STATE OF ALASKA

Department of Education and Early Development

Division of Innovation and Education Excellence

SCIENCE OF READING THREE-CREDIT ASYNCHRONOUS COURSE FOR ALASKA EDUCATORS

RFP# 2023-0500-0156

Amendment #2

Issued February 23, 2023

This amendment is being issued to clarify details in this RFP by providing vendor questions and answers.

Important Note to Offerors: You do not need to return this page of the amendment document with your proposal. All terms and conditions of the RFP remain.

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Questions and Answers related to RFP 2023-0500-0156

Please note: Vendor questions listed in **blue**, referenced language from the RFP or other sources in **black** and DEED answers in **red**.

1. The RFP has two different lists stating requirements for the content of the course. The lists are similar but different in some places. Please clarify which list the vendor should use to determine required content for the course.

DEED recommends using both lists as they complement each other. For example, the first bullet "Background knowledge needed to teach all components of beginning instruction" (page 10) is more of the umbrella and page 8 "content list" is the specific components of that bullet regarding background knowledge.

2. Is the vendor's responsibility for the course limited to the development of the course, including of a pre and post assessment, in a SCROM format using online course development software? That is, will the responsibility for uploading the course and assessment into Alaska's eLearning LMS, the maintenance of the course after it is uploaded, and the registration/support of users be the responsibility of AK DEED? Put another way, does the vendor have any continued responsibility for the course once it is built?
DEED will work with our eLearning vendor to load the course into the system. The course development vendor should build in time to address any issues with the course that arise when we try to load it into the system.

3. If the vendor already has an existing online course for which the vendor owns the copyright, can the vendor use content from this course in the course? Or does AK DEED want a vendor to create all content and materials from scratch?
Yes, existing content is allowed to be used for this purpose, as long as DEED will have the rights to use the content for future purposes. Vendor logos and copyrights may be used.

4. The RFP does not provide any language related to copyright ownership of the content that is incorporated into the online course that AK DEED is seeking to have a vendor build. If the vendor does use existing content that is from a course owned and copyrighted by the vendor, what will be the arrangement with AK DEED for ownership of what goes into the course? By way of example, I have included some wording below from a similar RFP that a different state has posted for the development of a SOR online course.

> For content already owned and copyrighted by the vendor incorporated into a new, customized course, the other RFP uses this wording:
>
> *If the offeror wants to incorporate any Pre-existing Materials in any customized online course deliverable, the offeror must first disclose this and seek the ___'s approval for doing so in advance. The offeror will retain ownership of all tools, methods, techniques, standards, and other development procedures, as well as generic and preexisting shells, subroutines, and similar material incorporated in any customized online course deliverable ("Pre-existing Materials") if the offeror provides the non-exclusive license described in the next paragraph.*
>
> *The offeror may grant the ___ a worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty free, perpetual license to use, modify, and otherwise distribute all Pre-existing Materials that are incorporated in any custom-developed online course deliverable rather than grant the ODE ownership of the Pre-existing Materials provided however, that the ODE may distribute such Pre-existing materials to the extent required by governmental funding mandates. On the request of the Offeror, the ___ will incorporate any proprietary notice the offeror may reasonably want for any Pre-existing Materials included in any customized online course deliverable in all copies ___ makes of that deliverable.*

For <u>new content the vendor produces</u> for a new, customized online course, the other RFP uses this wording:

All new content produced by the offeror for this project shall be owned by the ___, with all rights, title, and interest in all intellectual property that come into existence through the offeror's custom work being assigned to the ___

We agree with the language used above and will be incorporating similar verbiage into the final contract.

5. Page3, Section 1.01, Section 1.01 describes the request for "the creation of a three-credit asynchronous course to be loaded into DEED's online learning management system." This request has implications for intellectual property. Is it DEED's intention to use this course after the contract has ended? If so, is DEED seeking ownership or perpetual license rights for the course?
    See above.

