduction - first paragraph – Page 2 - The successful bidder will enter into separate Memorandum of Understandings with each PARCC state, and as a result will be responsible for adhering to the purchasing requirements of each respective state.

**Should future modifications to the Statement of Work be required, will the PMSC be expected to negotiate the revised scope and associated costs with each individual state, or will Rhode Island facilitate those negotiations on behalf of the other PARCC states?**

**ANSWER: Modifications that affect the entire PARCC membership will be negotiated by Rhode Island within a facilitated process representing all PARCC states. State specific modifications that introduce additions to the scope of work will be handled by the respective state requesting additional services.**

- 5 Request for Proposals (RFP) - Instructions and Notifications to Vendors – Page 3 - All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.

**Please provide additional guidance about how the Offeror can submit a firm and fixed price when the number of states that will be paying into the contract remains unknown. Please confirm that all PARCC states will be contracting for all of the services covered in this SOW, not selecting only a subset.**

**ANSWER: The contract will provide a fixed price of up to \$5.5 million that will be shared among the PARCC states. Any state wishing to administer PARCC assessments must be a member in good standing within the PARCC Consortium and contribute to the PMSC fees.**

- 6 Request for Proposals (RFP) - Instructions and Notifications to Vendors – Page 3 - Submitters should be aware of the State’s MBE requirements, which addresses the State's goal of ten per cent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements.

The goal is 10%. Will an Offeror be declared non-responsive if, after checking the MBE web site and not finding a suitable supplier/subcontractor, submits an offer with no MBE participation?

Is the MBE participation in this RFP 10% of RI's dollar expenditures or 10% of the cap of \$5.5M?  
Please confirm that the Offeror will be required to comply with the Rhode Island MBE requirements only.

**ANSWER: The MBE participation of 10% is a goal in all Rhode Island procurements. To satisfy Rhode Island’s requirement, the goal would be 10% of Rhode Island’s contract value; however, other states participating in this RFP may have their own state requirements. If there are subcontractor opportunities, the vendor will need to show evidence that they tried to find a suitable MBE. If none are available, a waiver may be issued.**

- 7 Instructions and Notifications to Bidders – Page 3 - State's MBE Requirements  
Page 3 notes the MBE requirements, which addresses the State's goal of 10% participation by MBE's in all State procurements. On the website: [www.mbe.ri.gov](http://www.mbe.ri.gov), there is a Minority Business Enterprise Utilization Plan. Please confirm that this plan can be submitted by the winning bidder post-award.

**ANSWER: The MBE plan would be submitted post-award. The tentative letter of award issued to the selected vendor will list this requirement. Please note that the MBE that the vendor intends to utilize needs to be an approved RI MBE prior to the bid submission deadline.**

- 8 General - **Please confirm that the PARCC Governing Board will direct and evaluate the work of the PMSC.**

**ANSWER: The PARCC Governing Board will direct and evaluate the work of the PMSC.**

- 9 General - **Please confirm that the PMSC is considered a thought partner to consortium states in meeting the strategic vision and goals of the consortium.**

**ANSWER: The PMSC is considered a thought partner, although not a unilateral decision-maker, in meeting the strategic vision and goals of the consortium.**

- 10 Pages 14, 15, 20 - Example of Services Not Expected, item 1: Day to day detailed project management. The expectation is that PARCC vendors (i.e. operational assessment, technology) are to provide robust project management. (p. 14) Project management is a requirement of, and contained within the contracts of the primary PARCC vendors. As such, the PMSC will be responsible for higher level, less granular Program Management across projects. (p. 15, bullet 2)  
Tasks PM27-28:

- Monitor the review and acceptance by PARCC of associated vendor deliverables, cross-vendor hand offs, facilitating where necessary to sustain the critical path. Communicate status of services and deliverables to all required parties, track related required execution of responsibilities based upon such status updates
- Oversee contracts between vendors and states (p. 20)

**The table on page 14 states that day to day detailed *project* management is not expected of the PMSC, however, several of the tasks in the PM component require close monitoring of contracts and deliverables between other PARCC vendors and states. There is an inconsistency in the request for**

high-level program management, but also detailed oversight of contracts with aggressive and complex timelines and hand-offs, typically considered project management tasks.

Please clarify what is expected of the PMSC with respect to project management, relative to the robust project management expected of PARCC vendors under other contracts.

**ANSWER: The PMSC is expected to manage the program by monitoring, identifying risks, and ensuring quality products and processes by overseeing and coordinating the specific project plans developed by PARCC vendors under other contracts.**

11 Please confirm that the PMSC is the same entity identified as the Partnership Manager in the Operational Assessments RFP released by New Mexico.

