



National Center and State Collaborative

National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) GSEG Project on behalf
of NCSC Member States

Facilitating Partner(s) for Design of Post-Grant Consortium for a Multi-State
Comprehensive System of Alternate Assessments based on Alternate
Achievement Standards (AA-AAS) and Related Resources

Request for Information (RFI)

Issue date:	October 4, 2013
Cut Off Date for Questions:	October 15, 2013
Response due:	October 25, 2013 3:00 EDT

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SECTION 1 – OVERVIEW OF REQUEST for INFORMATION

1.1.Introduction

This Request for Information (RFI) is intended to furnish information to the state partners in the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) about options to support development of a post-NCSC Grant Consortium to continue collaborative work of the states after the NCSC General Supervision Enhancement Grant (GSEG) is completed in October 2015. A list of state partners can be found at www.ncscpartners.org.

This RFI is focused on the capacity of potential partners to facilitate a state-centered process to design a post NCSC structure for ongoing development and administration of the operational assessment and governance during the 2013-14 year and to implement such a structure by the 2014-15 year, one year prior to the end of the NCSC GSEG grant. This will permit the new governance group to begin transition to post-grant activities such as field testing items for the 2015-16 assessment and beyond.

1.2.Contract Awards

No contracts will be awarded as a result of this RFI.

1.3. Cost of Preparing and Submitting Information

All costs incurred in preparing and submitting a response to this RFI will be the responsibility of the Vendor and will not be reimbursed by the NCSC grant or the partner states.

1.4. Definitions

AA-AAS – Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement Standards
NCSC - National Center and State Collaborative

SECTION 2 – BACKGROUND

2.1 Background

The National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) is a project led by five centers and 26 states charged with building an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) for students with the most significant cognitive

disabilities. NCSC was funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education to develop an AA-AAS based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) through a research and development grant opportunity known as the General Supervision Enhancement Grants (GSEG). These grants do not provide for governance and management structures for states to transition to post grant ownership of the system. Thus, the States involved in the NCSC project are interested in information from potential partners to provided governance and management planning services, and possibly continuing governance/management services transitioning beyond the grant period. More information about the NCSC project is available on this website: www.ncscpartners.org. This RFI from the NCSC project is released at the request of the States with this common interest.

2.2 Key Components of Management/Facilitation Needs

The partnering states have completed preliminary planning to determine a tentative schedule, membership, and structures for a post grant consortium. The NCSC states have agreed that the model for the assessment and governance should include high state involvement in the development of the assessment including activities such as item review and forms construction as well as decision making regarding assessment administration and reporting policies. In addition, the goal is that the consortium member states would all contribute to the core services of summative assessment, but some states may collaborate on other optional services such as curriculum development and formative assessments.

In addition, one state has agreed to serve as fiscal host for an interim planning period once additional information is gathered through this RFI process. The following potential schedule of activities is based on this initial work, but is in no way final. It is meant only as general context of anticipated activities and schedule to inform responses to this RFI. Some activities are already in process.

2.3 Potential Schedule of Consortium Activities

2013-14 – Governance Model Determined; States Develop Consortium Policies and Practices; Costs Defined; Final Membership Determinations

- States agree to participate in the consortium and pay interim fee to support travel, legal, organizational, and planning costs) to carry out planning activities for establishment of consortium (October 2013 – December 2013)
- Consortium members work to create mutually agreed-upon policies and practices to guide the consortium (October 2013 – June 2014)
- Preliminary consortium ongoing participation costs determined, facilitative assistance is procured, if necessary (December 2013 – January 2014)

- Long term financial arrangements agreed upon by the consortium members (March 2014 – May 2014)
- Consortium is legally established and operating, initial procurement in process, staff (if any) hired (May 2014 – September 2014)

2014-15 – Consortium Prepares for First Year of Operational Assessment

- Consortium members, staff, and contractors prepare for the first operational year of the consortium - the second NCSC assessment year (October 2014 – September 2015)
- Consortium prepares RFP(s) to guide the operational work of the consortium (Fall 2014)
- Consortium selects the contractor(s) to guide the operational work of the consortium (Winter 2015)
- Consortium members, staff, and contractors carry out operational development plan

2015-16 – First Year of Consortium Assessment Implementation

Potential partners should provide a description of their experience and expertise in the areas below. Not all areas require a response if a potential partner is interested in providing some of the facilitative services but not all. Respond only to those you would have interest in supporting. Please note this RFI is for facilitation and related project management services in a transitional planning period. However, the consortium may be interested in continuation of the relationship after the transition period pending quality of outcomes. Specifically, the states are looking for structures that would need to be in place to ensure that the assessment program remains state led after the transition period is complete and all governance structures are in place.

2.4 Requirements and Scope of Work

Respondents should describe their experience and expertise in each of the six areas below, providing specific examples for each:

1. Facilitation of large, complex membership organizations
2. Federal and State level governance, procurement, and other legal/regulatory systems
3. Governance structures, policies, and cost analyses
4. Management of large-scale integrated alternate assessment systems

5. General understanding of AA-AAS test design and development issues, including use of technology in large-scale assessment
6. Cost analyses and modeling for AA-AAS
7. Unique policy issues in AA-AAS

In addition, respondents should provide information on how they would work with NCSC states to develop a governance and management model for the operational assessment. Respondents should address the seven areas above in the proposed model.

SECTION 3 – RFI PROCESS

3.1 RFI Issuance

This RFI is available in electronic form through the NCSC GSEG website, <http://www.ncscpartners.org>. Paper copies of this RFI will not be available.

3.2 Public Notice

Public notice will have been provided through website postings and bidders' lists.

3.3 Assistance to Vendors with a Disability

Vendors with a disability may receive accommodation regarding the means of communicating this RFP or participating in the procurement process. For more information, contact the Designated Contact no later than ten days prior to the deadline for receipt of proposals.

3.4 RFI Designated Contact

All questions specific to the RFI must be submitted using email and sent to the person listed below. General communications shall be made in writing and addressed to the person listed below or emailed to the person listed below; communications made to other NCSC GSEG team personnel, or attempting to ask questions by phone or in person, will not be allowed or recognized as valid. Vendors should rely only on written statements issued by the RFI Designated Contact:

Leila Williams
leila.williams@azed.gov
1535 West Jefferson St
Bin 6
Phoenix, AZ 85007

To ensure that written requests are received and answered in a timely manner, electronic mail (e-mail) correspondence is acceptable, but other forms of delivery, such as postal and courier services can also be used.

3.5 RFI Submissions

Responses describing the seven areas listed in section 2.4 must be received **no later than 3:00 PM EDT on October 25, 2013**. Please email an electronic version (or submit a thumb drive with the hard copies) and submit two hard copies in your packet labeled “Facilitating Partner for AA-AAS Consortium” in a sealed envelope to:

Leila Williams
leila.williams@azed.gov
1535 West Jefferson St
Bin 6
Phoenix, AZ 85007

3.6 Clarification of Specifications

Any Vendor requiring clarification of the information provided, must submit specific questions, including section number and page, no later than **2 PM EDT on October 15, 2013** to:

Leila Williams
leila.williams@azed.gov
1535 West Jefferson St
Bin 6
Phoenix, AZ 85007

3.7 General Information

While the information submitted is not considered public information, if any part of your information is considered a trade secret, clearly designate that portion as “confidential” in order to obtain protection, if any, from disclosure.