Request for Proposals (RFP)

Funding Source: Yosemite Community College District
DSPS Program Accountability and Development Services contract

Funding Term: July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

Funds Available: Up to $200,000

Project Title: DSPS Allocation and Weights Study

Background

The Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) allocation provides funding to each California Community College to provide for the excess cost of services to students with disabilities as required by California Education Code sections 67310 et. seq. and 84850.

The approved DSPS allocation formula includes assigned weights for students with various disabilities to simulate the cost of services for students within each of the defined disability categories. The formula has been in effect for almost twenty years. Because of the emergence and increase of new disabilities, an increase in costs to provide certain types of accommodations and changes in service patterns, the disability categories and associated weights are outdated and no longer reflect the actual costs of serving students with disabilities, as required by state law. In addition, the entire DSPS allocation formula requires review and analysis with consideration to revisions in order to increase equity and transparency of DSPS funding systemwide.

In 2010-11, the Chancellor’s Office solicited a research study that examined one of the disability groups under which DSPS students are reported within the Management Information Services (MIS) data system, for the purpose of the DSPS allocation: the “Other Disabilities” category. One of the recommendations in the conclusion of this study that was completed in 2011-12, was to address inequities in the DSPS allocation methodology that were revealed in the findings of this study.

As a result, in 2012-13, the DSPS Unit of the Chancellor’s Office convened a new Disability Policy Workgroup (DPW), which met four times that year. After careful consideration of various other potential funding models, the final action plan developed by the DPW recommended that the Chancellor’s Office undertake a study to provide current cost data analysis that will help inform the Chancellor’s Office in updating the existing DSPS allocation formula. That update, as recommended by the DPW, would include a review of weights for the nine existing disability categories, as outlined in Title 5 California Code of Regulations sections 56032-56044, the identification of new or modification of the existing disability categories, and the development of weights for these new or modified groups. In addition, it was recommended that the allocation research study examine the accuracy of current base costs in the allocation and the
method utilized for determining college effort, as well as any options for simplifying the formula, and making it more transparent and equitable.

Currently, California Community Colleges are required to report, for the purposes of DSPS categorical state funding, the number of students they serve in each of the identified nine disability categories, every year, as well as the number of DSPS service contacts. The DPW also proposed that consideration be given to the idea that two new disability reporting groups be broken out from the “Other Disabilities” category and given their own category for reporting purposes: Students with Autism and Students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The DPW also recommended further study of a trend within the DSPS program where students are being reported under the “Other Disabilities” Management Information System (MIS) data reporting category while they either wait to be tested under the CCC Learning Disabilities Eligibility and Services Model (LDESM), or are otherwise confirmed by the college to have a disability (often based on outside documentation), which may or may not later be confirmed to meet the criteria of the Learning Disabilities Eligibility and Services Model (LDESM). Data that could help support the Chancellor’s Office’s research into any potential changes in this policy area, and perhaps reweighting of the LD and “Other Disabilities” categories, should also be collected in this proposed study.

In summary, the Chancellor’s Office is seeking a study of current actual cost data, comprehensive data analysis, a cost analysis, and other relevant information related to providing services to students with disabilities in the current nine DSPS reporting categories as well as proposed new categories for students with Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The Chancellor’s Office also desires the selected subcontractor to conduct simulations of other changes to the allocation formula proposed by the DPW, including changes to the base and college effort elements of the formula. In order to meet this need, the Yosemite Community College District, which performs program accountability and development services for DSPS statewide as the Chancellor’s Office current fiscal agent, seeks proposals for a subcontractor to complete the work described below.
Scope

Yosemite Community College District, in collaboration with the California Community Chancellor’s Office is seeking a subcontractor to conduct a thorough study of the DSPS allocation including a system-wide weight study of the nine DSPS MIS data reporting categories, the identification of weights for new or modified disability categories, and possible changes to the base and college effort elements of the formula. The subcontractor, in collaboration with an Advisory Group, will report findings and recommendations back to the DSPS unit. The subcontractor who is selected for this study will assess, document and thoroughly analyze the number of students reported in the nine current MIS data reporting categories by their actual impairment, through a representative sample of the community colleges’ local data, and conduct a cost analysis of students served in the nine current categories as well as new proposed categories of students with Autism and ADHD.

The expectation is that this study will be accomplished through a combination of surveys (on-line or in person), interviews, state-wide data analysis, the establishment of volunteer / partner colleges sites to share their data, the collection of that relevant data, college level data analysis, and a review of all other relevant data in order to assist the Chancellor’s Office in reweighting current disability categories and in establishing initial weights for new disability categories. The partner colleges’ additional costs that may be incurred as a result of their participation in the study will be reimbursed by the Chancellor’s Office through a stipend that is, outside of the budget established in this RFP. However, the subcontractor would be involved in collecting relevant information necessary for the invoice and payment process. The subcontractor will also be expected to run simulations to show impacts on the formula of adding new disability reporting categories, new or revised weights, revised base and college effort elements of the formula, and lowering the current 95 percent guarantee (per formula, currently all colleges are protected against any drop of more than 5 percent in their allocation from one year to the next, by guaranteeing a minimum of 95 percent of their previous year’s final allocation).

