![mdrc BUILDING KNOWLEDGE TO IMPROVE SOCIAL POLICY]

Request for Proposals for
Providers of Academic Language Interventions to Participate in an Impact Evaluation:

Offeror Questions and Responses

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(updated September 23, 2016)

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Thanks to offerors for submitting thoughtful questions about the Request for Proposals (RFP). This document includes the questions regarding the RFP received by August 31, 2016, along with responses from the study team. Please note that some of the submitted questions have been edited to make them generally applicable to all offerors.

As offerors prepare their proposals, there are several important considerations to address. First, in order for reviewers to accurately assess the suitability of proposed interventions for this evaluation, offerors are reminded that their proposals shall be as clear as possible about prior implementation of their intervention and the associated evidence of efficacy or effectiveness. In their proposals, offerors shall also discuss how prior implementation is relevant to this evaluation. In addition, offerors shall be clear about how the proposed implementation of their intervention in this evaluation is expected to lead to similar impacts on relevant student outcomes. If relevant, offerors should discuss any proposed adaptations to their intervention and/or account for potential contextual differences compared with prior implementation.

Question 1: Is this grant open to an alternative technology solution where 80% of instruction is delivered online and 20% by the local teacher?

First, offerors are reminded that this is a potential contract, not a grant.

This competition is open to interventions that have technology components that are a major part of their model. Offerors whose interventions are dependent on particular resources (for example, computers and internet access) should describe in their proposals the level of those resources that have been necessary in prior implementation of their model. In this case, this might mean the number of internet-connected computers per student per school (or per grade level or per classroom) and any dependence on home internet access. In addition, it would be important to explain how IT support is provided and by whom. Because schools that will be recruited will likely vary in their tech needs and resources, it would also be important for the proposal to address how the offeror would help ensure adequate technological resources are in place, and how the offeror has worked with schools in prior implementation of the intervention to meet technology resource needs.

Question 2: Can a Train the Trainer model be used to do the initial teacher training?

Yes. Providers can implement train the trainer models to do the initial teacher training. Applicants should describe experiences using these models to conduct trainings in the past.

Question 3: Can this study support 30 minutes a day four days a week technology-based instruction and 30 minutes a day doing small group instruction with the local teacher?

Yes, this type of instructional model is allowable within this project. However, it is important for the offeror's proposal to discuss how this model has been executed in prior school implementation. Specifically, the team will be interested in aspects such as how the offeror has collaborated with teachers and schools previously to make this model work within their local contexts. The schools eventually recruited to participate in this project will need support to be able to execute this model in participating fourth and/or fifth grade classrooms, so offerors' descriptions of their prior work in schools will be helpful in evaluating the feasibility of their models for this project. Please note that the proposal must also be accompanied by supporting evidence of efficacy/effectiveness.

Question 4: As part of our implementation training plan, we propose to have summer institutes based on the locations of the districts. Who will cover the travel expenses for the teachers and administrators attending the institute?

Offerors should plan to cover the travel expenses of the training participants, and include those cost estimates in their proposal budgets.

If there are trainings scheduled locally for each district, travel expenses are expected to be minimal for participating teachers and administrators. If there is a need to reimburse costs such as public transportation to/from summer trainings or mileage for participants who drive, the expectation is that the provider would account for these potential costs within its budget for summer training provision.

If a few centralized trainings are offered in strategically chosen geographic locations where participants from study schools from districts within a region are brought together, travel expenses may prove to be more significant. Offerors proposing centralized trainings should include a budget for covering these expenses in their proposals. Selected provider(s) may then have the opportunity to negotiate this budget with the contractor. Offerors are reminded that they should align sample size estimates in the RFP with their training models as they generate their estimates for these expenses. As a reminder, estimated sample size maximums assume that an intervention may be implemented in as many as 36 schools across as many as 12 school districts, with as many as 8 teachers per school participating (or 288 teachers total). The study team offers some suggestions of assumptions for offerors to consider as they construct these budgets:

- *How many centralized, regional trainings will be offered?*
- *Will they each be located in one of the participating districts from that region (therefore, teachers within that district might use their own vehicle or public transportation and would not need overnight lodging)?*
- *How many days will training last, and thus how many nights of lodging will be required for participants traveling from afar?*
- *Might some participants drive to trainings because they're local (daily roundtrips), or live close enough that they could drive even if they need to stay overnight (one roundtrip with overnight lodging)? (The current federal rate for mileage reimbursement is $0.54 per mile.)*

Question 5: The high level logic model included in the RFP discusses both reading and writing. Does the evidence supporting the efficacy/effectiveness of our intervention have to include measures of writing skills, as well as reading?

An intervention with evidence on relevant reading outcomes will not be disqualified because of limited or no evidence of impact on writing skills from prior evaluation research. Please provide information on all relevant outcomes that have been assessed for the given academic language intervention.

Question 6: Since this evaluation includes professional development and implementation over a single school year (2017-18), would a two-year professional development model that is adapted to one year be competitive in the ALI competition?

The potential offeror is correct that implementation will take place in the 2017-2018 school year and the evaluation will look at impacts on students in that year (and may also look at longer term effects on students beyond that implementation year). The offeror's adaptation to a one-year model would still be considered competitive if the offeror was able to make a compelling case for the potential impact of the adapted model.

Question 7: Can you estimate the expected locations of the districts you would select in which the selected offeror would then target the delivery of the PD?

No, at this time we do not know the locations that will be selected for this study. The study team has not yet begun communication with potential study districts, but expects that the selected districts will be spread across the country. The districts under consideration include those that have substantial populations of EL students (e.g., at least 30 percent EL students) and disadvantaged students (e.g., at least 50 percent of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch) and that would be large enough to include multiple schools in the research sample with such populations of fourth and fifth graders.

Question 8: Can you provide additional guidance on what offerors should provide for the fidelity measure?

Offerors should provide a copy of their fidelity measures, as well as enough information for the reviewers to determine whether the fidelity measurement tool sufficiently assesses program implementation. The fidelity measurement tool should be aligned to the key components of the proposed intervention and will inform the study team's development of a measurement tool to be used in the evaluation. While we are unable to provide additional guidance, offerors should review the fidelity measurement tool description provided in section C.5.2 of the RFP when creating their proposals.