

Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Learning Environments RFP Q&A

Please note the Appendix R, New York State Education Department's Data Privacy Appendix, posted separately with the RFP documents, will be included in the contract that results from this RFP.

Bid Details

Q1: Do you have any requirements for margins, font sizes, max page counts, etc.?

A1: There are no specific style or formatting requirements for the Technical Proposal. Please use the Cost Proposal Worksheet for the Cost Proposal section of the bid.

Q2: What level of detail do you want, particularly for the technical proposal? Some of the questions we could respond to in one paragraph or 15 pages, so guidance from you would be helpful to know what level of detail you're expecting.

A2: Quality bid submissions will address the Technical Criteria completely and concisely, while also being engaging to the evaluators.

Q3: If we submit a link for the application video, is that enough? Or do you need it submitted in another format?

A3: NYSED must be able to retain a copy of all bid submission materials. Please provide NYSED a downloadable copy in one of the following formats: .MP4 or .MOV

Q4: For the docs we must submit via email, is it okay if we have two cost proposal files, for example (one in Excel, one in Word), as long as we label them both as being part of the cost proposal? Or should we merge them into one doc?

A4: Please merge all cost proposal documents into one file. The format for the Cost Proposal can be found at [this link](#). Please use this format to submit your cost proposal.

Q5: Can we submit a proposal that would deliver professional learning modules and services addressing a subset -- but not all -- of the six core competencies?

A5: Deliverable 1 asks the contractor to produce modules "based on the six core competencies." The expectation is that the project plans address all six. Bids will be scored based on how each element of the RFP is addressed.

Q6: Pages 29-31 of the Submission document are not listed online. Have these pages been deleted?

A6: There is an error with the page numbering in the file. However, all required documents are included.

Q7: When will the awarded bid be announced?

A7: Based on our current timeline, we plan to announce the winning bid by early fall. This is subject to change.

Q8: Is the NYSED Office of Education Policy accepting out of state bids for RFP #21-016?

A8: Yes.

Budget

Q9: To be clear, we do not need to submit an FS-10, we only need to submit the Cost Proposal Worksheet?

A9: Correct.

Q10: How will the 30 points for budget be awarded: what is the calculation to determine points for those budgets that aren't the lowest?

A10: The submitted budgets will be awarded points pursuant to a formula that awards the highest score of 30 points to the budget that reflects the lowest overall cost. The remaining budgets will be awarded points based on a calculation that computes the relative difference of each proposal against the lowest budget submitted. The resulting percentage is then applied to the maximum point value of 30 points. In other words, cost scores will be calculated by dividing the lowest cost budget by each bidder's proposed cost and multiplying the result by 30. For example, Bidder A is the lowest cost at \$1,000,000 and receives 30 points for the cost score. Bidder B is twice the cost at \$2,000,000 and will receive half the points (15 points).

Q11: What is required for the "detailed budget" mentioned on page 23 of the RFP – is that the first worksheet in the Cost Proposal Worksheet? Or do we need to also submit a budget narrative or FS-10?

A11: As per the "Submission Documents" found at [this link](#), the Cost Proposal Submission should include the Cost Proposal Summary, Subcontracting Form, and M/WBE Purchases Form. The "detailed budget" refers to the first worksheet.

Q12: What happens if spending during implementation doesn't exactly match up with the time frames listed in the cost-proposal summary – but overall expenses stay within the original total budget amount? Is it a problem if spending doesn't exactly match that original calendar?

A12: Page 14 of the RFP provides that "All invoices submitted for payment must include dates of services and an itemized list of activities and costs consistent with the approved Schedule of Deliverables contained in the executed contract." However, as noted on page 7 of the RFP, "NYSED may adjust the timeline ... as necessary to carry out the goals of TRLE, subject to the approval of USDOE." Any changes will require the approval of NYSED and may necessitate a formal contract amendment and approval by OSC.

Q13: On the budget, are there any unallowable costs?

A13: While there are no unallowable costs, bidders will be scored on the plan they create in the Technical Proposal.

Q14: Can you share the allocated budget for the project, and/or per contracted organization?

A14: There is no designated amount for this project, but bidders are encouraged to prepare budgets that are reasonable and as cost-effective as possible. Page 25 of the RFP states, "The Financial Criteria portion of this RFP will be scored based upon the grand total for the budget summary." Therefore, 30% of each bid's score will be determined by the budget the bidder develops. NYSED will award one contract pursuant to this RFP.

Q15: Should respondents factor in advertising and marketing costs to help to achieve the milestones on page 9?

A15: Yes.

