

RFP #21-001 - Questions and Answer Summary

Questions in response to RFP#21-001 for Continuation of the Development, Administration, and Reporting of Teacher Certification Assessments for New York State Teachers and Educational Leaders as part of the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations (NYSTCE) Testing Program.

Program Questions

Q1. General: Under this agreement, what is NYSED’s expectation of job analysis updates for existing programs? How many studies will a vendor need to complete in the next five years for existing programs? Is there an annual schedule?

Answer: NYSED, in conjunction with a subcontractor, Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), completed a comprehensive Job Analysis in 2013. It is not anticipated that this comprehensive Job Analysis will need to be repeated during the term of the contract. This Job Analysis is currently used to conduct Job Analysis Surveys with education stakeholders for each new test developed. As per RFP Section 1.5.1.4 (6), “the contractor will conduct a job analysis survey for each certification examination for which a test is being developed.” This step takes place after a new Framework is developed. At this time, we anticipate up to 5 job analysis surveys may need to be conducted during the term of this contract.

Q2. On p. 18, under 1.5.1.4 Job-Relatedness, #6: Is there a schedule for when a job analysis survey is required for each certification exam?

Answer: Please see answer to question 1.

Q3. General: Can NYSED provide the typical number of candidates taking each exam on an annual basis?

Answer: Please see Attachment F in the RFP.

Q4. On p. 12 and p. 25, regarding alternative assessment delivery, other than Braille and large print, can NYSED provide a list of other typical accommodations or alternate assessment delivery options provided to candidates?

Answer: Below is a list of approved accommodations for the NYSTCE program. Candidates may request additional accommodations beyond these.

Accommodation Type
100% Extra Time
50% Extra Time
Adjustable Workstation
ASL interpreter - items and directions
ASL interpreter - directions only
Braille
Bring and Use a Braillewriter
Calculator

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CCTV
Circle Answers
Handheld Magnifier
Health Aids
Large Font Keyboard
Large Print Paper Test
Line Guide
Marker
Oral Interpreter
Other *
Paper Test
Reader
Scrap Paper
Screen Magnifier
Separate Room
Spellchecker
Trackball Mouse
Typist
Video Captions
Waiver of Biometrics
Water Bottle
Zoom-Text

* bring own chair, bring lamp, elevate feet, etc.

Q5. On p. 16., under 1.5 Exam Development – NYSTCE Custom-Designed Tests: Is there a schedule for when development activities must occur?

Answer: Once a new test has been identified, the contractor will present NYSED with a schedule for test development activities. These activities usually span a 2½- to 3-year development window. For tests already in progress, the contractor and NYSED will work together during the preliminary project planning period (February 1, 2021 – August 31, 2021) to outline a mutually acceptable development schedule.

Q6. On p. 17, under 1.5.1.4 Job-Relatedness, #3: Does NYSED anticipate introducing any new certification exams under this contract?

Answer: At this time, all anticipated new development is identified in 1.3.1 Chart 1: New York State Teacher Certification Examinations in the RFP.

Q7. On p. 19, under section 1.5.3 Bilingual Education Assessments: NYSED defines support for many different languages for the examination forms. What is the foreign language expectation for vendor systems, e.g., registration, scheduling, testing, candidate materials?

Answer: The registration system, scheduling, and candidate materials need only be provided in English. Testing materials are provided in English, except for those exams that test content in other languages. The contractor is required to provide testing materials in the appropriate languages for the Languages Other than English and the American Sign Language Content

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Specialty Tests, and Bilingual Education Assessments. In addition, portions of the Braille Content Specialty Test need to be provided in Braille.

Q8. On p. 25, under 1.8 Test Administration – All Tests: RFP states “contractor will administer all assessments, utilizing a technology platform that conforms to industry standards, including electronic item banking and automated form generation.” It is our understanding that fixed forms are developed and delivered as part of this contract. Can NYSED provide more information on expectations regarding automated form generation? Can you clarify which programs are using automated form generation methodology?

