

RFQ # 19-028

Smart Start Grant program

Qualifications of Professional Development and Support Services Providers

1. Question: My question is regarding the eligibility requirements found in Section 2.1, which states that the following entities are eligible to bid:
 - Non-Profit Organizations; and
 - Institutions of Higher Education

We are a nonprofit, public research, development, and service agency with tax exempt status under Section 115(1) of the Internal Revenue Code. I wanted to clarify that we are eligible to bid for this opportunity even if we are not a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Please confirm.

Answer: For purposes of this RFQ, a nonprofit, public research, development, and service agency with tax exempt status under section 115(1) of the Internal Revenue Code is eligible to bid.

2. Question: Can the PD be designed over a period of 5 years – cumulatively – so you need to complete year 1 to move onto year 2?

Answer: There is no prohibition against designing Professional Development cumulatively, structuring it such that participants need to complete Year 1 to move on to Year 2. Please note that the grants awarded to school districts may be for a period of less than 5 years.

3. Question: Should cost for school to purchase materials be included in the budget?

Answer: The design of the PD to be offered, including the budget necessary to offer the PD, are at the discretion of the applicant. It is anticipated that the grant application will allow no more than 20% of the funds in the grant applicants' total requested award be used for a combination of Equipment, Supplies and Materials. For the purposes of this grant, subscriptions for digital content or the use of online courses will be considered Purchased Services, not Supplies and Materials.

4. Question: Can sponsoring organizations observe classes of teachers in the PD using developed lesson plans? (Can this be a part of the assessment?)

Answer: The design of the PD to be offered, including the details of PD activities, are at the discretion of the applicant. The grant guidelines do not prohibit including observation of classes of teachers using developed lesson plans as part of the assessment.

5. Question: Is a set amount for PD participation determined by the provider? Is it per person or per school?

Answer: Yes, the amount charged for PD participation is determined by the provider. It is up to the applicant to determine if the costs are allocated per person or per school.

6. Question: If PD is held on a non-school day (Saturday) – all day, can feeding participants breakfast/lunch be included in the budget?

Answer: There is no prohibition for including this type of cost. It is up to the applicant to determine the best use of funds when designing PD for the Smart Start Grant Program.

7. Question: As a NYS Teacher Center entity, we do not have a vendor ID number. Are we allowed to apply for this RFQ? If our LEA is a BOCES, would this disqualify us and BOCES are not eligible to apply.

Answer: As stated on page 7 of the RFQ, BOCES are not eligible to apply. However, NYS Teacher Centers may apply, so long as the application is specifically from the Teacher Center and all services are provided directly by the Teacher Center. Were a Teacher Center to be included on and selected from the List of Approved Providers, a BOCES or school district could serve the Teacher Center as a fiscal agent, but would be prohibited from providing professional development and support services to the grantee.

8. Question: For a large college or university, is the college supposed to submit one application or would each individual faculty member who is interested submit their own application?

Answer: As stated on page 7 of the RFQ, the entities eligible to apply to provide professional development and support services include Non-Profit Organizations and Institutions of Higher Education. Individual persons are not eligible to apply.

9. Question: In the past our College has provided college coursework in methods of teaching science and courses in science content integrated with pedagogy for teachers of grades 1-6 and 5-9 that are part of our registered programs for teacher preparation as Professional Development in partnership with school districts aiming to increase the science literacy and support initial and professional certification of their teachers. Would such course offerings be appropriate for this RFQ?

Answer: The design of the PD to be offered, including the details of PD activities, are at the discretion of the applicant. There is no prohibition of using such coursework as part of the Professional Development plan, keeping in mind that the initial grants are targeted to grades K-5.

10. Question: Will being on the approved provider list be a requirement to apply for future NYSED STEM grant funds?

Answer: The approved provider list is specific to the Smart Start Grant Program.

11. Question: Will there be an RFP for Districts to apply for the Smart Start Funding? If so, when?

Answer: Yes, there will be a Smart Start Grant Program RFP released in the near future. A specific date for its publication has not yet been determined.

12. Question: What is the range of award amount for one service provider for the PD/support services?

Answer: Services providers are not guaranteed any specific amount under this RFQ. The Smart Start Grant Program will define award amounts for grantees, and it will be up to the grantee and service provider to determine the amount that will be spent on PD/support services.

13. Question: Are the estimated costs associated with the proposed PD to be presented as a cost per PD session? Are there any regional comparable for similar PD sessions?

Answer: The estimated costs for PD participation are determined by the provider. It is up to the applicant to determine if the costs will be presented as a cost per PD session. There are no regional comparable for similar PD sessions.

14. Question: How is “Educational Technology” being defined under the section: Subject Area(s) Provider is Applying to Serve (p. 18, p.27). (Maybe an example of what *is* and what isn’t qualified under that category?)

Answer: Please see the glossary of terms, page 4, where Educational Technology is defined as “The use of technology (materials and methods) to facilitate, promote, and improve teaching and learning in all subject areas.”.

15. Question: Should we include all staff members who may contribute to future PD’s even if they may or may not provide all three (A, B, and C) levels of support to this project? (p.19)

Answer: Yes, applicants should include all staff members who may contribute to future PDs even if they may or may not provide all three (A, B, and C) levels of support to this project. (p.19)

16. Question: What is meant by “standards or evaluation rubric alignment” on page 22?

Answer: Standards refers to the NYS Next Generation Learning Standards. Evaluation Rubric refers to the rubric that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the PD offerings. The Professional Development and Support Services offered should align with the Learning Standards and/or the rubric that the applicant will use to evaluate PD effectiveness.

17. Question: On p. 22 we are asked to provide details about the PD and there are 10 sub-questions. Do you want us to answer all ten questions per PD offering or can we aggregate our answers for across our offerings? Is it expected that we'd answer all ten questions one by one or just include our answers in a paragraph format?

Answer: It is acceptable, but not preferred, that applicants aggregate all answers across offerings, if all ten questions are explicitly addressed. It would facilitate the review process, however, if each PD offering is presented separately.