

Question and Answers for the Request for Application #15-068, Community College Basic Skills and Student Outcomes Transformation Program

- 1) How are you defining student support in instructional activities? Does this include embedded counseling, S.I., or corequisite remediation?
Response: **Yes, it does include embedded counseling, S.I. and Corequisite.**
- 2) Do you recommend we include a grant director? Also, is there special language we need to utilize for backfill vs. reassign time?
Response: **We do not make recommendations of any kind. What you include in your proposal should be based on your needs in addressing basic skills student outcomes, and no there is no special language.**
- 3) Do you have "model" responses/answers to the questions that can be shared?
Response: **No.**
- 4) Can we pay for overload of counselor time (instead of faculty release time)?
Response: **Yes.**
- 5) Work plan objectives - are these the objectives in the RFA (the five plus the other)?
Response: **Yes.**
- 6) Can these funds be used to expand facilities for tutorial support?
Response: **Yes, but you can't build something new, only modify something that already exist.**
- 7) One of the allowable expenses is instructional redesign yet it takes at least a year to approve new curriculum. Can we suggest in our proposal that we will redesign in year 1 to 1 ½ and then implement in the last half of the grant (last three semesters)?
Response: **Yes, but you're still going to need to show significant improvement with student outcomes within the time frame identified in the RFA. There is no extension of performance time.**
- 8) Re: program management: what seems to be appropriate staffing for the managing of our program? Could you provide some technical assistance on what the CCCCO is looking for there? (Faculty coordinator? Staff program director? Clerical support? Any guidelines on what seems appropriate? Or is it dependent on the program?)
Response: **It depends on the college; the focus should be to demonstrate that your college is ready to manage the work and funds.**
- 9) Is the organizational chart part of the two-page Program Management page limit?
Response: **No, but it should be kept to less than two pages.**
- 10) Can K-12 districts be a funded partner in the context of the collaborating with high school teachers on multiple measures, for example?
Response: **Yes.**

- 11) Is there a page limit for the separate "Sustainability" section?
Response: **No, there isn't, but consider other page limits you have seen within the RFA.**
- 12) When the template is downloaded -- the header for the budget summary page ends up at the bottom. Will this be corrected and re-posted or should we submit as is?
Response: **We will correct and repost it.**
- 13) Three years of implementation, but five years to spend it, right? So, is this a three-year financial plan or a five-year financial plan?
Response: **There is a three-year financial plan and a five-year reporting plan.**
- 14) Should the priority criteria point sections (K-12 collaboration, scale-up and serving greater proportions of students) be addressed separately or embedded within the response to need section?
Response: **It should be incorporated and shouldn't be separated from what you are planning to do.**
- 15) Do you want a References/Work Cited page?
Response: **It's up to you but is a good idea if you're doing a program or strategy that falls into the "other" category.**
- 16) Is it possible for the application budget detail sheet to be formatted into an excel spreadsheet rather than in word format?
Response: **Yes, but you must include all of the elements from the budget detail sheet in the same format. In addition, the Excel file will need to part of the final submitted PDF of the application; that is, you should not submit a file separate from the rest of the application.**
- 17) Do the hard copies need three original signatures or just one and two copies of the application?
Response: **All three hard copies need to have original signatures.**
- 18) What if you are hiring a new Program Director? Just list To Be Selected? Are letters of reference allowed?
Response: **Yes, listing "to be selected" is okay, and no letter of reference is necessary.**
- 19) If we are scaling up existing programs that are currently run under two different programs, do we have to combine them into one for the RFA or do we provide both program director's and dean's information?
Response: **Not necessarily, but you would need to identify two different methods/objectives and who the appropriate contact(s) is(are).**
- 20) Do we need to include appendix C with our applications?
Response: **No.**
- 21) Does the budget identify only costs for all 3 years combined or do we specify individual year costs?
Response: **You would have to put the budget together for all 3 years on the summary sheet and on the detail sheet you can put year 1, year 2, and year 3.**