Conflict of Interest

Q16: My company helped write the TRLE grant application last year and were paid \$5,000 for that work. My company also does video and LMS work. Today, we were contacted by a company that plans to bid on TRLE and asked us to subcontract for video production and LMS support. I told them I would need to check if that would be a conflict of interest.

A16: Previous work on the formulation of NYSED's federal grant proposal does not constitute a conflict of interest. That work was concluded prior to the development of this RFP and the commencement of this solicitation.

Learning Management System (LMS)

Q17: If there is a vendor that has an existing secure Learning Management System that can support the State can we partner with them (and not need to create another such system)?

A17: Yes, as long as the LMS meets the requirements listed in the RFP.

Q18: Deliverable 6 (Page 13): If the solution built is LTI (Learning Tools Interoperability) compliant--a method to provide access from one LMS to another LMS, so that portals can share their content. Is that satisfactory, or do we still need to build out a Common Cartridge solution?

A18: Yes, Learning Tools Interoperability compliance is also an acceptable format for LMS requirements under this RFP.

Q19: Deliverable 5 on page 7 indicates that the respondent must host the content at no cost during the grant period. In the description of Deliverable 5 on page 12, it states that the LMS must continue to be available and updated following the conclusion of the grant period. Can a respondent assume that either NYSED or customers will begin paying for this service at that time?

A19: Deliverable 5 on page 7 states that all project deliverables must be hosted on a secure LMS that is accessible to all New York State educators at no cost to the user or their employer during the grant period. On page 12, the RFP states that NYSED is requiring the option to continue using the LMS following the contract period, but NYSED would not be responsible for maintaining the platform itself. For example, such availability *could* take the form of an

arrangement whereby NYSED has the option to assume control of—and financial responsibility for—a platform license or subscription going forward. As stated on page 23, the proposal should explain how the bidder proposes to implement Deliverable 5, including the plan for the LMS, to meet NYSED’s expectations as described in the RFP.

Q20: What are the expectations for the LMS helpdesk support for users? Would users need a number to call for live support, or would a call back within 24 hours be acceptable?

A20: Page 13 of the RFP states, “The LMS must have helpdesk support for users.” We are interested in the ways in which bidders plan to address the helpdesk requirement. Instituting a callback procedure is acceptable.

Q21: Page 13 outlines information on Ownership and Branding of Deliverables. In this section it references code as an example of something that NYSED shall own. To clarify, if a respondent were to build a custom repository for this information online, does this section mean that NYSED would own the code for that repository in addition to the content on it?

A21: Yes. Page 13 of the RFP states, “New York State Education Department shall own all materials, processes, and products (software, code, documentation and other written materials – collectively “the Deliverables”) developed under this contract.”

Q22: 2 similar questions were received:

- a. **Page 13 outlines information on Ownership and Branding of Deliverables. In this section it references code as an example of something that NYSED shall own. If NYSED would own the code, should respondents factor in the development costs/rights into their response?**
- b. **The cost of creating and maintaining a secure Learning Management System (mentioned in deliverable 5) that is available statewide for free to all educators could be very expensive. If we include that cost in our grant proposal (which we would need to, to complete that deliverable), it will make our budget very high. Is it your assumption, that such a cost would be included?**

A22: As the RFP states on page 13, “New York State Education Department shall own all materials, processes, and products (software, code, documentation and other written materials – collectively “the Deliverables”) developed under this contract.”

Q23: Page 14 outlines that all materials must be clearly labeled with the funding source. If the content were branded with a company logo and labeled as requested, would that be acceptable? In other words, can the content and LMS be co-branded with the vendor and NYSED logos?

A23: Yes, the content and LMS may be co-branded.

Q24: Can the content reside on the vendor’s platform as well as the NYSED LMS?

A24: Content may reside on the vendor's platform as long as it adheres to all other contract terms, including but not limited to the following language on page 14 of the RFP: “All materials shall clearly be labeled as being developed with funding from New York State Education Department’s Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Learning Environment Program, through the United

States Department of Education Stabilization Fund-Rethink K12 Education Models Grant (ESF REM Grant).”

Video Production

Q25: The required video production – must all 60 trainings that are part of deliverable #1 be filmed?

A25: All modules should feature a video element.

Q26: 3 similar questions were received:

- a. **Can you further define “broadcast quality” video? Does this require access to a recording studio, green screen, television grade cameras, etc...?**
- b. **When you state broadcast quality can you give more specifics? Broadcast quality is within our capacity, but has implications for the budget so we want to make sure we are not planning to overproduce or underproduce the product.**
- c. **Can you expand on the word “professionally developed” video as there are many levels of this?**

A26: "Broadcast quality" videos should include professional filmmaking techniques such as film and sound editing, on-screen graphics development, cinematography, etc. Equipment to be used is at the contractor's discretion.