The selected subcontractor will also be expected to work in communication and consultation with an Advisory Group of key stakeholders convened with assistance of Chancellor’s Office staff to help inform the study. The subcontractor will be expected to make recommendations of changes to the allocation formula for further vetting by the Chancellor’s Office and for final consideration by the CCC Board of Governors.

The Chancellor’s Office will be involved in reviewing and providing input on the survey tool(s) which the subcontractor proposes to use, so as to avoid any duplication in data / information already compiled internally. It will also be involved in convening the Advisory Group and in reviewing the work, analysis, and recommendations of the subcontractor.

The Chancellor’s Office would expect benchmark updates at various points within the 2013-14 fiscal year (please include those dates in your workplan) and to receive the completed final 2013-14 report, by no later than August 15, 2014. Due to timelines involved, the Chancellor’s Office expects that this workplan will likely be extended into the 2014-15 fiscal year through the award of a second, non-competitive subcontract given to the same subcontractor with the DSPS fiscal agent, in order to finish any work still necessary that has not been finished by the 2013-14 final report deadline. Therefore, the Chancellor’s Office is asking for a 12-month workplan in this RFP. The Chancellor’s
Office will assign a staff member to act as the Project Monitor for this contract and to assist the subcontractor with reporting and invoicing components. The subcontractor will be expected to review the existing allocation formula and all other historical documents (including the last weights study conducted at the request of the Chancellor’s Office).

Examples of the types of information and data being sought, and questions to be answered in the report include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- What are the average costs involved with serving students who are currently being reported under the nine MIS data reporting categories in our allocation model?

- What is the average cost of serving all DSPS students as a group without breaking them out by different disability types?

- What are the average costs of serving students with Autism, and ADHD currently included in the “other” category?

- What are the average costs of serving students in the “Other Disabilities” category after those students with Autism and ADHD are removed from the group?

- What are the average costs of serving students with LD, if all LD students in the “Other Disabilities” category prior to undergoing LDESM testing were coded to the LD category?

- What would the impact be of not having a Speech and Language disability category?

- What would the impact be of increasing the 10 percent of the DSPS allocation currently reserved to reimburse “college effort” in the DSPS allocation formula? What do simulations of different percentages of college effort reimbursement show?

- What would the impact of changing the DSPS 95 percent guarantee be? What do simulations of different percentage guarantees show?

Proposal Outline

Written proposals should include:

A. A written, detailed description of your interest in the project.

B. A proposed budget not to exceed $200,000.
C. A detailed description of your 12-month workplan (see below) to include: a description of the research methodologies and tools to be utilized, how the data will be collected and analyzed, how and when you will provide the Chancellor’s Office with benchmark updates, how you will maintain appropriate documentation of the work completed, how and when you will present the report and any findings, a description of the project objectives and how (within the workplan) specifically you plan to meet those objectives.

D. A description of your organization’s staff qualifications to successfully conduct this study and to complete the required report, e.g., a narrative clearly outlining your staff’s experience using various research techniques and methodologies, and data collection strategies, as well as a description of your technical background, including prior work with CCC fiscal analysis, knowledge of MIS data systems and Community College reporting requirements and, preferably, your direct experience with California’s higher education system and with students with disabilities.

Evaluation

A. Clarity and detail in the demonstration of your interest in this project - 10 points.

B. Clarity, detail and feasibility of your proposed budget - 25 points.

C. Quality of workplan and demonstrated ability to complete as much of the project as possible and to provide deliverables by the 2013-14 subcontract reporting deadline (August 15, 2014), as well as a description of the work and remaining deliverables that would likely need to be completed in the next fiscal year. The Chancellor’s Office requests that this information be provided in the form of a proposed 12-month workplan, covering January 2014 – December 2014. The workplan should also include a description of the overall project objectives and how you plan to meet those objectives - 45 points.

D. Qualifications and experience necessary to complete this project - 20 points.

Proposed Calendar of Key Events

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Release date</td>
<td>November 1, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for submitting proposal to YCCD</td>
<td>December 16, 2013*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scoring of proposals, by a review panel</td>
<td>January 6-7, 2014</td>
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<td>Notice of Intent to Award</td>
<td>January 8, 2014</td>
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<td>Deadline to file protest</td>
<td>January 15, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract finalized and work begins by</td>
<td>January 20, 2014</td>
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Contacts for Information / Questions

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Please Mail Four (4) Original Copies of the Proposals to*:

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*Postmarks will be accepted