6. Page 3, Section 1.01, Section 1.01 describes the request for "the creation of a three-credit asynchronous course to be loaded into DEED's online learning management system." There are varying definitions of what it means for a course to be asynchronous, which impact the design of an online course. Can you please clarify your design assumptions?
    a. For example, is it safe to assume that a staff member at DEED will perform all administrative functions within the LMS once the course is uploaded, including managing user and reports/data?
        Yes, DEED will assume all management of the course once completed and uploaded successfully into our platform.
    b. Also, does DEED intend this to be fully asynchronous and automated (e.g., no human facilitators or graders; no participant discussion boards; quizzes are computer scored)? Or, does DEED intend the course to be blended with human interaction (e.g., course facilitators interact with participants; participants interact with each other in cohorts)? If the intention is to have course facilitators and/or participants engage with other participants, will DEED want its staff trained to be facilitators, moderators, or course managers so they can carry out these duties after the completion of the contract?
        It is DEED's intention that this course by fully asynchronous with computer scoring or quizzes and assessments. Any staff training required to support the course should be included in the vendor's proposal.

7. Page 17, Section 4.05, Section 4.05 states: "<mark>Offeror must demonstrate an understanding of the training schedule and a reasonable timeline for completing the scope of work.</mark>" Can you please clarify what is meant by "training schedule"? The RFP deliverables seem to focus on the development of the course by the end of the contract, not the delivery of the course to teachers during the contract. Is it correct to assume that this course is for use with teachers after July 1, 2024 (i.e., it is for those who missed their initial opportunity to take the 3-credit course to be offered under Project 1 in RFP 2023-0500-0096)?
    Highlighted above is an edit error and should read "Offeror must demonstrate and understanding of the scope of work and a reasonable timeline for completion of all contract requirements." The vendor will not provide the course delivery, but a final package that can be

loaded into the Learning Management System for independent delivery to educators. This course is not intended to replace the 3-credit course offerings offered in RFP 2023-0500-0096 but to offer another option for educators seeking to fulfill training requirements in a flexible manner.

8. What are the technical requirements for the state's elearning system?
   The browsers currently supported are Chrome, FireFox, and Microsoft Edge. It is recommended that people use the most up to date version of their browsers and operating systems.

9. Does the state's elearning system track usage hours?
   Yes, the system tracks how long learners spend in modules.

10. Is it expected that all the content be completed on the platform or can there be work done outside of that platform?
    The expectation is for a fully asynchronous course that does not require out of platform tasks.

11. What is the deadline for getting the content loaded into the system?
    The eLearning vendor will assist DEED with loading the content into the system. We need to have time prior to the end of contract for this process in case there are further considerations that need to be addressed with the content development vendor.

12. Do you want the course to be presented in an entirely digital online format, or do you want there to be downloadable materials for activities and references in addition to digital presentation?
    Fully asynchronous online format, though references, tools, or resources for the end-user can be included in the course package.

13. What is DEED's eLearning platform? What version of SCORM does it use?
    We currently publish everything in SCORM 1.2, but HR Learn can also accept SCORM 2004, AICC, and xAPI packages for eLearning modules as well as individual content objects in PDF, PowerPoint and MP4 videos.

14. Is the state planning to serve all user data within their eLearning platform, or will the vendor be required to host individual user information and data?
    The course will be loaded into DEED's existing eLearning platform, which is housed in the HR Learns learning management system. Upon completion of the course, DEED will load the course into the platform and manage users, reporting, etc.

15. Will the developer receive acknowledgement on the course materials in any capacity?
    Yes, the developer can include logos, acknowledgements, and copyrights as agreed upon between DEED and the develop.

16. With a Science of Reading course, there could be copyright permissions involved in the creation of material (e.g., functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging of brain photographs, Scarborough's Rope illustration, excerpts of academic research, etc.). In addition, the owner of materials is required to report usage connected to permission fees. How does the state expect to handle the submissions and costs of these permissions, either in a single use fee or yearly renewal fee?
All fees for copyright permissions must be included in the contract budget to be paid as a single use fee.

17. Companies experienced in providing Science of Reading professional development and in creating asynchronous courses in the Science of Reading are likely to have developed existing proprietary Science of Reading courses for other users. The State of Alaska requirement that the Science of Reading courses to be created for it are works made for hire to be used by it for any purpose including possible distribution outside of the State of Alaska may conflict with the proprietary interests of such companies. In lieu of the works made for hire requirement, would the State of Alaska allow companies to retain the intellectual property rights in the Science of Reading courses to be created and to grant to the State of Alaska an exclusive, irrevocable, paid-up and perpetual license to use the courses within the State of Alaska?
Yes, this is the intention of the contract.