M/WBE

Q27: My business is currently a certified M/WBE in New York City and New Jersey and intends to submit a proposal for this bid. My application for the state of NY was submitted in December 2020 but is still pending. How does that affect my MWBE compliance for this bid? Should I submit documentation of Good Faith Efforts, or request a partial or full waiver?

A27: A business is not considered certified as a M/WBE vendor until they have New York State certification through the NYS Division of Minority and Women Business Development. Full participation and utilization of New York State certified M/WBE firms to meet 30% utilization is the goal. If there is a gap then a Request for a Waiver (Form M/WBE 101), Good Faith Efforts (Form M/WBE 105), and justification will need to be provided.

Q28: Is the M/WBE requirement 30% of the entire budget, or are there any exemptions to the calculation? (Such as salaries, benefits, indirect costs, etc.)

A28: The M/WBE requirement is 30% of the total contract amount.

Q29: Our firm has MWBE Certification from New York City & New Jersey. Page 4 indicates that New York State approval will be required. Our application has been sitting in the review process for quite some time. If awarded, can we use our New York City MWBE Certification?

A29: No, a firm must be a New York State certified M/WBE with the NYS Division of Minority and Women Business Development to count towards the participation goal.

Partnerships

Q30: Could you tell us the organizations that received Phase 1 of this grant? We may want to reach out to them to investigate whether they would want to work with us for Phase 2.

A30: Information regarding our partnerships can be found at [this website](#).

Q31: 2 similar questions were received:

- a. **What support is provided from the state in informing/notifying educators of the availability of these modules and enforcing competition?**
- b. **What type of support will be given to the contractor to disseminate the trainings to educators- specifically for deliverable 4 focusing on those not served by CTLE Sponsors who received turnkey training. (ex: mail list provided? PLE opportunities advertised on a statewide listserve?, etc.)?**

A31: NYSED will collaborate with the contractor to utilize NYSED's existing communication channels (including, but not limited to, listservs) and statewide relationship networks to promote the availability of the PLEs. It is unclear what is meant by the question about "enforcing competition."

Q32: Is this a fee for service? If so, will these agencies on Page 9 be paid:

"a. Collaborate and partner with Special Education Regional Partnership Centers (RPCs) and Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks (RBERNs) on development, vetting, and dissemination of PLEs and wraparound supports.

b. Collaborate and partner with existing New York State educator professional learning entities and networks on dissemination of PLEs and wraparound supports?"

A32: The RFP does not dictate whether the contractor's collaboration and partnership with the entities mentioned in your question may or may not be a fee for service arrangement. These organizations have pre-existing structures in the field that can be leveraged to accomplish our common goal of providing quality professional learning to teachers in New York State.

A further clarification is required regarding a clause in the RFP. It is the Office of Special Education Technical Assistance Partnerships (TAPs), not the RPCs, that the winning bidder will be required to collaborate with.

Q33: What does the partnership with the RBERNs and RPCs need to include? What activities should we plan to work with them on?

A33: The RFP does not dictate the exact contours of the contractor's collaboration and partnership with the entities mentioned in your question. These organizations have pre-existing structures in the field that can be leveraged to accomplish our common goal of providing quality professional learning to teachers in New York State.

A further clarification is required regarding a clause in the RFP. It is the Office of Special Education Technical Assistance Partnerships (TAPs), not the RPCs, that the winning bidder will be required to collaborate with.

Q33: Please further define subcontracting. If we wanted to give another BOCES funding to help with one of the deliverables, is that considered subcontracting?

A33: From page 2 of the RFP: "Subcontracting is defined as non-employee direct personal services and related incidental expenses, including travel." In the scenario described, "another BOCES" would be considered a subcontractor because they are not employees of the bidder.

Q34: What is the difference between a subcontractor vs. a partner?

A34: The context in which the word "partner" is used in the RFP describes any working relationship between entities, regardless of the presence of a financial agreement. A partner may or may not be a subcontractor, depending on the presence of a financial agreement. A financial agreement between entities would constitute a subcontracting relationship.

Q35: What is the difference between a subcontractor and a consultant?

A35: The context in which the word "consultant" is used in the RFP describes a working relationship between entities that includes a financial relationship. A consultant is an example of subcontracting.

Q36: We envision our organization leading this work and providing some of the activities, but also pulling experts from the around the state to help provide many of the deliverables and to be part of the program planning. In that scenario, would those outside experts be considered partners, so more than 50% of our budget could be paid to them? Or would they be considered subcontractors?

