



Solicitation Information

March 9, 2016

Addendum #1

RFP #7550303

TITLE: Pre-Kindergarten Program Evaluation

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: March 16, 2016 at 2:00 PM (ET)

Below are vendor questions with State responses. No further questions will be answered.

**GAIL WALSH
CHIEF BUYER**

State Pre-Kindergarten Program Evaluation RFP #7550303

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

March 9, 2016

QUESTION 1: There are several suggested assessment measures for child outcomes and classroom quality. Can any of the assessments be changed? We would tentatively like to switch the ECERS-R for the ECERS 3 and one executive function measure for another executive measure. We would also propose to use version 4 of the PPVT and WJ, rather than version 3 as stipulated in the RFP.

QUESTION 2: The RFP requests the use of the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement, 3rd Edition and the PPVT-III. Please confirm whether the latest 4th versions of each instrument may be used.

QUESTION 3: The RFP mentions assessing children with the Woodcock-Johnson and the Woodcock-Munoz. Please confirm whether RIDE wants both instruments used for students with limited English proficiency at all waves.

QUESTION 4: Child Measures, Page 6: What process does RIDE envision for the selection of the additional SED measure? Does RIDE want the evaluator to select and propose one? If so, which aspects of SED does RIDE value measuring the most? Is it anticipated that this instrument will be administered on the same schedule as the other child measures?

ANSWER: Applicants are encouraged to propose to use the most current and meaningful assessment measures provided they align with the intent of the evaluation objectives.

QUESTION 5: Our research institute is based in New Jersey so we would like to work with a local organization to subcontract the data collection. Do we need to identify a subcontractor in advance, or can we determine that after submitting our proposal?

ANSWER: Per the RFP, subcontractors are to be specified by name, address, and with a brief description of the subcontractors' organizational capacity and qualifications. Please review the state's Minority Business Enterprise requirements and consider whether any RI MBE vendors may be able to assist with the subcontractor opportunities. Visit www.mbe.ri.gov for further information.

QUESTION 6: On page 9, the RFP states that the contract will end on December 31, 2018 (with the option to extend it to June 30, 2019). However, the timeline on page 5 shows data collection occurring in spring 2019. The SOW on page 7 states that the evaluation model includes 3 years of data collection, followed by 6-months of data analyses and report writing. Can you please clarify the grant period?

QUESTION 7: The RFP, on page 7, Scope of Work, says, "The longitudinal evaluation model described above includes 3 years of data collection, followed by 6-months of data analyses and report writing." However, on page 9, the RFP says that the contract will begin with the issuance of a state purchase order (presumably between July 1 and September 1, 2016), and will end on December 31, 2018 - a maximum period of two years and six months. Finally, also on page 9, the RFP states, "RIDE reserves the

right to align the contract end date with the state fiscal year end of June 30, 2019.” This additional funding would bring the contract period to three years – not the three years and six months referred to on page 7.

QUESTION 8: How should we align the scope of work with the RFP’s stated contract period, and what should we use as the end date of the work/contract? One option we have considered is to propose the work that can be done in two years and six months, with an alternate timeline if there are three years available.

QUESTION 9: The RFP also says, on page 9, that, “RIDE retains the option of granting a time extension of up to one year with additional funding if available and if the level of work is expanded by mutual written consent.” Is this an extension to June 30, 2020?

QUESTION 10: On page 9 the RFP specifies an end date of December 31, 2018. Please confirm the period of performance for a contract of 3 years and 6 months is July 1, 2016 through December 31, 2019.

QUESTION 11: The RFP says that the total cost of the contract is not to exceed \$710,000. What is the time period of the contract for the \$710,000? From the RFP, we think the time period is the time through June 30, 2019 – is this the case? Or is it for the three years and six months required by the scope of work (page 7)?

QUESTION 12: The project is described as being three years of data collection, beginning in July 2016, followed by six months of analysis and report writing. Based on this start date, should we assume that the project end date is December 31, 2019, and not December 31, 2018?

QUESTION 13: Please clarify if the total cost of \$710,000 is for the entire contract period from the issuance of state purchase order to end of December 2018 or it is \$710,000 per state fiscal year.

ANSWER: The timeline RIDE has identified for the proposed evaluation covers three years. The RFP end date of December 31, 2018, reflects the current terms outlined in the state’s federal Preschool Expansion grant. However, RIDE anticipates that a six month extension for federal funds will be allowed and will specify those terms within the final contract awarded. Should federal resources not be allocated, the state will consider supplementing with state resources. Applicant timelines may cover the time period from July 1, 2016 (pending issuance of a state purchase order) through June 2019. Applicants are encouraged to propose evaluation designs, including reporting, which fit into this timeline. In order to accommodate the stated timeline, RIDE will consider rigorous evaluation designs which prioritize research questions #1, 2, 4, and 5. The total cost of the contract for this three year time period is not to exceed \$710,000.

QUESTION 14: In the description of the cost study on page 6, the RFP refers to the “aggregation of state data” for this research question. What state data is available to understand the costs of the RI pre-kindergarten program?