**ANSWER: The PMSC is the same entity identified as the Partnership Manager in the Operational Assessments RFP released by New Mexico.**

12 Appendix D - Detailed Scope of Services, Component 1 - Appendix D, Section V.F.2 - PM2  
Appendix D, p. 192  
Appendix D: "The Partnership Manager shall have primary authority and responsibility for the management of this contract."  
Page 16 - PM 2: "Facilitate and support states' management of the operational assessment vendor, as well as other PARCC vendors"

Please confirm that per Appendix D, the PMSC has primary authority to manage the work of the operational assessment vendor.

**ANSWER: The PMSC has primary but not unilateral authority to manage the work of the operational assessment vendor.**

13 High Level Statement of Need and Scope Expectations - PARCC Assumptions Related to Scope and Delivery of Services, bullet 8 – Page 15 - Respondent assumes liability for all work conducted by contractor on behalf of the PARCC Consortium ...

Please clarify the extent to which the PMSC will be "liable" or work conducted by PARCC contractors. Please confirm that the selected PMSC will not incur any financial responsibility for poor execution or liquidated damages incurred by other PARCC contractors?

**ANSWER: The PMSC will not incur any financial responsibility for poor execution or liquidated damages incurred by other PARCC contractors to the extent that the PMSC has met its responsibilities under the scope of work. The PMSC will be evaluated for continuation by its ability to ensure timely and high quality implementation of other PARCC contracts.**

14 High Level Statement of Need and Scope Expectations - PARCC Assumptions Related to Scope and Delivery of Services, bullet 9 – Page 15 - PMSC will be managing Intellectual Property (IP) on behalf of the PARCC Consortium. The IP will be held by PARCC states in a yet to be determined structure. Please clarify the activities that will be associated with the management of PARCC IP.

**ANSWER: The PMSC will be responsible for the management and policing of all IP. On behalf of the PARCC Consortium It will obtain and enforce confidentiality agreements.**

15 High Level Statement of Need and Scope Expectations - PARCC Assumptions Related to Scope and Delivery of Services, bullet 9 – Page 15 - PMSC will be managing Intellectual Property (IP) on behalf of the PARCC Consortium. The IP will be held by PARCC states in a yet to be determined structure. IP management activities will likely require specialized legal support. Please confirm Rhode Island or other PARCC states will provide the access to lawyers needed to support this function and that the PMSC is not expected to include legal staff as part of their proposal and pricing.

**ANSWER: Given that control of any intellectual property (IP) will be held by the consortium of PARCC states, it is presumed that each participating state would be responsible for legal support relative to that shared control/ownership. To the extent that the PMSC engages in the licensing, sub-licensing, or other use of IP on behalf of the PARCC consortium as part of its assigned and contracted duties, any legal support relative to such tasks would be the responsibility of the PMSC. Any actions or litigation outside of these responsibilities would be the financial responsibility of the PARCC Consortium states.**

- 16 High Level Statement of Need and Scope Expectations PARCC Assumptions Related to Scope and Delivery of Services, bullet 10 – Page 15 - Please account for two (2) Governing Board meetings per year, estimated cost approximately \$45,000 per meeting.

**Is the \$45,000 per meeting a reimbursable other direct cost (ODC) or is that part of the firm fixed price in the bid, in which case the annual maximum is really \$5,410,000?  
If the cost is fixed yet it exceeds \$45,000 per meeting will the PMSC be reimbursed for the difference?**

**ANSWER: This is a fixed price contract. The costs for the Governing Board meetings are to be budgeted within the \$5.5 million and costs beyond this price will not be reimbursed.**

- 17 Detailed Scope of Services, Component 1 - PM1, PM18 – Pages 16, 19 - PM1 and PM18 refer to the use of SharePoint (or similar tools) for document management.

**Please confirm that the PMSC is expected to provide hosting and support for a SharePoint instance and licensing as part of their proposal and pricing.**

**ANSWER: The PMSC is expected to provide a mechanism for secure document sharing between and among the PMSC and PARCC states. The PMSC is responsible for hosting, supporting, and licensing whatever system is chosen.**

- 18 Detailed Scope of Services, Component 1 - PM4, PM8, PM19, PM24, PM27 – Pages 17-20 - Various  
**There are multiple requirements specifying activities such as Master Schedule development, communications, progress reporting, risk/issue management, and quality assurance in relation to only the "Summative Assessment". Please confirm that the requirements specified in these sections apply to all components of the PARCC assessments.**

**ANSWER: These requirements apply to all the non-summative components of the PARCC assessments beginning in the second year of the contract.**