A36: In this scenario, if the "experts from around the state" are being paid, they would be considered subcontractors because they are not employees of the bidder. A financial agreement between entities would constitute a subcontracting relationship.

Performance Measures

Q37: What if anything will NYSED be doing to help drive adoption to hit the specified goals?

A37: NYSED will collaborate with the contractor to utilize NYSED's existing communication channels (including, but not limited to, listservs) and statewide relationship networks to help promote the availability of the PLEs in pursuit of our common goal of achieving the Performance Measures outlined on Page 9.

Q38: 3 similar questions were received:

- a. **We are concerned about meeting the requirement for 40% of educators and educational leaders (and then later 75% of the same groups) to complete hybrid/online learning because of so many reasons, including: some subject areas are less likely to be taught online; and turnover of educators and educator leaders (between retirements, new teachers, those leaving the field). What happens if we don't meet the performance measures?**
- b. **What happens if any of the performance measures aren't met? Will full funding still be awarded, even if all measures aren't met?**
- c. **Is payment for services contingent on attainment of the goals listed on page 9?**

A38: This project is funded by a grant from the US Department of Education (USDE), and the Performance Measures in the RFP align directly with those that have been agreed upon between NYSED and the USDE. Continued availability of funding may depend on making reasonable progress towards--and eventually meeting--the agreed-upon performance targets.

Q39: 3 similar questions were received:

- a. The required performance measures seem unattainable, particularly considering most schools (and teachers/students) will likely be in-person in the fall. In other words, how can we get 40% of all teachers and teacher leaders (and later 75%) statewide to participate in trainings related to hybrid/online learning, when they won't likely be using it? Do you think 40% and 75% performance targets are realistic, considering the typical attendance of educators to PD?**
- b. Do you think 40% and 75% performance targets are realistic, considering the typical attendance of educators to PD?**
- c. The performance measures listed in the RFP are both ambitious and time-constrained. Given the many challenges and obstacles that may occur in Phase 1 that will impact Phase 2 work, will the Department be amenable to adjusting these measures?**

A39: The Performance Measures outlined in the RFP align directly with those that have been agreed upon between NYSED and the US Department of Education. We are interested in the creative ways in which bidders plan to address the challenge described in this question. NYSED and the successful bidder will engage in regular check-in calls on the status of the project. NYSED will update USDE on project status and progress toward performance measures and, if applicable, the need to amend such measures. However, the USDE is under no obligation to approve such requests; therefore, the expectation is that the contractor would need to meet such measures.

Q40: How will the educators report the performance measures as indicated on page 9 of RFP #21-016)? Will there be any assistance from the NYSED?

A40: According to page 13 of the RFP, the contractor must provide a "data dashboard to keep track of analytics including the number of unique users accessing each professional learning module, completion data, and demographics." The contractor should include these numbers in their quarterly reports, in a form acceptable to NYSED. NYSED will utilize dashboard data in order to create yearly reports to the US Department of Education for grant accountability.

Q41: 2 similar questions were received:

- a. In regards to the required performance measures, is the state mandating that every teacher has to complete these modules?**
- b. Are educators who are permanently certified and thus exempt from CTLE requirements mandated to complete these modules?**

A41: No. Participation in the TRLE modules will be voluntary. NYSED's CTLE requirements, found online on the [NYSED website here](#). These requirements state, in part, that certain certificate holders "are required to successfully complete 100 clock hours of acceptable CTLE during the registration period."

Q42: 2 similar questions were received:

- a. **Do the percentage completion requirements (i.e., 40% of statewide educators) refer to those holding a professional classroom teaching certificate, educational leadership certificate, and Level III teaching assistant certificate? Does it also apply to holders of Continuing Teaching Assistant certificates or Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) certificates?**
- b. **Are educators who are permanently certified and thus exempt from CTLE requirements included in the statewide percentage completion requirements?**

A42: NYSED's grant application to the USDE specified that 159,222 teachers and 6,000 educational leaders will be served through the professional learning experiences under this RFP. Any educator, regardless of role or certification status, can be counted toward meeting the Performance Measures. For purposes of this RFP, NYSED defines "educators" broadly to include classroom teachers, those providing push-in and pull-out services, school leaders, teaching assistants, pre-service educators, school counselors, educators working in early childhood settings, and others.

Q43: Are these modules going to be made available to educators in private/parochial/charter schools? Will they be included in the statewide percentage completion requirements?