- 22) Will funding begin on July 1?
Response: **Yes.**
- 23) What is the real difference between scaling up and reaching greater proportion? I am afraid my explanation will be the same for both.
Response: **Scaling up is taking something that already exists and increasing it. Reaching greater proportion is getting more students than before or introducing something new.**
- 24) Any restriction on hiring a full time Program Director?
Response: **No.**
- 25) Can we take one year to plan and serve students in year 2?
Response: **Yes.**
- 26) If we use strategies listed in RFA, do we need to include research?
Response: **No, unless you are working under the "other" objective/category.**
- 27) Regarding partnerships with k-12 can we pay for professional development and stipends to k-12 teaches?
Response: **Yes.**
- 28) Is reading curricular redesign eligible under this grant?
Response: **Yes.**
- 29) Are non-credit certificates considered for meeting completion goals?
Response: **No.**
- 30) We are in a quarter system, is it safe to say that 3 courses (semesters) is equivalent to 5 quarters?
Response: **No.**
- 31) If you want to include the priority criteria for "collaboration with K-12 school districts to better articulate English and mathematics instruction", what objective would it fall under?
Response: **It depends on the college but could fall under objective 1.**
- 32) Can we use funds to help develop cut scores for the CAI? if we are focusing on MMAP
Response: **Yes.**
- 33) In the information sent out, it said to consider the programs/practices in the document Basic Skills Completion: Student Success in Community Colleges: Effective Practices for Faculty, Staff and Administrators, so do these practices meet the requirement of the "other" objectives?
Response: **Yes.**

34) What specifically do you need to see in terms of institutionalizing scaled up practices such as SI or intensive reviews? Does funds from Stud Equity, BSI, SSSP after the 3 year period count as institutional funding?

Response: **No we don't have anything specific to see, and yes the funds would count as institutional funding.**

35) Do additional student support services (such as embedded SI, counseling) in transfer level English and math courses (due to greater access with adoption of multiple measures) count under practice #5 integration with instruction? What about CTE/industry career foundation courses?

Response: **Additional support services count under practice 5 – make sure they are not duplicated with other programs at the college.**

36) Can you seek to propose implementing four of the seven objectives?

Response: **Yes.**

37) Is it possible to be funded for less than what is requested?

Response: **Yes, it just depends on what you request.**

38) Do you need to include research if you are addressing the first 5 defined objectives?

Response: **No.**

39) Can we spend funds on S.I. or Counseling, if we can find a way to sustain these services after three years?

Response: **Yes, as long as you provide evidence of why you are using that strategy if you are operating under the "other" objective or provide an explanation for how it fits one of the other objectives, such as integrated with instruction.**

40) In the 6th objective, it speaks of an accelerated path with technology. Is tech a requirement?

Response: **No, it is not a requirement.**

41) The RFA doesn't seem to reference ESL explicitly. Is there any significance we should be reading into that rather obvious omission?

Response: **Basic skills are defined by seven TOP codes. Any course or support related to one or more of these TOP codes would probably fall under the intention of the law which created the RFA. The goals of the program remain the same as well as the timeframe for achieving them.**

42) The legislation originally stated that this could be addressed as an **and/or** category; however, the RFA does not make that distinction. Will you clarify if the intent is to be for a strategy addressing criteria a. AND b., or whether it is to be for a. OR b (in Section D)?

Response: **It is a. OR b. We will modify the RFA to reflect this.**

43) I am curious as to the inclusion of ESL students and programs in this new grant opportunity. The possible principles and practices for adoption specifically mention English and math but not ESL. Our other initiative, the ESL/Basic Skills Initiative includes ESL in the title and focus. Could you shed some light on what is intended? As foundation skills coordinator, I am working with my colleagues in ESL, English and math to determine the direction of our proposal, and this question came up.

Response: The legislation emphasizes English and math courses. If ESL courses were part of a plan that enables students to complete a credit English course within three terms, then the purpose of the law would seem to have been fulfilled. I don't see a bar in the legislation or the RFA for the inclusion of ESL courses, as needed to accomplish the goal of completing a gatekeeper English courses within three terms. In addition, basic skills are defined by seven TOP codes. Any course or support related to one or more of these TOP codes would probably fall under the intention of the law which created the RFA. The goals of the program remain the same as well as the timeframe for achieving them.

