

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Request for Offer (RFO)

TEXAS SUCCESS INITIATIVE PRE-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY SOLICITATION
RFO No. 781-1-25139

Questions and Answers #2

August 13, 2021

- 9. Our research shows that a Pre-Assessment Activity like the one described already exists. Please let us know how the new system should be different from those already in place.**

Response: The new system should meet the requirements set forth in the RFO. The evaluation criteria for awarding the contract does not include a comparison with any current system or systems currently in place.

- 10. Regarding section 2.01 Experience, are you referring to vendors that have experience creating web-based applications in general, or those that have more specific experience creating online academic assessments like the one described?**

Response: Experience should reflect both.

- 11. Are you looking for a vendor to create the web application with guidance on the content and questions from THECB, or are you looking for a vendor to create the content of the pre-assessment activity itself along with the web application?**

Response: The vendor should be prepared to address content as outlined in the solicitation and according to the PAA requirements as outlined in [Title 19 Texas Administrative Code § 4.55\(b\)](#).

- 12. What role will THECB play in this project?**

Response: THECB's primary role is to ensure all deliverables are met according to the requirements of the solicitation and the awarded vendor's approved offer.

- 13. If you are looking for a vendor to create the content of the pre-assessment activity itself, would you accept a partnership between a web application company and academic assessment or curriculum provider?**

Response: The vendor may subcontract under this RFO.

- 14. Section 3.01 states that respondent shall “Customize the PAA to the needs of approved school districts as determined by THECB.” Please describe this need in more detail. Also, how many school districts that need customization should we estimate and what level of effort should go into each customization (on average).**

Response: Regarding customization, high schools and institutions of higher education need to present campus-specific information and resources to students as outlined in [Title 19 Texas Administrative Code § 4.55](#). THECB does not keep track of customization efforts between the vendor and school districts, so we are unable to estimate the number of school districts and level of effort.

- 15. Section 3.01 mentions the creation of an administrative site. Please describe the details of the administrative site as specifically as possible.**

Response: The administrative site should address anticipated needs of the vendor and the school districts and institutions of higher education that have signed up for the PAA service to help ensure services are provided to meet applicable requirements as outlined in the RFO.

- 16. How should data from the Pre-Assessment Activity integrate with the TSIA2, if at all.**

Response: There is no expectation for data integration between the PAA and the TSIA2.

- 17. Has any previous user or audience research been completed that can inform this project? For example, do you have documented usability testing, stakeholder interviews, audience surveys, or other research that will be helpful?**

Response: No previous user or audience research has been conducted.

- 18. What technical requirements must the new system adhere to? Is there a particular content management system or technology stack that is required? Is there one that you would prefer?**

Response: Technical requirements should meet or exceed industry standards for this type of product and service sought and as outlined in the RFO, Subsection 3.01.

- 19. Section 3.01.13 mentions that the application may be hosted with DCS. If so, what operating system, scripting languages, and databases**

will be available on the hosting server? Please describe other pertinent details about the hosting environment.

Response: Information regarding the Data Center Services hosting environment may be found on the Texas Department of Information Resources website: [Data Center \(texas.gov\)](http://DataCenter.texas.gov).

- 20. Will the system store any personally identifiable information? If so, will this data be stored locally or with another provider?**

Response: The vendor should provide a secure system that meets FERPA and meets or exceeds related industry standards regarding PII to store data so school district and institutions of higher education who have signed up for this service are able to access the PII for verification purposes, if needed.

- 21. Will new content need to be written for the application? If so, how much help are you expecting from your chosen partner? Do you need content strategy, copywriting, or copy editing services?**

Response: Unless awarded vendor receives appropriate permissions to use existing content, the awarded vendor is responsible for all content comprising the PAA that meets the requirements as outlined in the RFO and [Title 19 Texas Administrative Code § Rule 4.55\(b\)](#).