- 19 Detailed Scope of Services, Component 1 - PM28 – Page 20 - Oversee contracts between vendors and states and ensure payment timetables and accuracy, working with state fiscal leads

**Please confirm that the PMSC is expected to oversee the contracts between the operational vendor and each of the 12 states listed in Appendix C.**

**ANSWER: The PMSC is expected to manage the core PARCC activities for each state to ensure quality and timely delivery on behalf of all PARCC states. But the individual states will manage their added services. Individual states will look to the PMSC for an efficient mechanism to communicate assurance that the scope of work is on track and that deliverables are of high quality in order to process their monthly invoices.**

- 20 Detailed Scope of Services, Component 1 - PM32 – Page 20 - Responsible for employee and State participant accounting, time tracking, travel and related payments.

**Please confirm that the PMSC is not responsible for the funding to reimburse state staff for travel as part of this contract.**

**ANSWER: The PMSC is responsible for reimbursing state staff travel only for those meetings that are part of this contract, (e.g. Governing Board meetings.)**

- 21 Detailed Scope of Services, Component 2 - The State Engagement and Communications activities will support cross state collaboration, monitoring, tracking and facilitating productive and effective engagement. – Page 22 - Provide a modest level of communications support to the PARCC consortium as directed by the Governing Board.

**Does Rhode Island expect that the PMSC will serve as the spokesperson for the consortium (e.g. answering media calls)?**

**ANSWER: The PMSC will be the spokesperson for PARCC per direction from the Governing Board and Executive Committee.**

- 22 Detailed Scope of Services, Component 3 – Page 22 - The Summative Assessment activities will ensure that agreed upon states' standards of quality are met for each component of the assessment areas.

**Is the PMSC expected to provide oversight of the item development process, and sign-off on item quality under the terms of this contract?**

**ANSWER: The PMSC is expected to provide oversight of the item development process, and sign-off on item quality in consultation and coordination with PARCC member states leads under the terms of this contract.**

- 23 Detailed Scope of Services, Component 4 - TP5 – Page 23 - Oversee the management and maintenance of the Partnership Resource Center

**Please confirm that the PMSC is expected to oversee the management of the vendor selected to manage and maintain the PRC, and that the PMSC is not expected to host, manage, or maintain the technology related to the PRC as part of the scope and price of this contract.**

**ANSWER: The PMSC is expected to oversee the management of the vendor selected to manage and maintain the PRC. The PMSC is not expected to host, manage, or maintain the technology related to the PRC as part of the scope and price of this contract.**

- 24 Detailed Scope of Services, Component 5 - RA2 – Page 24 - Develop PARCC Consortium assessment report (i.e., summary trends).

**By when will the report need to be released each year?**

**ANSWER: That is to be determined.**

- 25 Detailed Scope of Services - Cost Savings Recommendations – Page 25 - Contractors shall submit their recommendations in the body of their proposal response (required), as well as in the Cost Notes (optional) to be attached to this RFP response. Contractors shall be as specific as possible with their recommendations and resulting cost savings.

**Are the possible cost savings dollar amounts (where they can be known) to be kept out of the Technical Proposal and only be in the Cost Proposal?**

**ANSWER: The cost savings proposals should be included in the body of the proposal and in the notes of the cost proposal. Please ensure that all vendor pricing for the scope of work is only in the cost proposal. Technical proposals are scored prior to staff seeing any pricing.**

- 26 Cost Proposal/Terms of Payment - first paragraph – Page 30 - The total cost of the contract is not to exceed \$5.5 Million per year based upon projected state participation and allowable fees across years.

**The RFP introduction indicated that the successful bidder will enter into separate Memorandum of Understanding with each PARCC state. Does the \$5.5 million limit apply only to the contract awarded by Rhode Island, or across all states executing a Memorandum of Understanding? If the \$5.5 million price limit includes MOUs with all PARCC states, please confirm that Rhode Island will indicate how the cost is to be allocated to each state.**

If the \$5.5 million price limit includes MOUs with all PARCC states, please confirm that if a state leaves the PARCC consortium after executing this contract, that state's share of the PMSC cost will be reallocated across the remaining PARCC states.

**ANSWER: The successful bidder will enter into contracts with each PARCC state that will not exceed \$5.5 million based upon a previously agreed upon process among PARCC states. If a state leaves the PARCC consortium the PMSC costs will be reapportioned across the remaining PARCC states. However, the contract will be renegotiated if the total number of tested students falls below 5.5 million.**

- 27 Cost Proposal/Terms of Payment - first paragraph – Page 30 - The total cost of the contract is not to exceed \$5.5 Million per year based upon projected state participation and allowable fees across years.