44) Can we use these funds to renovate space in order to establish Basic Skills progress assistance? Are there any limitations?

Response: Yes funds may be used to renovate existing facilities but not to do major construction.

45) We see that California Community Colleges who are receiving a separate Basic Skills Initiative allocation are eligible to apply for the Basic Skills grant program not Districts. Since all four of our colleges are part of the BSI and would like to apply for this program, the question is: can we apply as a District or should we submit four separate applications? We would, of course, still like to apply for the maximum award amount for each college. Our work on systems (especially with respect to multiple measures and other innovations we are working on) is happening districtwide, while our colleges are implementing instructional practices and student supports at the college level.

Response: The legislation indicates CCD's may apply (Ed Code §88805(a)(1)), and the RFA indicates colleges may apply (e.g., section B p. 3, etc.) In multi-college districts applications must be college-based not district-based.

46) The RFA mentions narrative throughout the instructions. Are we permitted to insert tables with data to support the narrative, specifically within our identified problem?

Response: There is no preclusion from the use of tables with data in the narrative portion of your application.

47) The awards are 1.5 million per year. Does it have to be equally distributed over the three years at \$500k per year? Or can it be larger amounts in the first two year and less in the 3rd year with overall total not to exceed the 1.5?

Response: Awards are up to \$1.5 million total not per year. Funds distribution is covered in the legal articles I and II.

48) Are any Letters of Support required? Allowed?

Response: They are not required and are not encouraged.

49) Grant period is three years and project addresses five year outcomes. Should the Workplan cover three years or five years?

Response: **The workplan should cover three years.**

50) Any page limit on Sustainability section?

Response: **No page limit is specified for this section but discretion should be used in the proportion to the other sections of the application proposal.**

51) Will grant applications be accepted but at a lower rate, i.e. an application for 1.5 million is accepted but only granted 750,000? (I ask this because I think everyone is going to ask for 1.5 million, but that would leave only ~40 grants for the 114 community colleges, most of which need this kind of transformative work and funding.)

Response: **It is possible that a proposal may be funded at less than what is requested. This depends on what is proposed and is evaluated on a case by case basis.**

52) Under which of the key objectives does acceleration fall (reducing the amount of remediation a student must take)? It seems 6, but such curricular redesign (by reducing the number of courses a remedial student must take) may or may not be “utilizing technology,” so is it then #7? We want to make sure that we are clear for our grant application.

Response: **Acceleration will fall into objective #6.**

53) Do our Objectives in Workplan need to be (can they be?) verbatim from the RFA's objectives, e.g. # 1- 7 on page 4?

Response: **You will have to use your judgement here; however, you would seem to be on solid ground when one stays as closely as possible to the RFA.**

54) Can we have a full-time, dedicated director for the grant?

Response: **This is an allowable expense; however, all personnel allocated need to be appropriate for what is proposed and the goals of the project.**

55) How important is collaboration in AEBG in terms of scoring the application? Does being part of an AEBG consortium automatically make it “applicable”? Is there an expectation to leverage AEBG funds?

Response: **There is no expectation to leverage any specific funds. The design of the project should address meeting the performance goals established in the RFA within the specified timeframe. The scoring Rubric is outlined in Section “K” of the RFA.**

56) Are the expenditure guidelines the same as for the yearly BSI grant?

Response: **This is a different RFA. The guidelines from BSI should not be consulted for the \$60M grant. The only two guiding documents are the legislation and the RFA.**

57) Can high school partner districts be funded partners for paying teachers to participate in planning and collaboration?

Response: **This activity is an eligible activity.**

58) I heard from a colleague that being awarded grant funding may affect your institution's current BSI funding amount. Is that true?

Response: **Untrue.**

59) Can grant funds pay for food during collaboration meetings?