ANSWER: The RI Department of Education has detailed budget information for each State Pre-K program grantee. Budget information includes: employee compensation and benefits, property and facilities expenses, supplies and materials and indirect costs.

QUESTION 15: Would the evaluator be expected to conduct the CLASS and ECERS classroom observation?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION 16: Does RIDE maintain a list of CLASS and/or ECERS certified/trained observers?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION 17: Are there observation data, collected by some or all of the state Pre-K programs, that can be used to refine the observations in those classrooms?

QUESTION 18: According to RIDE's website, state pre-k classrooms use a number of tools to provide data to teachers about their classroom practices. Will all pre-k classrooms (those currently funded and those funded through the Expansion Grant) be collecting their own CLASS and ECERS-R data during the evaluation period? If so, when will these data be collected and will these data be available to evaluators?

ANSWER: RIDE does collect program- and classroom-level measures of quality within Comprehensive Early Childhood Education (CECE) Program approval and monitoring activities. However the data is not collected annually, nor is it available for evaluation purposes.

QUESTION 19: Does the budget narrative count toward the technical proposal page limit?

QUESTION 20: Should the budget narrative be included in the technical proposal volume or should it be included in the cost volume?

ANSWER: The technical proposal budget narrative section informs RIDE of the vendor's plan for how funds will be used and includes a rationale for how the allocated funds are reasonable and sufficient to conduct the state pre-kindergarten program evaluation described in this RFP. Total cost of the proposed work should not be revealed within this section. Total costs are identified within the cost proposal which at minimum includes Appendix A and provided budget detail sheets from the RFP. Therefore, the technical proposal budget narrative does count toward the technical proposal page limit.

QUESTION 21: Is it acceptable to include the list of similar projects/clients as an appendix?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION 21: Is the firm that conducted the RCT study and evaluation of the 2009-2011 Pre-Kindergarten Demonstration Project eligible to apply for this evaluation contract?

ANSWER: Yes

QUESTION 22: Did RIDE conduct the second phase of evaluation as planned, “with the first round of program quality data available in Fall 2015,” as projected in “Investing Early in School Success: Providing High Quality Pre-Kindergarten for Rhode Island’s 4 Year Olds” (December 2014 Policy Brief, page 7)? If so, will these data be available to the selected evaluator?

ANSWER: The statement quoted in Question 22 references this evaluation. “Investing Early in School Success: Providing High Quality Pre-Kindergarten for Rhode Island’s 4 Year Olds” was written prior Rhode Island’s Preschool Expansion Grant award. Upon award, RIDE decided to postpone the collection of program quality data to align with the start of this evaluation project.

QUESTION 23: Is it possible to provide a list of the current 33 Pre-K classrooms in terms of setting (i.e., public schools, Head Start programs, and community-based child care programs) and community?

QUESTION 24: Where are the 33 pre-K classrooms located---evenly distributed throughout the eight RI communities or clustered in certain areas? Is there a list or map?

ANSWER: The current list of State Pre-K classrooms is located at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/EarlyChildhoodEducation/Programs.aspx#13020-pre-k-programs>

QUESTION 25: How many students are anticipated to be in the lottery?

QUESTION 26: Does RIDE have any information on previous pre-k lotteries to inform bidders about the local demand for the program in each site (e.g., number of applications, acceptance rate)?

ANSWER: Estimating anticipated lottery participants is complicated by the fact that the state is currently expanding access by adding additional classrooms. Additionally, the state is enhancing its recruitment efforts in order to increase the numbers of lottery applicants. However, we can report that that last year over 1,000 families entered their children into the lottery for 594 seats.

QUESTION 27: Stratified random sample approach, Page 5: “RIDE will require the use of the outlined research design, but due to prohibitive costs, may use a stratified sample approach rather than including the entire population of state Pre-K children.” Does this mean that RIDE expects the evaluator to conduct stratified sampling at the student level, or will block-level stratified sampling at the classroom level be sufficient?

QUESTION 28: Do you expect that each classroom will be assessed annually? In other words:

- 2016-17: Assess all 33 classrooms (Time 1)
- 2017-18: Assess same 33 classrooms (Time 2) + 20 new classrooms (Time 1)
- 2018-19: Assess same 33 classrooms (Time 3) + same 20 classrooms (Time 2) + 7 new classrooms (Time 1)

QUESTION 29: If testing the entire population is unfeasible, logistically or financially, what sample size does RIDE consider to be reasonable (percentage of total population or a fixed number of students)? Will an equal number for the comparison group be required?

QUESTION 30: A “stratified sample approach” (RPF p 5) is mentioned. (a) What are the strata in which RIDE is interested? (b) What percentage of the total Pre-K population in RI does each strata represent?

ANSWER: RIDE anticipates funding seats for a minimum of 954 children in 53 classrooms in Fall 2016. Applicants are encouraged to propose rigorous evaluation designs which prioritize research questions #1, 2, 4, and 5.

QUESTION 31: Can RIDE provide an approximate number of presentations to various stakeholder audiences in person to report on progress? Is it anticipated that these would take place in the final six-month data analysis and reporting phase?