- 22. If content will be provided by your chosen partner, please give an estimate for how many pages or snippets of content will need to be written or edited.**

Response: Please see response to question #21.

- 23. Will content need to be presented in languages other than English? If so, which ones?**

Response: The awarded vendor should be prepared to provide content in English only.

- 24. If multiple languages are needed, who will provide the translated content and should the translated content be human-translated or will a machine translation (such as Google Translate) suffice?**

Response: Please see response to question #23.

- 25. Will this project require a substantial amount of data or content migration from an old system to the new one? If so, who will be**

responsible for this migration? Please estimate how much content, and what types of content, need to be migrated over.

Response: There is no expectation for data or content migration from an old system to the new one.

26. What third-party or legacy applications must the application interface with? How deep of an integration does each one need?

Response: There are no third-party or legacy applications that any new applications must interface with.

27. Is the new system required to meet accessibility standards? If so, to what level?

Response: The new system must meet or exceed all industry standards for accessibility for the type of product sought, as outlined in the RFO.

28. Related to accessibility, is general adherence to WCAG and Section 508 guidelines acceptable, or do you need formal accessibility testing and/or a WCAG conformance certification (for example, WCAG 2.1 AA certification)?

Response: Please reference RFO Subsections 3.01.12 and 3.02.2.

29. What other functionality will the application need to include? Besides those described in the RFP, are there any other features or functions we should consider?

Response: The vendor should meet or exceed all functionalities as outlined in the RFO.

30. Once the project has started, what will the makeup of the decision-making committee be like? Will decisions be made by a large group, a small committee, or a single person?

Response: THECB staff will ensure all components of the statement of work are met according to the RFO. Staff will consult with the awarded vendor on a regular meeting schedule, which may include a hoc meetings, as needed.

31. What project management process will work best for this project: waterfall, agile, a hybrid of those, or something different?

Response: The vendor should propose in its offer the management process that is most effective to meet the requirements of the RFO, based on vendor experience, capacity, resources, and outcomes.

- 32. What level of training will you require after the website project is complete? Will you just need content contributor training on the CMS or will you need a deeper, more technical developer training?**

Response: Trainings should be designed for multiple users: school district and institution of higher education personnel who have signed up to use the PAA product for its students, along with students who will be using the product.

- 33. How should this project be billed? Fixed-bid deliverables based, hourly, monthly retainer, or something else?**

Response: Please see the RFO, Subsections 5.02 and 5.03 for information regarding invoicing and payments.

- 34. Is there someone who could be considered an incumbent on this project? Is there another company that you've worked with before, or any other company that would receive preference for winning this project?**

Response: There is a current contract that is set to expire with a vendor for similar services as specified in this RFO. There are no competitive preference criteria for this RFO.

- 35. When should the project be complete? Is this a critical due date? What event is driving the due date?**

Response: The project completion date will be no later than February 2022. This timeframe will prevent a disruption to accessing a state-wide PAA for schools and institutions of higher education.

- 36. Please provide general budget guidelines. Even a rough ballpark estimate or range would be very helpful. Do you imagine this project to be \$100k, \$500k, or \$1M+?**

Response: It is expected that the proposals include a budget designed to meet the needs of the project as outlined in the RFO. This is a competitive solicitation, and we are unable to provide a range or estimate.

- 37. Is it acceptable to share documents and attachments using Google?**

Response: No. Please see the RFO, Subsection 10.02 for information regarding requirements for acceptable submissions.

38. Will proposals be evaluated digitally, or will they be printed for evaluation?

Response: Evaluators will select the appropriate mechanisms to conduct a complete evaluation of all submitted offers that meet or exceed the requirements as outlined in the RFO.

39. The time between the Q&A response and the proposal deadline is tight. Can you please extend the deadline?

Response: At this time, we are unable to extend deadlines associated with this solicitation.

40. How many vendors have submitted questions in response to this RFP?

Response: Two vendors have submitted questions in response to this RFP.