The Terms of the Contract indicate that this is expected to be a 3-year contract, with possible extensions that would result in a 5-year contract. Please confirm that \$5.5M is the expected price ceiling for year 1 of the contract, and annual price increases of 3-5% per year are envisioned for the subsequent contract years.

**ANSWER: The total amount of each year's contract will be determined prior to June 30<sup>th</sup> and will be adjusted to incorporate changes in PARCC state membership.**

- 28 Cost Proposal/Terms of Payment - Proposal Evaluation/Evaluation Factors - Pages 31, 32 - Evaluation Point Summary table. Evaluation Factors

Page 31 lays out the evaluated criteria as Plan and Approach, Project Organization and Resumes. Page 32 lays out the evaluation factors as Technical Evaluation Approach and Management Evaluation Approach. Which is correct? How will bids be evaluated?

**ANSWER: The evaluation criteria include Executive Summary/Understanding of Issues, Firm Capabilities and Experience, Plan and Approach, Project Organization and Resumes, and Reference and Other Information as listed on page 31.**

- 29 Introduction/Specific Terms and Conditions - First paragraph – Page 2 - The successful bidder will enter into separate Memorandum of Understandings with each PARCC state and, as a result, will be responsible for adhering to the purchasing requirements of each respective state. Article 7 – Page 38 - ... RIDE will process all invoices within 30 days of date of invoice.  
Please confirm that the PMSC will submit all invoices to Rhode Island, and Rhode Island will oversee contracts between the PMSC and each state listed in Appendix C to ensure payment timetables and accuracy, working with state fiscal leads.

**ANSWER: No, the PMSC will invoice each state separately.**

- 30 Specific Terms and Conditions - Article 10 – Page 39 - Failure of the Contractor to perform or deliver required work, services, or reports under this Agreement may result in the withholding of payments by RIDE to the Contractor.  
When will Rhode Island and the PMSC discuss the withholding of payments? Pre-award in discussions/clarifications or post-award prior to executing a contract?

**ANSWER: Payment terms will be negotiated as part of the contract.**

Please confirm that the Offeror can withdraw its proposal if agreement cannot be reached on the withhold terms and conditions.

**ANSWER: Yes, the Offeror can withdraw its proposal if agreement cannot be reached on the withhold terms and conditions.**

- 31 Specific Terms and Conditions - Section III – Page 45 - Payment Terms  
What are the Rhode Island payment terms? Will payment be based on deliverables or monthly progress payments?

**Please confirm that payment terms across all states will follow the Rhode Island payment terms.**

**ANSWER: Payment terms will be negotiated as part of the contract. Although we will review what is proposed by the individual vendors, Rhode Island anticipates that there would be monthly invoices listing time and materials for completed work. Other states may have their own payment terms.**

32 Appendix C - Appendix C – Page 46 - Twelve PARCC states listed

**Under the terms of this contract, are the states listed the only states with which the PMSC can enter into MOUs?**

**ANSWER: The PMSC can enter into MOUs with any state or entity that is in good standing within the PARCC Consortium.**

33 General

**How does Rhode Island expect that the PMSC will ensure the quality of the work produced by PARCC vendors, given the specific program management requirements?**

**ANSWER: The final contract will include a negotiated service level agreement that will specify quality. It is expected that the proposal will include strategies and mechanisms that describe how the PMSC will ensure quality.**

34 General

**Please confirm that under the terms of this contract, the PMSC is not expected to travel to PARCC states to engage state chiefs, senior staff or key stakeholders (e.g. legislators, state board members, or education professional associations).**

**ANSWER: The PMSC is not expected to travel to PARCC states unless a separate agreement is arranged as an additional service within an individual state's contract.**

35 General

**Please clarify the extent to which the PMSC is expected to work with consortium leadership in attempting to grow the number of states or test takers in the consortium.**

**ANSWER: The PMSC is expected to attempt to grow the number of states or test takers in the consortium by working in partnership with the Governing Board to determine strategies.**

36 Cost Proposal/ Terms of Payment – Page 30 - The total cost of the contract is not to exceed \$5.5 Million per year

**If there is growth in the number of states beyond those listed in Appendix C, will the consortium consider renegotiation of the contract and the \$5.5 million annual contract limit, given the additional work required to manage the participation of additional state leaders?**

**ANSWER: The PARCC Consortium will provide each year's contractual amount based on the number of member states. The PARCC Consortium reserves the right to renegotiate contracts should the number of states drop below the current membership for the first year's contract.**