Answer: Although current exams are administered as part of this contract as fixed forms, the current vendor uses proprietary software to initialize form construction. NYSED wishes to explore with testing vendors the further use of automated form generation to minimize item exposure.

Fiscal Questions

Q1. RFP page 2, states, “NYSED will award one contract pursuant to this RFP.”

- A. On or by what date will the selected contractor be notified of award?
- B. By what means will the selected contractor be notified of award (e.g., e-mail, US mail, etc.)?

Answer: Bidders will be notified of tentative award or non-award as soon as the review process is complete and all necessary approvals have been obtained. The tentative awardee and any non-awardees will be notified by an email sent to the contact listed on the Response Sheet for Bids contained within the Submission Documents.

Q2. Submission Information: Section 6 Submission Documents, page 1, requires submission of hard copies of proposal documents (Submission Documents, Technical Proposal and Cost Proposal) as well as a CD or flash drive.

- A. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, would NYSED consider an email submission in lieu of a printed copy?
- B. In regard to an email option:
 - i. To what email address should proposal files be submitted? Would it be AssessmentRFP@nysed.gov?
 - ii. How many megabytes may each email contain at maximum?
 - iii. Can the submission be split into multiple emails (marked email 1 of 2, email 2 of 2), if necessary?
 - iv. Will McKenzie Johnson or another individual confirm receipt of the email proposal submission?
 - v. Will McKenzie Johnson or another individual be available to contact by phone if there are unexpected issues with email submission? If yes, at what phone number can this individual be contacted?

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- C. If email submission is not an option, would NYSED consider alternatives such as secure FTP or an upload, as other state agencies have recently implemented for procurement processes? If yes, please provide the information regarding file transfer or upload. Alternately, if a vendor is able to provide NYSED with a secure FTP or file transfer solution managed by the vendor, would NYSED consider receiving proposals in that manner?
- D. If NYSED requires a printed proposal submission, will staff be on-site to receive the proposal package?
- E. Given that the NYSED website notes that the buildings are restricted to visitors due to COVID-19, if NYSED maintains the hard copy requirement and a bidder would like to hand deliver the proposal, will access to the building be granted for this purpose?

Answer: For this solicitation, NYSED requires hard-copy proposals as outlined in the RFP. It is preferred that packages be mailed/shipped. However, if a bidder has a need to hand-deliver to meet the proposal deadline, arrangements can be made for delivery. We request that you notify us of your intent to hand-deliver bids in advance with your best estimate when that will be. Please email those details to Thomas McBride at thomas.mcbride@nysed.gov.

Q3. Submission Information: RFP pages 36 and 41, 2.1 Documents to Be Submitted with this Proposal. In sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, NYSED requests that the mailing envelope labels for the Technical and Cost Proposals should read "RFP #21-001-Technical Proposal-Do Not Open" and "RFP #21-001-Cost Proposal-Do Not Open," respectively. In other RFP sections (RFP p. 2; Submission Documents p. 1), these labels are noted as, respectively, "Technical Proposal – RFP #21-001 Do Not Open" and "Cost Proposal – RFP #21-001 Do Not Open." Please clarify which label wording should be used for the Technical and Cost Proposal mailing envelopes.

Answer: Thank you for noticing and asking about that discrepancy. The specific order doesn't matter as long as the requested elements are all included in the label.

Q4. Upon further inspection of the cost proposal, we would like additional clarification on the inclusion of ATS-W. RFP page 1 indicates that delivery of ATS-W is not included in this RFP. However, the state's cost proposal template includes a line for entering a cost for ATS-W. In the interest of ensuring that all bidders provide the state with comparable information for the state's evaluation, should bidders include a cost for ATS-W in the cost proposal? Or should \$0 be used since ATS-W is not included in this RFP? Or will the state issue an updated cost proposal with ATS-W removed?

Answer: Bidders are requested to use the revised Cost Proposal form – with the ATS-W line removed – that was posted at the [P-12 Competitive Procurements website](#) on August 20, 2020.