ANSWER: RIDE anticipates that two presentations would be given to various stakeholder audiences. One presentation would occur at the beginning of the evaluation which shares the plan for the work. The second presentation would occur at the end of the evaluation and would share findings. However, these presentations would not necessarily need to be conducted in person.

QUESTION 32: Can RIDE provide any information about whether incentives were employed in the Pilot Study, and if so, information about the nature of the incentives?

ANSWER: Families were offered gift cards as an incentive to participate in pre/post child evaluations.

QUESTION 33: Can you provide any more specificity about the “additional points ... awarded for the inclusion of a Rhode Island-based partnership or collaboration that improves the efficiency of the evaluation and builds the capacity of the Rhode Island-based organization to conduct similar program evaluations” (i.e., a certain portion of the 25 points awarded for this section)?

ANSWER: Vendors will be awarded five points (out of the total 25 points available) for the inclusion of a Rhode Island-based partnership or collaboration that improves the efficiency of the evaluation and builds the capacity of the Rhode Island-based organization to conduct similar program evaluations, within the Work Plan and Capacity of the Agency Effectively to Administer the Project section of the technical proposal.

QUESTION 34: Does RIDE expect the evaluator to provide formal report(s) of interim findings during the assessment/data collection phase, such as after the initial post-test data are collected in fall 2017? If so, does RIDE expect the evaluator to conduct rigorous comparative analyses, or will descriptive analyses be sufficient?

ANSWER: RIDE expects to receive report(s) of interim findings during the assessment/data collection phase and anticipates the inclusion of descriptive analyses will be sufficient.

QUESTION 35: When will families apply for the lottery?

QUESTION 36: When will the lottery application be made publicly available? When will the lottery applications be due?

QUESTION 37: How many sites will be used for families to apply to the lottery?

ANSWER: RIDE has an online lottery application system. The State Pre-K Program child lottery will open in April and close in June 2016. Child applications will be available on the same timeline. Families can also download a hard copy application and deliver it to any State Pre-K Program site in their community. The current list of State Pre-K classrooms is located at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/EarlyChildhoodEducation/Programs.aspx#13020-pre-k-programs>

QUESTION 38: When will the lottery be drawn and when will applicants be informed of selections?

ANSWER: The State Pre-K Program lottery is anticipated to occur on June 28, 2016. Applicants will be informed of selections within the two weeks following the lottery, and in an ongoing manner as the enrollment process moves ahead.

QUESTION 39: What is the approximate population size (or average classroom size) for the 33 state Pre-K classrooms in which child measures will be administered (at least during the pre-test period)?

ANSWER: Each State Pre-K program classroom enrolls 18 four-year-old children.

QUESTION 40: Does RIDE want a statistical matching process done to identify a comparison group? If so, does RIDE have a list with demographics of children eligible for the program, but were not enrolled in the program?

QUESTION 41: Can RIDE ensure accessibility to comparison children for administration for the child measures or should accessibility be a criteria for selecting the comparison children?

ANSWER: RIDE maintains a waiting list with demographics of children eligible for the program, but who were not selected for a State Pre-K seat within the lottery.

QUESTION 42: Does RIDE have a list of “programs of equivalent quality” (RFP p 6)?

ANSWER: Yes. RIDE can identify “programs of equivalent quality”.

QUESTION 43: How are students tracked from Pre-K to Kindergarten to Grade 1? (E.g., is a State student ID assigned to the student when entering Pre-K?)

ANSWER: All State Pre-K children are assigned a State Assigned Student Identifier.

QUESTION 44: What is the academic year for the state-funded Pre-K programs (e.g., year-round starting in month ???, September to June)? Is it consistent across the state?

ANSWER: State Pre-K programs are in session for 180 days of the year on a calendar similar to the school district in which they are located. State Pre-K programs typically open in September and are in session through June of the same calendar year.

QUESTION 45: The RFP does not request the submission of staff resumes/CVs. Please confirm whether resumes are allowable as appendices to the technical proposal and will not be counted in the 20-page limit.

ANSWER: Staff resumes/CVs are allowable as appendices to the technical proposal and are not counted in the 20-page limit.

QUESTION 46: Are there any font or spacing requirements for the 10-20 page technical proposal?

ANSWER: Although not specified within the RFP, RIDE would appreciate receiving proposals with at least single line spacing with size 11 font.

QUESTION 47: There appears to be a conflict between contract date and deliverable for the first year. Page 5 (top of page) states that the contract will begin July 2016. However, page 8 “Project Schedule and Deliverables” calls for tasks 1 & 2 to being immediately upon execution of contract. This implies work beginning before the contract start date, if in fact, the contract is awarded and executed prior to the beginning of their fiscal year (July 1, 2016). The interim between proposal submission (March 16, 2016) and the fiscal year (July 1, 2016) appears to be more than enough time for contract execution. Do you expect tasking to begin in this prior fiscal year, which will not end until June 30, 2016?

ANSWER: RIDE anticipates that the contract will be executed on or before July 2016. No work will begin prior to the execution of the contract.