

Regional Partnership Centers, RFP 24-015
Questions & Answers Summary

Program Questions

- 1. Will there be a different RFP released for the FACE Centers? The inclusion of the FACE Center Staffing Schedule in this RFP is leaving us questioning if FACE staffing and program deliverables should be included in this proposal.**

A: The FACE Centers staffing schedule was posted with the Regional Partnership Centers RFP for informational purposes. FACE Center staffing and program deliverables should not be addressed in bids for RFP 24-015. RFP 24-014 was posted on 1/11/24 and can be found on [the NYSED website](#).

- 2. Appendix 2 indicates the Southwest is RLT 6, while Appendix 1 and Appendix 3 indicates the Southwest is RLT 7. Which RLT is correct for the Southwest?**

A: The Southwest is Regional Level Team (RLT) 7. An updated version of Appendix 2 has been posted on the [NYSED website](#), making Southwest RLT 7 and Southeast RLT 6.

- 3. How do you define “Full-time”?**

A: Full time is considered to be generally 40 hours per week. Specific full-time hours should be identified by each bidder agency.

- 4. Is it expected that 10-month positions will be the 10 months of September through June?**

A: Yes

- 5. Do assigned SCF/staff have to be available 5 days/week each week of their contractual year for this contract (excluding vacations, holidays, etc.)?**

A: Yes, staff are expected to be available Monday through Friday.

- 6. Can a person filling a required position for this contract simultaneously engage in other contracts/work their agency is doing as long as they do not use Partnership materials, resources, or training content?**

A: If staff are 1.0 FTE, then work beyond their full-time Educational Partnership contract would need to occur outside the typical workday Monday through Friday.

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7. What is your definition of “office”?

A: A physical central business location with a formal address, but not a home.

8. Must the required “office” be pre-existing/existing at the time of proposal submission, or can we commit to establishing the office once the contract is awarded? If it must be pre-existing, do we need to provide the location in our proposal?

A: An office must be established by the time the vendor signs and returns the contract to NYSED. Please email the address to RFP24015@nysed.gov once that information is available if the address is not included in your technical proposal.

9. In light of many agencies shifting to remote work, can an assigned SCF or staff member’s home office fulfill the “office” required for this RFP?

A: No, an office must be a physical central business location with a formal address, not a home.

10. The RFP requires that an office be in the region but does not specify that staff need to be in the region. Is it acceptable for an SCF or other staff to be located outside of the region?

A: A Systems Change Facilitator or other staff may reside outside the region; however, regular attendance at the central business location is expected. Commuting to and from the office location is not a reimbursable expense. Travel expenses, for required work in the region or in Albany as requested by NYSED, will be reimbursed consistent with the General Services Administration (GSA) rates.

11. Is the 12 days annually for each individual specialist or for each TAP associate? In other words, does each specialist need to track 12 days of associated work with the TAP associate or does each TAP associate need to have a total of 12 days in the region via in-person and remote – working with different specialists?

A: The 12 days annually is for the regional team, not each individual specialist.

12. Is it appropriate to define/interpret *technical assistance* as: “the process of providing information to an organization or professional and/or individual with a need or problem”? If not, can you define *technical assistance* as its intended herein?

A: Technical assistance is defined as a stand-alone instance of providing information or resources to an Educational Organization (EO) or other stakeholder without additional guidance or coaching.

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13. Is there a preferred spelling or difference in meaning between *workplan* v. *work plan*? E.g., the term appears as *workplan* (one word) as in “Workplan for Year 1, 2024-2025” and as *Work Plan* (two words) in the Application Checklist.

A: There is no difference. The preferred spelling is *workplan*.

14. Can you define *overseeing* as it’s meant in #3 of the Deliverables for the SCF; “Overseeing the development of high-quality Support Plans...”?

A: “Overseeing” means to watch over and direct to ensure a satisfactory outcome or performance, to ensure work is completed within the required timelines and is of quality and completeness.