Response: **State funds from this project should not be used for food.**

60) What is the total narrative page limit and is there a page limit to the workplan? Right now, I see that the RFA states 4 pages for the Need statement, 6 for the Response and 2 for Program Management, for a total of 12 pages. There is no page limit listed for the Sustainability section and if there is a page limit for discussing the Priority Criteria. I am assuming that we would be addressing those in their own sections and not have the Criteria be interwoven in the Response section.

Response: **Some subsections in (G) have page limits stated whereas others do not. Some require the use of appendicized forms. Those sections which don't have a page limit are not constrained by page counts, or the use of a prescribed form.**

61) Can a community college district with multiple colleges submit one application for the whole district -- or must each application be for only one college? Prompt 5d for the narrative asks for an organizational chart. Should this be included in the 2 pages allowed for that section, or can it be a separate attachment?

Response: **The legislation calls for districts to apply. Multi-college districts must submit applications by colleges. Do not submit one application for all colleges in a district. If there are four colleges each college applying must submit separate applications. Section 5 has a limit of two pages, but the organizational chart is not a part of that page limit.**

62) On page 9 of the RFA - #7: Overall Feasibility of the Project clearly states that this section is for readers only and will be determined by what is written in other sections of the application. Therefore I understand that we should not write to this section specifically in our proposal. Is this correct?

Response: **Correct.**

63) On page 10 of the RFA there are four additional sections noted: Sustainability of the Program Collaboration with Local School Districts Serving K-12 for Better Articulation of English and Math Instruction, Collaboration with Local School Districts Serving k-12 for Better Articulation of English and Mathematics Instruction, Scaling Up Existing Practices, And Providing Services to Greater Proportion of Students. Should there be a specific response to each of these questions in the our proposal or like for # 9 are these sections for readers only and with ratings to be determined by what is written in other sections of the application?

Response: **Only the "Sustainability section is separate. The other sections should be incorporated into the proposal.**

64) If we need to write specific responses to each of these questions in our proposal are there maximum page limits for each or these sections?

Response: **Some sections have page length limits, e.g., #3, #5. Others do not. If there are page length limits, they are specified at the top of a given section.**

65) Do tables and charts need to adhere to the 12 point Arial font, single space, format guidelines? We'd like to know if we can use a smaller font in those specific areas.

Response: **There should be no deviation on font. Arial 12 point font is an ADA accessible font and size. Single spacing within a chart is appropriate.**

66) Does the college organizational chart need to adhere to the 12 point Arial font, single space, format guidelines?

Response: **No.**

67) My college is considering the objective to place more students directly into transfer-level courses but is considering having those students also take a two-unit support course. Can the grant money be used to pay a faculty to teach the two-unit course?

Response: **If your college will collect apportionment for the students in this two-unit course, then no you may not use the grant to pay faculty to teach that course.**

68) In preparing our budget for this grant application, we are unsure what is meant in the Application Budget Summary (Appendix A) by "Total Apportionment Budget". Can you please clarify what this is?

Response: **One of your funding sources for implementing what you propose in the application may be apportionment funds. For instance, if you are developing an accelerated curriculum, you will have instructors teaching that course and they would be paid through apportionment not through the grant; on the budget summary, this would be listed under Instructor Salaries in the Apportionment Budget column. However, in order to develop that curriculum, you may decide to provide a stipend to the instructors, which would be listed under Instructor Salaries in the Grant Budget column.**

69) The first item on the Contact Page asks us for "Funding Source." Should we be putting "Chancellor's Office" there?

Response: **For funding source, please list all sources of funds for implementing the project you propose in your application. The grant itself would be one source, but there may be others you are using as well.**

70) On the Budget Summary, can we have the college Business Officer sign, or does it have to be the District Business Officer?

Response: **While the budget summary form asks for the District Chief Business Officer, you can have your College Chief Business Officer sign; it really depends on whether the grant will be primarily managed at the district level or the college level.**

71) On the Contact Page for Business Officer, do we use the college's or the District's?

Response: **For Business Officer on the contact page, you should use the same person who signed the budget summary.**