

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Human-centered Research and Experience Design for College & Career Advising in Texas

781-1-25209

Questions and Answers #1

August 18, 2021

Question 1:

Are there specific goals you need to meet as an org? Like mandated by the state.

This work contributes to 60x30TX, the THECB strategic plan. This plan is currently under a refresh but the focus on credential attainment will remain.

Question 2:

Will you provide a list of interested parties so that primes and subs can identify potential partners for this RFP?

Link to the Texas Comptroller's Centralized Master's Bidders List (CMBL)
<https://mycpa.cpa.state.tx.us/tpasscmbsearch/tpasscmbsearch.do>
Search by NIGP Code, 924-19 Education Research Services

Question 3:

What are the backgrounds of the THECB working team who will collaborate with the consultancy on this initiative?

Laura Brennan, Deputy Assistant Commissioner for College and Career Advising, will serve as the primary contact. Her bio can be found [here](#), along with the Texas OnCourse product, implementation and content teams, who will also serve as key contributors. Additionally, Claudette Jenks will actively support this work. Claudette serves as the Director of College Access for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Question 4:

What are your expectations about how participant recruiting will happen? Are there networks/ channels to students and other key stakeholders that we can leverage?

The Texas OnCourse network provides an opportunity for the contractor to connect with K12 stakeholders. Over 18,000 educators across the state use Texas OnCourse online learning. We also have connections with higher education institutions that will allow for connecting with current college students.

Question 5:

What are budget expectations or range for this scope of work? Has a budget been allocated?

The THECB cannot provide budget information for this procurement.

Question 6:

What is the type of research/testing previously done? What were the past methodologies?

Texas OnCourse is currently working with a third-party evaluator to better understand the program impact on student outcomes. We are in the first year of a three-year evaluation engagement. Additionally, we are working with a qualitative evaluation partner ADVi, our virtual advisor chatbot. The THECB team will share findings from these engagements as available.

Question 7:

Please provide the NIGP code list via this chat.
924-19 Education Research Services

Question 8:

Any ethnographic research?

Texas OnCourse worked with a local design- research firm to conduct ethnographic research that informed the development of MapMyPath, a tool to support students as they transfer and apply credits between higher education institutions.

Question 9:

Okay to conduct all research in this program remotely given today's challenges.

Yes, however, we lean on the expertise of the selected firm to determine if conducting all research remotely may create an undesired bias.

Question 10:

What are budget expectations or range for this scope of work? Has a budget been allocated?

Answered under question No. 5

Question 11:

Are there any internal mid-program milestones or dates we should be aware of as we craft an approach? Perhaps a key stakeholder meeting or conference?

We will host our executive advisory committee meeting on October 15th. Additionally, we would need the contractor to prioritize developing personas for students who have some college, no credential.

Question 12:

Who will be the main contacts that we will be collaborating with at THECB and what are their backgrounds?

Answered under Question No. 3

Question 13:

What kind of understanding of the HCD process does the THECB working team have?

Texas OnCourse has leveraged HCD in developing and delivering products, with the product management team often leading the efforts. Additionally, the THECB team has participated in HCD workshops, so most of the team has an understanding of the value.

Question 14:

What is the THECB working team's expected involvement or time commitment to collaborating with the consultancy on this program?

Laura Brennan and Claudette will serve as primary partners and therefore will be available for necessary collaboration.

Question 15:

Is there interest in building HCD capacity internal to THECB?

This work is already underway.

Question 16:

What's the type of research and testing previously done? What were the past methodologies? Will we have access to the outputs of this work to build on during this program?

First part of the question answered under Question No. 6.

Information from prior research and testing may be provided at THECB's sole discretion and in compliance with any underlying contract terms.

Question 17:

What are your expectations about how participant recruiting will happen?

We will provide access to our network of over 18,000 K12 educators to support in stakeholder recruitment. Additionally, we will facilitate connections with our institutional partners for recruitment in higher education.

Question 18:

Are there networks and/or channels to students and other key stakeholders that we can leverage?

Answered under Question No. 4

Question 19:

What is the expected depth and rigor for the validation of findings by the various communities of use?

With recognition that a primary output of this engagement is to develop a holistic and equitable advising strategy for the state, we will lean on the expertise of our contractor to recommend the appropriate sampling, depth and rigor for the work. The THECB team's knowledge of the field will support this decision on the approach to the work.

Question 20:

Is it acceptable to conduct all research sessions remotely? Any concerns or considerations we should be accounting for?

First part of the question answered under Question No. 9.

At present there are no known concerns or considerations that should be accounted for. It is expected that the awarded vendor will conduct their services in compliance with any current or future government orders.

Question 21:

How important is it to consider the academic calendar given it could affect student and advisor availability to participate in the research?

The academic calendar is likely an important consideration in recruiting participants for interviews.

Question 22:

Does the agency anticipate a technical expert conducting phase II of the project?

We anticipate a contractor with technical capacity to propose the technical solution of the strategy. However, this engagement will not include the engineering required for the technical solution.

Question 23:

How does THECB perceive the relationship of the "design partner." How will the agency partner with the contractor? What elements do you perceive there will be collaboration, if any?

We anticipate regular collaboration between the agency and the contractor with frequent check-ins for knowledge sharing and progress updates. The THECB team will bring strong subject matter expertise and a wide network of educators to the engagement.