A43: The PLEs must be made available at no cost to all educators in New York State, including educators in non-public schools, charter schools, early childhood settings, and pre-service programs. Any educator, including but not limited to including educators in non-public schools, charter schools, and pre-service programs, can be counted toward meeting the Performance Measures.

PLE Content

Q44: Would we be allowed to evolve beyond the six competency areas, to also include other related topics that we're finding educators and education leaders want training on?

A44: PLE content must be aligned with the Quality Remote/ Hybrid Teaching (QRT) Framework, which will be collaboratively developed with the TRLE Advisory Board and other experts in the field. Depending on this input and the findings of the Phase 1 action research, the QRT Framework will likely include some form of all six competency areas but could evolve beyond them.

Q45: To us deliverables 1-3 describe the work RICs have underway through phase 1 of the TRLE grant. How is this work different?

A45: The content of the Phase 2 PLEs must be aligned with the QRT Framework, which will be informed by the findings of the Phase 1 action research. While the emphasis in Phase 1 is rapid deployment to communities hardest hit by the pandemic, the emphasis in Phase 2 is to create an enduring, coherent set of resources and wraparound supports to be delivered by trained providers, to ensure consistent quality of services statewide.

Q46: Do the 60 PLEs need to be created by us during the grant period? Or can we take previous PLEs that we or our subcontractors or partners have created, and update them for this program?

A46: Resources may draw on previously created materials. However, all PLE content, delivery, and supports must be appropriate to the then-current educational context and be aligned to the QRT Framework. Furthermore, the contractor must ensure the work product is coherent, as noted on page 7 of the RFP. All RFP deliverables must be produced by the deadlines specified in the RFP.

Q47: 4 similar questions were received:

- a. **Regarding Deliverable 1, is there a minimum/maximum length for each of the 60 modules?**
- b. **Do the learning modules described in Deliverable 1 (page 6) have a minimum length of time?**
- c. **What is the expected length of each module? To be completed in what length or time?**
- d. **Can you share approximately how many hours of CTLE will be expected per module or Core Competency?**

A47: Each module should afford users the opportunity to earn at least one hour of CTLE credit. One CTLE credit hour is defined as a minimum of 60 minutes of instruction/education. There is no maximum length, but each module must effectively convey the concept it is intended to cover. On page 6, the RFP states "We anticipate 10 modules for each core competency."

Q48: Are "modules" further broken down into smaller units like chapters/lessons? E.g, a 3 hour "module" may consist of several shorter videos/activities.

A48: Modules may be broken down into smaller units.

Q49: What type of interactive activities are you looking for? Can they be interspersed?

A49: The requirement of "interactive activity components," mentioned on page 10 of the RFP, is meant to ensure that educators completing the modules do not do so passively and that modules created adhere to adult learning best practices. As stated on pages 21-22, bidders will be scored, in part, based on how well the performance task addresses how PLEs will allow educators to engage with the content as opposed to simply watching a video. As stated on page 23, the Project Plan will be scored based on how the bidder proposes to implement the deliverables, including designing and implementing PLEs, to meet NYSED's expectations as described in the RFP.

Q50: Where can we find the New York State Framework for Quality Remote/Hybrid Teaching Framework (QRT)? When will the QRT Framework be made available to the awarded vendor?

A50: The QRT Framework is in the initial stages of development. NYSED plans to share drafts--and, eventually, the final Framework--with the contractor as soon as practicable. NYSED's target date for releasing the Framework is in late 2021. The contractor should plan to work with the TRLE external evaluation partner at SUNY Stony Brook and the TRLE Advisory Board regarding operationalizing the QRT.

Q51: Is it still NYSED's position that the modules/learning experiences developed and implemented in Phase 1, and upon which action research was conducted, will yield a

worthwhile and substantial amount of information, insight and ideas to support Phase 2 efforts (i.e., development of 60 PLEs across the 6 component areas)?

A51: Yes. Development of the QRT Framework will be directly informed by the Phase 1 action research as well as by input from the TRLE Advisory Board and other experts in the field.

Q52: If there is less than expected information and ideas generated from Phase 1 action research efforts that impact the quality and thoroughness of the QRT Framework, will the Department modify the scope of work to allow more time for the framework to be completed and PLE development to occur?

A52: Page 7 of the RFP states “NYSED may adjust the timeline below as necessary to carry out the goals of TRLE, subject to the approval of USDOE.” As for the scope of work, we do not anticipate this to change.

CTLE Sponsors/Providers

Q53: How is a CTLE sponsor (in deliverables 3 and 4) different from a CTLE provider (mentioned in deliverable #1)? Is there a difference?

A53: For the purposes of this RFP, there is no difference between a CTLE provider and a CTLE sponsor.