15. What role will RPC and FACE specialists, non-SCF, have in developing Support Plans?

A: Once it is determined that an Educational Organization (EO) will have a Support Plan, Regional Partnership Center (RPC) and FACE Center staff work with the RLT and EO to develop a data-informed Support Plan, identifying Focus Areas and related outcomes, goals, and actions. During support planning, the RPC staff, FACE Center staff, and EO staff form an Implementation Team and conduct a systematic review of data to determine the most appropriate goals and aligned actions for implementation.

The following steps outline expectations of how a Regional Team (RT) will collaborate with an EO in the development of a new Support Plan.

- **Implementation Teaming:** Prepare for a meeting with the identified EO and form an EO Implementation Team.
- **Existing Initiatives:** Identify existing related initiatives.
- **Needs Assessment:** Analyze and review data to narrow to specific areas of focus.
- **Focus Areas & Problem Statements:** Develop precise problem statements for each focus area, and brainstorm solutions.
- **Capacity Assessment:** Assess capacity to implement proposed solutions within the Focus Areas.
- **Goals & Aligned Actions:** Develop Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (S.M.A.R.T.) goals, goal attainment scaling, and actions that support goal attainment for each focus area.
- **Collaboration** with OSE and Technical Assistance Partnerships (TAPs) in the development and quality of the support plans.

16. Deliverable #3.1.2 states “Twenty (20) hours of professional development for team members upon hire, as determined by Needs Assessment.” For budget planning purposes, will this take place virtually, within the region, will travel to Albany or elsewhere be required?

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A: The 20 hours of professional development may be addressed virtually or in-person within the region at the central business location of the RPC.

17. SCF deliverable #s 12 and 13 refer to SCF mentorship. For budget planning purposes, will this be virtual, or would any travel be required?

A: Mentoring will occur virtually. There will be no travel required.

18. With regards to the deliverables under MTSS-I: Is there one LS and BS assigned for the duration of the contract, or is the determination made annually during Resource Planning? Would that be their only role?

A: All specialists will be responsible for RFP deliverables specific to their role. One consistent Literacy Specialist and one consistent Behavior Specialist will also be responsible for MTSS-I deliverables. The current collaborations between specialists and MTSS-I Coaches will continue throughout the life of the contract, which may include additional specialist titles.

19. When speaking about support plan development, can you please describe what the term 'overseeing' means?

A: "Overseeing" means to watch over and direct to ensure a satisfactory outcome or performance, to ensure work is completed within the required timelines and is of quality and completeness.

20. Deliverable 2.2 indicates that staff will participate in one day of a two day meeting twice annually. For budgeting purposes, will this be in person in the region or will travel to Albany be required?

A: These meetings will be in-person, within the region, preferably at the central business location of the RPC.

21. Deliverable 2.3 indicates participation by RPC staff in workgroups. For budgeting purposes, will those meetings take place virtually, or will travel be required?

A: These meetings will take place virtually. Please refer to SCF deliverable 10 for SCFs participation in the Partnership Implementation Team (PIT).

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22. Deliverable 3.1.2 indicates that specialists will receive 20 hours of PD upon hire. For budgeting purposes, will those meetings take place virtually, or will travel be required?

A: The 20 hours of professional development may be addressed virtually or in-person within the region at the central business location of the RPC.

23. Can you clarify the role of the RPC and FACE specialists in the development of support plans?

A: Once it is determined that an EO will have a Support Plan, RPC and FACE Center staff work with the RLT and EO to develop a data-informed Support Plan, identifying Focus Areas and related outcomes, goals, and actions. During support planning, the RPC staff, FACE Center staff, and EO staff form an Implementation Team and conduct a systematic review of data to determine the most appropriate goals and aligned actions for implementation.

The following steps outline expectations of how a Regional Team (RT) will collaborate with an EO in the development of a new Support Plan.

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- **Collaboration** with OSE and TAPs in the development and quality of the support plans.

24. I was disappointed to learn that some Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) that previously held but were not awarded current Regional Partnership Center (RPC) contracts for the period ending June 30, 2024 will not be submitting new applications for the July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2029 RPC. Are there incentives for BOCES to rebuild?

A: BOCES, like any other eligible entity, would be well positioned to submit proposals for Request for Proposal (RFP) 24-015. Contracts for establishing an RPC are awarded through an RFP which is a competitive bidding process designed to ensure full and open competition. As such, there can be no incentives targeted towards a specific entity such as BOCES. The purpose of this RFP is to provide technical assistance and professional development necessary to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and their families. All eligible entities are encouraged to submit proposals.