18. Who will be responsible for loading the asynchronous online course into DEED's online learning management system and what is required of the winning bidder to support this process?
The eLearning vendor will load the course into the system. DEED asks that the development vendor be available to address any issues that arise during that process.

19. What are the proficiency requirements of the Alaska Reads Act for K-3 teachers?
   - *Demonstrated proficiency in the Science of Reading by all K-3 teachers is a requirement of the Alaska Reads Act and it is the intent that educators completing the courses offered by the selected vendor will meet the proficiency requirements of the Alaska Reads Act. (p.7)*
The Alaska Reads Act states that K-3 teachers must have training, coursework, or testing in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and oral language. The training, coursework, and/or test must be approved by the state board.

20. Will the proficiency requirements be determined by completion of this course, a state provided assessment, or another way?
The proficiency requirements are determined by a completion of the course and the summative assessment at the end of the course (page 10). The summative assessment should be inclusive of the material covered within the course and application of newly acquired knowledge and/or instructional strategies.

21. How do you expect the targeted audience (Classroom Educators, Reading Teachers, and Educational Leaders) to use the course information in their respective roles?
"Instructional practices suggested and/or needed to transfer content to classroom lessons quickly and that can be integrated with any reading curriculum or published reading program." (Page 10). Direct to instruction application that is curricular agnostic. In addition, knowledge of best practice will inform practices within each school for the RTI/MTSS Framework, intervention materials, school schedules, professional development, and family engagement.

22. Do you expect this to be addressed in the training or will this be addressed separately by the state?

- *A key component of the professional development is to ensure that educators working with K-3 students have a deep understanding of the Science of Reading and the required level of training for their specific role in providing effective reading instruction to students in their schools.* (p.8)

Yes, we expect the course to address this.

23. What kind of guidance do you envision for this bullet point?
- *Guidance on how to articulate the philosophy to stakeholders, educators, and families; including how to address resistance and barriers.* (p.8)

We expect the vendor to include in their proposal a plan for how this will be addressed in the course.

24. How long will participants be given to complete the modules?
This course should be asynchronous and available for the user to complete on their own timeline. Course completion will lead to a certificate of completion and associated assessment score that can be submitted by the end-user for requirements.

25. Is it a requirement that the content of the asynchronous course show alignment to the AK standards or other standards explicitly in the modules?
Yes, the contents should show alignment to the Alaska English Language Arts Standards

26. With respect to timeline, can you provide estimated time expectations regarding the following processes:
The vendor should propose a timeline for completing all tasks prior to the end of the contract. DEED will finalize and approve the timeline with the vendor once the contract is awarded.
- review of asynchronous courses before release to educators:
Yes, DEED would like to review the content and provide feedback to the vendor prior to the end of the contract. The vendor should include this review in the proposed scope of work and include a proposed timeline.
- course registration window:
DEED will load the course into our eLearning platform for self-service registration within the DEED eLearning platform.
- uploading of content into DEED:
The DEED eLearning vendor will load the course into the platform. DEED asks that the content development vendor build time into their proposed scope of work that allows for addressing bugs or fixes during this time frame.

27. When do you expect the modules to be available for participant access?
The course must be live by the end of the contract, though an earlier delivery would be preferred.

28. Has a review team been identified to provide feedback during the development process?
Review will be completed by the Academic Support Team at DEED.

29. Has a preferred registration process been identified for these courses?
DEED has a self-registration process for eLearning courses.

30. Because many students are second language English speakers with Alaska Native languages being the primary language spoken at home and in the community, do you anticipate any specific information that needs to be considered or incorporated such as the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools?

- *Information on how the brain learns to read and the nature of reading difficulties (e.g., dyslexia, generalized language learning disorders, etc.) as well as special considerations for supporting culturally and linguistically diverse learners with learning to read.* (p.8)

Incorporating Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools should be considered. We are focused on making sure that our teachers have the skill set for working in a variety of contexts with diverse learners. Incorporating these standards supports that effort.

31. Can you provide examples of how you anticipate this to be presented in the modules? For example, should there be a discussion or presentation on the importance of oral traditions?
    - *The training should address culturally relevant instruction and alignment to the Science of Reading.* (p.10)

    The proposal should address how the vendor intends to address this in the course.

32. How many of the school districts have programs that teach Alaska Native languages?

    15 or more districts have Alaska Native Language programs, the program types vary by school and district with some including immersion programs, and others incorporating language courses into the curriculum.