Request for Proposals (RFP)

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

Funding Term: July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011

Funds Available: Up to $200,000

Project Title: An Evaluation of the “Other Disabilities” DSPS Reporting Category

I. Background

Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations defines nine disability categories related to the Disabled Students Program and Services (DSPS) program in the California Community Colleges, in sections 56032-56044. California Community Colleges are required to report, for the purposes of categorical state funding, the number of students they serve in each of those nine categories, every year. Eight of the nine categories define very specific types of impairments. However the ninth, defined in section 56044 as “Other Disabilities,” simply states: “This category includes all students with disabilities, as defined in Section 56002, who do not fall into any of the categories described in Sections 56032-42 but who indicate a need for support services or instruction provided pursuant to Sections 56026 and 56028.”

Over the course of the last several years, the number of students reported under this category has grown significantly. It is now, by far, the most highly reported disability category statewide. The California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, in working closely with its various advisory boards and the DSPS field in general, believes that this trend is the result of many converging factors including; an increase in students with conditions such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD), Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome and others that do not fit neatly into the defined disability categories coming to community colleges, a trend within the DSPS program where students are being reported under the “Other Disabilities” Management Information System (MIS) data reporting category while they wait to be tested under the Learning Disabilities Eligibility and Services Model and confirmed by the college to have a suspected learning disability, possible misplacement of students who could be reported under the Psychological Disability category, and a general misunderstanding of the “Other Disabilities” category and the nine disability categories, in general.

The large numbers of students reported under “Other Disabilities” (approximately 1/3 of all students currently reported as having a disability) creates a certain level of inequity in the state DSPS allocation process. This category is assigned a relative weight value related to the comparative costs of serving students in the “Other Disabilities” category versus the costs of serving student in the eight more clearly defined categories, which also have assigned weights within the formula. This assigned weight for “Other Disabilities” may not be valid, due to the fact the Chancellor’s Office anticipates that
many different impairments with widely fluctuating costs are associated with serving the growing number of students reported under this category.

The Chancellor’s Office believes the research sought in this Request for Proposals could be the foundation to transition into a full blown state-wide needs assessment study of the weights assigned to all disability categories. It may also result in the pursuit of new Title 5 regulations to define currently undefined impairments and disability categories, more research into the costs associated with serving disabilities by category or by type, and other further policy analysis into the general viability of the DSPS allocation formula’s principles.

In summary, the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office is seeking more relevant data, comprehensive data analysis, a cost analysis, and other relevant information related to the statewide issue of the extreme growth in the “Other Disabilities” MIS data reporting category over the last 5 years. As result, the Yosemite Community College District seeks proposals for a new subcontract to complete the work described below.

II. Scope

Yosemite Community College District, in collaboration with the California Community Chancellor’s Office is seeking a subcontractor to conduct a system wide study in the area of the “Other Disabilities” MIS data reporting category and to report findings 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 “Other Disabilities” MIS data reporting category by their actual impairment, through a representative sample of the community colleges’ MIS data, and conduct a cost analysis of students served in this category.

The expectation in that study would be accomplished through a combination of surveys (online or in person), interviews, statewide data analysis, the establishment of volunteer / partner colleges sites to share their data, college level data analysis, a review of all relevant historical literature on this topic, plus any other appropriate and effective research techniques.

The Chancellor’s Office will initially be involved in reviewing and providing input on the survey tool(s) which the contractor proposes to use, so as to avoid any duplication in data / information already compiled internally. Then, the Chancellor’s Office would expect benchmark updates at various points within the 2010/11 fiscal year (please include those dates in your workplan) and to receive the completed final report, by no later than August 15, 2011. Due to timelines involved, the Chancellor's Office expects that this workplan may be extended into the 2011-12 fiscal year through the award of a second, non-competitive contract given to the same subcontractor with Yosemite Community College District next year to finish any work still necessary that has not been finished by the 2010-11 report deadline. 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.
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:

- Through a representative sample, what different impairments by number and percent are being reported in the “Other Disabilities” MIS data reporting category?

- How are students’ disabilities reported under the “Other Disabilities” MIS data reporting category being documented and verified by the DSPS program?

- How many students, by number and percent, are originally reported under the “Other Disabilities” MIS data reporting category and then eventually moved to another disability reporting category such as Learning Disability?

- At what point in the student’s educational plan and in the reporting cycle are students who are being temporarily reported in this category while they are being assessed for possible suspected learning disabilities moved to the Learning Disabilities reporting category?

- How many colleges, within their existing MIS systems, are internally coding students reported to the state under “Other Disabilities” as having a more specific disability type, such as ADD and Autism?

- What are the average costs involved with serving students who are currently being reported under “Other Disabilities” MIS data reporting category?

- What are the average costs of each of the various disabilities reported under “Other Disabilities” MIS data reporting category?

III. **Proposal Outline**

Written proposals should include:

A. A description of your interest in the project.

B. A proposed budget not to exceed $200,000.

C. A detailed description of your workplan 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.

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, 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.

IV. 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 - 15 points.

C. Quality of workplan and the demonstrated ability to complete as much of the project and provide deliverables as possible within the fiscal year, and by the reporting deadline, as well as a brief description the work and resulting deliverables that could not be feasibly completed until next fiscal year - 35 points.

D. Qualifications and experience necessary to complete this project - 40 points.

V. 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>January 31, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for submitting proposal to YCCD (See Item VII below)</td>
<td>February 25, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scoring of proposals, by review panel</td>
<td>March 2 – 4, 2011</td>
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<td>Notice of intent to award</td>
<td>March 7, 2011</td>
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<td>Deadline to file protest</td>
<td>March 15, 2011</td>
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<td>Contract finalized and work begins by</td>
<td>March 21, 2011</td>
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VI. Contacts for Information / Questions

Scott Berenson
DSPS Program Coordinator
California Community Colleges, Chancellor’s Office
1102 “Q” Street
Sacramento, CA 95811-6549
(916) 322-3234

Scott Valverde
DSPS Specialist
California Community Colleges, Chancellor’s Office
1102 “Q” Street
Sacramento, CA 95811-6549
(916) 445-5809
VII. Please mail three (3) original copies of your proposals to:

Dorothy Pimentel
Yosemite Community College District
2201 Blue Gum Avenue
P.O. Box 4065
Modesto, CA 95358