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Fiscal Questions

25. If including cost for the required office in the budget and the office is shared, how are we expected to determine the % of office cost to ascribe to this project?

A: Whatever percentage of the shared space is dedicated to the RPC is the percentage of the rent that could be included in Purchased Services for this project. If rent for the office space is already paid by another funding source, no rent would be charged for the RPC on the Cost Proposal Form.

26. What information is required to be included in the quarterly voucher? What fiscal records are required to support the voucher? Will we be required to allow NYSED access to our accounting records or be subject to auditing for this project?

A: The Standard Voucher (agency form AC92), must include the name of the originating agency being billed, payee I.D., payee name and address, reference/invoice number, description of services and payee certification. The quarterly expenditure report which aligns with the approved annual budget is required to support the voucher. Successful bidders may be subject to audit and should ensure that adequate controls are in place to document the allowable activities and expenditure of State funds.

27. Is the voucher an accounting of the actual expenses during the quarter, or do we just request to be paid ¼ of the contract amount for that year?

A: The Quarterly Expenditure Report is a description of how money was spent within each budget category during each quarter of the project year. A voucher is the “bill” for services rendered during a specific time period. These reports are due within 30 days of the end of the quarter.

28. To what extent will the use of SDVOBs be taken into account in scoring?

A: Use of SDVOBs does not factor in the scoring. While it is not mandatory, bidders are strongly encouraged to utilize SDVOB. The goal is at least 6 percent. For additional information about this program, including a list of SDVOBs, please visit the [Office of General Services, Division of Service-Disabled Veterans' Business Development website](#).

29. Is food an allowable cost when it's for stakeholders (e.g. families, EO staff) at a training?

A: Food is not an allowable cost.

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30. Are clerical/support staff positions allowed in the Regional Partnership Centers? If so, are there guidelines on the amount of FTE clerical support that may be included in this RFP?

A: Clerical and/or support staff positions are allowed to be included in the RPCs and would need to be reasonable and necessary to complete the scope of work outlined in the RFP.

31. Should clerical staff be included in *salaries* and *employee benefits*? If not, where should they be included? Does this differ if clerical staff is part-time or full-time?

A: If the clerical staff members are employees, include whatever pay and benefits they receive in the Salaries and Employee Benefits sections on the Cost Proposal Form. If the clerical staff are employed by a subcontractor, include their pay under Purchased Services.

32. What calculation will be used to compute the relative difference of each proposal against the lowest budget submitted?

A: As described in the RFP, the cost proposal is worth 30 percent, or 30 points, and is based on the grand total of the five-year budget summary submissions. The lowest cost proposal is awarded 30 points, while the others are calculated according to this formula: $30 \times (\text{lowest proposal} / \text{proposal being evaluated})$. 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 through the formula is awarded 15 points.

33. What is the approved restricted indirect cost rate that we should use for the length of this contract?

A: There is no specified approved restricted indirect cost rate for this RFP. However, all proposed costs will be reviewed for reasonableness. Please also keep in mind that this RFP employs a “best value” method of procurement, with 30 percent of the overall points awarded based on cost. (See “Criteria for Evaluating Bids” section of the RFP for additional information). Bidders are encouraged to submit budgets that are cost-effective.

34. The cost proposal form is locked, and therefore bidders are unable to add rows; can this be unlocked or could additional rows be added to each category?

A: The Cost Proposal Form must remain locked. However, a revised Cost Proposal Form, with additional lines for Salaries and for Benefits, has been posted with the RFP and Q&A at the [NYSED website](https://www.nysed.gov). Should a bidder still need more lines, please send a request to RFP24015@nysed.gov.

35. For purposes of budgeting, Will specialists' participation in the twice annual meeting for the purpose of professional development be virtual, in-person in a central location such as Albany, or in-person within the region?

A: These meetings will be in-person, within the region.

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36. If clerical support or staff are able to be included in the staffing for the Regional Partnership Centers, can the (cost proposal form) be unlocked?

