

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)
Questions from the Program Improvement Projects (PIP)
Bidder's Conference
March 16, 2012

General Questions

Can the Priority Area Abstract (Appendix B page 21) be single-spaced?

Yes. Only the Priority Area Abstract page can be single-spaced. All remaining sections of the proposal must be double-spaced.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) indicates that there is \$4.48 million available for this round of funding. Is that amount more or less than what was available in prior years?

The funding is approximately the same as prior years.

You are requiring submission of an electronic budget. Are you expecting programs to also print the budget and budget narrative and include it with the RFP?

Please print the Excel budget narrative and ED-114 and attach it to the submission and to each copy. Email the budget template. See instructions for submitting budgets outlined in the Excel budget.

How long will the whole review process take?

We hope to notify all applicants by either email or phone as to whether the proposal submission was accepted or rejected within 6 weeks from due date (see page 5 in the RFP, item J).

Can you please explain the matching funds requirement?

Matching funds may include expenditures from state, local and other non-federal sources for adult education programs, services and activities. Matching funds must be available through tangible assets and can many times be in-kind services. Prospective grantees must provide clear documentation of the source of matching funds. Federal funds cannot be used as a match for this grant (see page 6 in the RFP, item L).

Can equipment be used as a match?

Yes, as long as the equipment is used for the proposed project.

Should we use the budget template in the grant application or should we use the Excel template?

The budget pages in the application should not be used. They appear in the grant application as a placeholder. Please utilize the Excel budget sheets found on the web site located with the RFP.

Do we need to develop a special letter of collaboration or can we use the collaboration form within the RFP?

Please use the form within the RFP, which can be found on page 24.

Revised on 4/10/12

The RFP requires four letters of collaboration. Does that mean four letters for each priority area or for the entire grant submission?

Four letters of collaboration for the grant submission, one of which must be with the one-stop.

There is a requirement that approval by the appropriate board be included with the grant submission. Can it be a general approval?

It must be specific to the grant submission. The approval should be signed and recorded in the minutes of the board meeting.

Can we use our own assessments to measure progress for formal reporting purposes?

The Connecticut Competency System (CCS), which is utilized by the adult education providers that are funded by the CSDE, provides the standardized assessments prescribed in the available test chart of the CCS Assessment Policies and Guidelines. Only these assessments may be used for formal reporting purposes.

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Adult/accountability/ccspolicies.pdf>

Programs are encouraged to supplement the use of standardized assessments with informal assessments such as teacher-made tests, portfolios, unit tests, applied performance assessments, learner observations, etc. to inform instruction on a regular, ongoing basis.

Can we see what the CASAS assessments look like?

CASAS tests can be viewed during training and may be purchased after all training requirements have been completed.

Are the training requirements for the Connecticut Competency System (CCS) and the Connecticut Adult Reporting System (CARS) available?

Yes. Training requirements for CCS are outlined in the CCS Assessment Policies and Guidelines (see <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Adult/accountability/ccspolicies.pdf>).

The CSDE expects that at least one CARS user from each provider will participate in annual CARS training. Training is offered by the CSDE for both new and experienced users.

Are the tests (CASAS) available online?

Yes, online versions of CASAS tests are available but all test administration must be proctored in-person.

Family Literacy

Can you explain the Special Rule for Family Literacy programs?

Family literacy project funds are to be used primarily for adult education services. For the other required components of family literacy projects, including early childhood education, integrated literacy activities and parent and child time together, funding should be obtained through other agencies or organizations whenever possible; for example, community based organizations or family resource centers (see page 3 in the RFP).

Revised on 4/10/12

Can you have people that are in the different instructional programs also in a family literacy program?

That is certainly possible, but remember that families are required to participate in all four components when they are involved in a family literacy project not just some components (see page 9 in the RFP).

Do you still have two areas within Family Literacy – elementary and secondary? Where does it say that in the RFP?

If you are planning on applying for a grant in either the family literacy or 21st century careers category, be sure to indicate whether the population you will be serving is either elementary (ESL, ABE, GED) or secondary (high school completion or National External Diploma Program - see page 18, item J).

Transition: Twenty-first Century Careers

Does a new class have to be established for this priority area or is there an expectation that these components could enhance an existing class?

