

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

TEXAS SUCCESS INITIATIVE ASSESSMENT, 2.0

RFP No. 781-9-21432

First Set of Questions and Answers

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has received the following question concerning RFP No. 781-9-21432:

1. The RFP states, "Respondent that is awarded a contract must be authorized to provide the TSIA2 system to Texas public institutions of higher education (IHEs), Texas public school districts (SDs), and other approved testing sites for purchase.

The RFP also states, "standard disclosure and waiver language, to be approved by THECB, for all test takers, including a specific waiver for Texas public high school students to allow scores to be sent directly back to the student's school district, as identified through the county-district-campus number."

Related to transportability is student test data for the TSIA2 intended to be available from any institution under THECB's purview (i.e. TEA) to any other institution under THECB's purview, or is data transportability limited to a subset of institutions?

Data transportability should be available to any institutions under THECB's purview.

2. You require that the TSIA2 be aligned to the most current versions of Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS); the critical Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and CCRS Performance Expectations that support the English III (Reading and Writing) and Algebra II State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) End-of-Course Assessments; the AEL Standards, 2.0; and the skills identified under the National Reporting System's (NRS) six-level Educational Functioning Level Descriptors (EFLD).

Will THECB provide a list of the most current changes to the aforementioned standards?

The most current revised versions of the standards are available as links in the "Definitions" section or Appendix A.

Is the expectation that these alignments are complete at the time of response or given the opportunity to minimize costs by using portions of existing

assessments/item pools or by proposing assessments that have been modified to meet the requirements of this RFP' for final and complete alignments to be submitted after the RFP response?

It is expected that the 58 sample items submitted as part of the Respondent's proposal aligned to the standards, as described in Attachment E.

3. Respondents must also describe the development/selection of test items for these assessments that are aligned to the most current versions of appropriate English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards of the Texas CCRS; the TEKS that support the English III and Algebra II STAAR End-of-Course Assessments, used as an option in Texas public high schools to determine college readiness; AEL Standards, 2.0; to the skills identified in the NRS EFLD.

Please clarify what is meant by 'aligned to appropriate standards'. For example, college readiness classification aligned to Texas CCRS, TEKS that support English III and Algebra II STARR End-of-Course and the diagnostic profile levels aligned to AEL and NRS EFLD. Will these be one-directional alignments (from TSI to each of the standards above)?

Respondents must describe how they will determine sufficient alignment of the items developed or selected for both the classification and diagnostic components to the standard appropriate for the level of ability and component area the item targets. Since there is overlap in the three sets of standards, it would be anticipated that some items would need to demonstrate alignment across all three sets of standards. It may be possible that some items may address only TEKS and AEL standards, and some may only address CCRS and TEKS.

4. The RFP states, "The English Language Arts (ELA) component must be one assessment that evaluates both reading and writing, delivered as one integrated test or two tests, resulting in one combined or composite score plus a separate or integrated essay score."

The RFP also states, "Based on this estimate, the potential revenue to the successful Respondent(s) may be \$22,000,000 with a cost ceiling of \$4.00 per mathematics assessment and \$7.00 per English Language Arts (ELA) assessment, (including the objective and essay components)."

Is the ELA cost ceiling inclusive of reading and writing, (including the objective and essay components)?

Yes. See Section A.1.10 and Definition of "ELA."

5. The RFP states, "The Respondent must develop online or computer-based instruction materials for those students who are administered the diagnostic assessment (i.e., students classified as not college ready) and for instructional purposes. The

weaknesses identified in the student's diagnostic profile must be linked to those instructional materials that can provide review and remediation of the identified deficiencies. The Respondent's Proposal must include a description of these materials, including how they are linked to the assessment process and how students access these materials without additional charge or fees to students classified as not college ready."

While you do not want to charge students, can institutions be charged for these materials?

No.

if so, should pricing for instructional materials be included in Optional Services and Products portion #10 of the Compensation/Fee Structure Form?

N/A

6. The RFP states, respondents must be able to support testing centers as needed by providing a dedicated helpline for responding promptly to user questions and by providing onboarding and other training for approved test administrators.

Please clarify, the expectation for a dedicated helpline: Texas only or dedicated to supporting the internet-based CAT assessment program?

We expect the helpline to address questions from Texas users directly related to the TSIA2 and its internet-based CAT assessment program.

7. The RFP states, students have the ability to send score reports, including the diagnostic profile, as applicable, to a minimum of three (3) test administrators or testing sites within the state of Texas at the time of the test administration and at a later period of time after the assessment has been completed.