A: Clerical and/or support staff positions are allowed to be included in the RPCs and would need to be reasonable and necessary to complete the scope of work outlined in the RFP. If the support staff are employees, their pay would be listed under salaries.

The Cost Proposal Form must remain locked. However, a revised Cost Proposal Form, with additional lines for Salaries and for Benefits, has been posted with the RFP and Q&A at the [NYSED website](#). Should a bidder still need more lines, please send a request to RFP24015@nysed.gov.

37. On the cost proposal worksheet, it only allows for 13 staff members to be listed. This includes all key personnel within our budget but does not allow for the inclusion of our PI and any administrative support staff. Should we include administrative/PI salaries within this worksheet?

A: Clerical and/or support staff positions are allowed to be included in the RPCs and would need to be reasonable and necessary to complete the scope of work outlined in the RFP. If the support staff are employees, their pay would be listed under salaries. A revised Cost Proposal Form, with additional lines for Salaries and for Benefits, has been posted with the RFP and Q&A at the [NYSED website](#). Should a bidder still need more lines, please send a request to RFP24015@nysed.gov.

38. Are clerical/support staff positions allowed in the Regional Partnership Centers? If so, are there guidelines on the amount of FTE clerical support that may be included in this RFP? Does this salary get documented in the salaries section of the budget proposal? If so, is there a document that is unlocked that allows for more lines for salary?

A: Clerical and/or support staff positions are allowed to be included in the RPCs and would need to be reasonable and necessary to complete the scope of work outlined in the RFP. If the clerical staff members are employees, include whatever pay and benefits they receive in Salaries and Employee Benefits on the Cost Proposal Form. If the clerical staff are employed by a subcontractor, include their pay under Purchased Services.

The Cost Proposal Form must remain locked. However, a revised Cost Proposal Form, with additional lines for Salaries and for Benefits, has been posted with the RFP and Q&A at the [NYSED website](#). Should a bidder still need more lines, please send a request to RFP24015@nysed.gov.

39. Does this contract support the salary of administrative supervision? If so, is there a specific percentage of FTE allowed? Does this get documented in the salaries section of the budget proposal?

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A: Funds may be used for expenses that are reasonable and necessary to complete the scope of work. Yes, that expenditure would be included in Salaries. Please also keep in mind that this RFP employs a “best value” method of procurement, with 30 percent of the overall points awarded based on cost.

40. Is a budget narrative that outlines the expenses in the year 1 budget form required?

A: A budget narrative is not required; a Year 1 Workplan and the Cost Proposal Form are required.

41. Under this definition, would someone be filling a staff position who our agency has signed a contract with for a specific period (e.g. 10-months) but not permanently hired be considered a “consultant” and have to be included in the 30%?

A: The following clause appears in all NYS contracts: For each individual for whom costs are claimed under this agreement, the contractor warrants that the individual has been classified as an employee or as an independent contractor in accordance with [2 NYCRR 315](#) and all applicable laws including, but not limited to, the Internal Revenue Code, the New York Retirement and Social Security Law, the New York Education Law, the New York Labor Law, and the New York Tax Law. Furthermore, the contractor warrants that all project funds allocated to the proposed budget for Employee Benefits, represent costs for employees of the contractor only and that such funds will not be expended on any individual classified as an independent contractor.

42. Do we need to provide evidence in our proposal that included staff are employees vs. consultants? If so, what evidence would be acceptable?

A: No. But for employees, list the associated cost under Salaries on the Cost Proposal Form and for Consultants/Subcontractors, list the cost under Purchased Services.

Minority- and Women-Owned Business (M/WBE) Questions

43. Does requesting a MWBE waiver or partial waiver, or not including SDVOBs negatively impact our proposal?

A: Review and scoring of a bidder’s Technical and Cost proposals does not take M/WBE and Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Business (SDVOB) participation into account. Therefore, requesting a full or partial M/WBE waiver and/or not including SDVOB does not adversely affect a proposal. Once an award is announced however, a contract cannot proceed before M/WBE is approved.

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44. In a shared office, are there restrictions on the use of supplies, equipment or services purchased through MWBEs under this RFP?