Remember that this is a program improvement project. It could be either but be careful that you don't utilize federal dollars to provide the mandated instruction that you are required to provide. That would be considered supplanting.

Can technical training (e.g. IC3 Internet and Computing Core Certification and Customer Service) be supported with these dollars?

No, they cannot. Title II federal dollars may not be used for technical training, job development or job placement services. Matching funds may not be used in this way either. However, students who complete this course of study could transition into those technical training opportunities, which could be funded by another entity.

Non-traditional Adult Education Instruction and Services

Can these funds be used for counseling and support services?

Yes, they can be used in this way. Additionally, providers may want to seek collaboration with other agencies that have resources and expertise to provide counseling and support services to the target population of this priority area. For example, Local Mental Health Agencies (LMHAs) through their supported education programs have resources to assist and support their students/clients who may attend adult education programs.

Expansion of the National External Diploma Program (NEDP)

Can you clarify expansion?

Expansion does not mean adding additional students. The adult education provider would be expected to expand to new sites and/or new towns. The goal is to increase access throughout the state.

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If there are areas near my town that do not have this program, can these funds be used to expand to those sites? Will new training be offered in the summer?

With the consent of the adult education provider in an area town, you could use these funds to expand beyond your catchment area. Training will be held in August.

Could this funding be used to get staff trained?

Yes, funds could be used to support staff get trained.

Can we require more learning outcomes (e.g. computer skills, Accuplacer)?

Yes, you can require more learning outcomes but remember that the goal of expansion is to provide additional access to the NEDP.

How close is the implementation of the electronic NEDP?

CASAS is predicting everyone will be online by September although the CSDE believes that it might potentially be later than that.

Transition: Post-secondary Education and Training

Can a postsecondary partner include a certification provider e.g. training provider?

Yes, that would be fine.

Potentially, advanced ESL participants might have diplomas from their country of origin. Is that all right?

Yes, as long as it is a foreign credential.

One of the colleges said they would not do a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Is the MOU required?

Yes, the MOU is a required component of any grant submitted in this priority area. (Education Connection and Vernon Regional Adult Based Education have good models). Some samples can also be found in the College Transition Toolkit, which can be obtained through the National College Transition Network (www.collegetransition.org).

What is the board for a community college from which an applicant would need acceptance?

The Board of Trustees of the community college.

Transition: Integrated Basic Education and Skill Training

If a teacher is certified in both adult education and certified in the technical training area can they teach both components?

Yes, theoretically, the same person could teach both components if they hold the requisite certifications in both adult education and the technical training area.

What is meant by technical training?

What we mean by technical training is training that leads to an industry recognized credential; for example, certified nursing assistant or pharmacy technician.

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What about funding guarantee for the future funds relative to technical training?

Providers that apply for grant funds in this priority area must have funding guarantees and commitments for the technical training for the period of the grant.

Could a staff person in the high school who is responsible for Perkins projects be utilized to provide job development in adult education?

Yes. Please remember that these funds cannot be used for job development.

What if that Perkins staff person is funded with local dollars? Can we use those funds as a match?

No. Perkins funds are federal and federal dollars cannot be used to match these dollars.

What if the teachers are not there at the same time?

The expectation of this priority area is that the instruction is parallel and simultaneous (refer to page 13 in the RFP).

Can a student pay for the technical training component of an I-BEST project?

Theoretically, a student could pay for the technical training component of the I-BEST project. However, this approach would deny access to many students because of the cost. Before you consider this as an approach, think about how you would document the payment of those costs when submitting your grant. The CSDE has asked for a budget that provides evidence of funding commitment for the technical training component of the I-BEST project that adequately supports all expenses necessary for this component. Local, state or federal adult education funds cannot support technical training.

What if we have another grant that can provide the technical training within our own organization?

Yes, that would be acceptable, but be sure to document the costs related to the technical training in a detailed budget that provides evidence of the funding commitment for this component.

English Language Civics Education

Is this priority area the same as in years past?

Yes.

Can EL/Civics funds be used for the high school credit diploma civics course?

No, these funds are specifically targeted to immigrants and other limited English proficient individuals.