Please clarify "test administrators or testing sites within the state of Texas." Is this limited to those institutions and test administrators that are users of the TSIA2 assessment or could this be any institution or test administrator in the state of Texas?

Yes, this is limited to those institutions and test administrators that are users of the TSIA2 assessment.

8. The RFP states that, contractor(s) may be asked to submit the TSI Assessment, 2.0 (TSIA2) developed under this RFP to one or more federal agencies (e.g., U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Labor) for the following approvals:
- Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) Ability-to-Benefit testing;
 - ESEA Peer Review, as outlined to meet the requirements set forth in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA); and/or

- OCTAE Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) reporting

Will the inability for respondent to submit TSIA2 for one or more of federal agencies for approval disqualify them from the consideration for this RFP?

The inability for a Respondent to submit the TSIA2 for one or more of the federal agencies for approval will not disqualify the Respondent from consideration for this RFP.

9. The RFP states "Three (7) identical copies of their proposal"

Are vendors to submit three or 7 copies of the proposal?

The Respondent should submit seven (7) identical copies of their proposal.

10. Technical Proposal narratives should not exceed seventy-five (75) pages in length, plus ten (10) pages of attachments or appendices, not including required forms.

Please confirm that the 75 page/10 page attachment limit applies to Tab 3, Technical Proposal.

The 75-page/10 page attachment limit applies to the total page submissions for TABS 3, 4, and 5.

Are Tabs 4 and 5 considered part of the Technical Proposal and therefore part of the 75 page limit?

TABS 4 and 5 should be included in the 75 page/10 attachment limit.

11. The RFP states that Tab 3 contains the Technical Proposal composed of three parts: 1) a detailed description of the Respondent's qualifications and prior experience performing tasks similar to those required in this RFP; 2) the Respondent's management plan; and 3) the Respondent's technical plan.

TAB 3, Technical Proposal, should include only a description of the Respondent's technical plan to provide the products and services

required by this RFP. This section must encompass the requirements of Sections A.1.4 - A.1.17 of this RFP. The description is to be complete, clear, and concise, and must include responses to the specific topics and deliverables included in Sections A.1.4 -A.1.17.

The RFP also requires that Tab 4 respond to Qualifications and Experience and Tab 5 to Management Plan.

Please clarify which information regarding Qualifications and Experience and Management Plan should be included under which tab since it appears that these sections are under Tab 3 and then again under Tabs 4 and 5.

TAB 4, Qualifications and Experience, should include a detailed description of the Respondent's qualifications and prior experience performing tasks similar to those required in this RFP (see TAB 4, p. 28 for more details) TAB 5, Management Plan, should include the Respondent's management plan (see TAB 5, p. 28-29 for more details).

12. Please confirm that Attachment F, Instructions for Completing Compensation/Fee Structure Form is to be submitted under Tab 8, separate from the Compensation/Fee Structure Form, which is submitted under Tab 6.

Attachment F, Instructions for Completing Compensation/Fee Structure Form should be included in TAB 6 (not TAB 8).

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Second Set of Questions and Answers

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has received the following question concerning RFP No. 781-9-21432:

1. The RFP states, "Vendor shall provide DIR with the URL to its Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT)..."

What is the expectation for delivery of the VPAT?

It will be expected that the awarded contractor deliver the VPAT electronically to DIR.

2. The RFP states, "If selected as a Finalist, the Respondent must facilitate an internet-based demonstration of its proposed software (test administration engine) that incorporates the fifty-eight (58) college readiness and diagnostic sample items submitted as part of the Respondent's proposal (see section A.5.2). The demonstration must be part of the in-person interview protocol scheduled in June 2019." and "In all, Respondents must submit with their proposals a total of fifty-eight (58) aligned sample items of high psychometric quality."

Can we submit sample items with the RFP response and use a live test for the in-person interview demonstration? In which case the sample items and the demo items will not be the same.

Yes.

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RFP No. 781-9-21432

Third Set of Questions and Answers

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has received the following question concerning RFP No. 781-9-21432:

1. Are respondents required to submit the VPAT with our proposal as an attachment?

If yes, does it count against the 10 page attachment limit? Also if yes, should the VPAT be part of Tab 3 or Tab 8?

No. It will be expected that the awarded contractor deliver the VPAT electronically to DIR prior to contract award.

2. P. 27, Tab 3, Technical Proposal, lists A.1.4-17 as the requirements to be included in the technical proposal. However, A.1.18 Delivery Procedures and A.1.19 Data and Access Requirements on p. 22 also list requirements. Should A.1.18 and A.1.19 be included in Tab 3, Technical Proposal?

Yes.