A: Supplies and equipment purchased as part of RPCs contracts should be used for that program.

45. The RFP staffing matric does not include clerical support personnel. Can we use a MWBE staffing agency to provide clerical support for this project?

A: Yes. Include that expenditure under 2. Purchased Services on the Cost Proposal Form.

46. If we are awarded the contract but then are not able to meet our projected MWBE spending targets due to conditions of the work, will we be penalized?

A: New York State Education contracts contain Appendix A-3, Authority: Article 15-A of the Executive Law and 5 NYCRR parts 140-145) which will have the final approved M/WBE Utilization percentage. In the A-3, it states, "Failure to comply with the foregoing requirements may result in a finding of non-responsiveness, and/or a breach of contract, leading to the withholding of funds or such other actions or enforcement proceedings as allowed by the contract and/or Article 15-A."

47. Is the MWBE partial waiver percentage the percentage we have achieved or the percentage we did not achieve? For example, if 8% WMBE was achieved, do you request a waiver of 2% or 8%?

A: Bidders must make good faith effort to solicit MWBE firms to meet participation goals. If efforts are unsuccessful, the applicant may apply for a Partial or Full Request for Waiver. This request MUST be accompanied by documentation demonstrating the efforts made and reasons why the applicant was unsuccessful in obtaining MWBE utilization.

The percentage of the waiver granted is based upon the unattained goal, so in the scenario above the submitted waiver documentation would be to waive 2% of the 10% goal. Actually, this RFP has a goal of 5% MBE and 5% WBE, so the Request for Waiver Form has two potential partial waiver boxes to check.

Questions about Submission Documents

48. The order of the documents/pages in the *Submission Documents* is different than the order of the documents in the *Application Checklist*. E.g., in the *Application Checklist*, the "Iran Divestment Act Certification" is #9, however it is p. 17 in the *Submission Documents*. In the *Submission Documents*, the "NYSED Substitute Form W-9" is pp. 15-16, before the "Iran Divestment Act Certification", and #12 in the *Application Checklist*. Is the order of the documents in the

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Application Checklist, correct? Should documents be taken out of the order they appear in the Submission Documents to match the order of the Application Checklist?

A: Please use the checklist as a guide for which documents are needed and as a means of tracking which elements have been completed.

49. In the Submission Documents Package under *Consultant Disclosure Reporting, Form A* is listed as #19 but it comes after #20 and there's already a #19, *Form DB-155*. Should *Form A* follow the *Disability Benefits Coverage* forms as #21?

A: Thank you for letting us know about the sequencing. These documents do not need to be numbered. Please use the checklist a guide for which documents are needed and as a means of tracking which elements have been completed.

50. How can bidders be notified that NYSED has received emailed submission packets since certified mail with a return receipt is not an option?

A: Bidders can request that NYSED reply with email acknowledgement that the bid was received.

51. When will bidders be notified if they're awarded the contract?

A: Bidders will be notified of award/non-award as soon as the review process is complete.

52. How will bidders be notified that NYSED has received emailed submission of packets?

A: Bidders can request that NYSED reply with email acknowledgement that the bid was received.

53. Is there a specific order of documents that you wish bidders to follow. It appears that there is a discrepancy between the Submission Documents list and the Application Checklist

A: Please use the checklist as a guide for which documents are needed and as a means of tracking which elements have been completed.

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54. Can more clarity be given regarding the signature attestation. For example, where it says "sign beside" on the checklist, does that mean sign the checklist on the corresponding line? Can we send one email with all of the documents that are being attested as signed or should there be separate emails?

A: One attestation covers all documents, and one email is preferred with four attachments (Submission Documents, Technical Proposal, Cost Proposal, and M/WBE Documents). The signer can then place the following statement in the body of the email:

- a. "I agree, and it is my intent, to sign this document by [describe the signature solution used] and by electronically submitting this document to [name of recipient individual or entity]. I understand that my signing and submitting this document is the legal equivalent of having placed my handwritten signature on the submitted document and this attestation. I understand and agree that by electronically signing and submitting this document I am affirming to the truth of the information contained therein."

Or copy the statement onto paper, sign it, scan it and include it with the Submission Documents package.