

Evaluation Services for Illinois Striving Readers Project

RFSP Webinar
December 22, 2009
Presented by:
Sarah McCusker

Eligible Bidders

- Institutions of higher education, professional organizations and private organizations, and other entities with experience in evaluating educational programs are eligible to apply.

Fiscal Information

- The total projected amount of federal funding available is \$800,000 for the initial contract period and four renewal periods. It is anticipated that contract amounts will not exceed \$175,000 for Fiscal Year 2010 (FY10). Contract amounts up to a maximum of \$200,000 will be available in FY11 and FY12. A maximum of \$175,000 will be available in FY13. In addition, a maximum of \$50,000 will be available in FY14 to complete evaluation activities and reporting.
- For purposes of compliance with Section 511 of P.L. 101-166 (the “Stevens Amendment”), bidders are advised that 100 percent of the funds for this program are derived from federal sources.

Contract Period

- The contract period will begin no sooner than January 15, 2010, and will extend from the execution date of the contract until June 30, 2010. Contracts may be renewed for four additional contract periods (July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011; July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012; July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013; and July 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013).
- Renewal of any contract period is contingent upon sufficient funding for the purposes set forth in this RFSP and satisfactory performance of the contractor in the preceding contract period.

Receipt of Proposals

- Proposals will be received, by mail or in person, in the Fiscal and Procurement Division of the Illinois State Board of Education until 4:00 p.m., on January 5, 2010.
- No late proposals or FAX proposals will be accepted. Proposals should be sent to the following address:
Illinois State Board of Education, Fiscal and Procurement Division, 100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001.
- Proposals are to be addressed to Sherri Sullivan, Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) State Purchasing Officer.

Protest Review Office

- All protests should be clearly labeled on the delivery envelope and addressed to: Division Administrator of Fiscal and Procurement Division, 100 N. First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001. The Illinois State Board of Education uses Section 1.5550 of the rules governing Standard Procurement for handling protests (see 44 Illinois Administrative Code 1.5550;
<http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/044/044000010R55500R.html>).

Submission Requirements

- Proposals must be submitted in five parts: a narrative description of the proposed work; cost proposal; CDs; Standard Certifications and acknowledgement of addendums (if any are posted to the website); and one redacted version which includes the narrative and cost. You must submit at least ten (10) hard copies each of the narrative and cost proposals; one copy of the Standard Certification and Assurances forms required under Part III of the Proposal Format; one redacted version of the proposal; and four (4) CDs of the narrative and cost proposal, two (2) in Word format and two (2) in PDF format. Each part must be sealed in individual packages and clearly labeled as “NARRATIVE” on one package, “COST” on one package, “CERTIFICATIONS” on one package, “CDs” on one package and “REDACTED VERSION” on the fifth package.
- Each package of the proposal must be clearly labeled with the RFSP title, the bidder’s name, and the wording: “SEALED PROPOSAL DO NOT OPEN.”

Submission Requirements

- Bidders shall clearly identify any information on the redacted version that is exempt from the disclosure requirement of the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140). You must clearly mark “REDACTED VERSION” on top of the proposal. This redacted version may be released by ISBE. If ISBE receives a challenge for the release or disclosure of the information that has been redacted, then ISBE will notify the bidder of such challenge and it will be the bidder’s obligation to defend the non-disclosure of the redacted information at its sole cost and expense. Failure of the bidder’s defense for such non-disclosure will result in the release of such information. ISBE hereby disclaims any and all liability for the release of any information contained in the redacted version of a proposal.

Out-Of-State Companies

- Non-Illinois bidders must contact the Illinois Secretary of State (217/782-1834) regarding a Certificate of Authority to Transact Business in Illinois (805 ILCS 5/13). Application Form BCA 13.15 may be downloaded from http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/business_services/publications_and_forms/bca.html.

Changes to the RFSP

- ISBE will post changes to the RFSP on the Illinois Procurement Bulletin (www.purchase.state.il.us). If ISBE issues any changes (including amendments or addenda) to this RFSP, acknowledgement of receipt of such changes must be made to the State Board of Education in writing, signed by an individual authorized to legally bind the bidder and included in the package labeled “CERTIFICATIONS.” If changes to the RFSP are not acknowledged, ISBE retains the right to reject the bid as non-responsive. Therefore, bidders are advised to check the Illinois Procurement Bulletin before submitting their proposals.

Opening of Proposals

- Proposals will be publicly opened at 10:00 a.m., on January 6, 2010, at the Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001. The content of all proposals will remain confidential and the contents will not be shared with competing offerors.

Background

- The Striving Readers program is authorized as part of the 2005 Fiscal Year Appropriations Act under the Title I demonstration authority (Part E, Section 1502 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 – PL 107-110), and is administered by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) was awarded one of eight, discretionary Striving Readers grants under the second cohort competition offered by ED to state educational agencies (SEA).

Background

- The purposes of the Striving Readers program are to raise the reading achievement levels of adolescent students in Title I-eligible schools with significant numbers of students reading below grade level and to help build a strong, scientific research base for identifying and replicating strategies that improve adolescent literacy instruction. Toward this end, funds awarded for the Illinois Striving Readers Project will be used to improve the literacy skills of ninth grade students in Title I-eligible schools who are reading two grades below level.

Background

- Four (4) Illinois school districts including six (6) eligible high schools have been selected to participate in this demonstration program. Participating districts are charged with the key program goal of improving the literacy skills of struggling adolescent readers through the implementation of an intense, supplemental intervention. Participating schools are required to provide intensive, targeted literacy interventions for a ninth grade cohort of a minimum of 75 students in each of the three (3) project implementation years. Passport Reading Journeys™, developed and published by Voyager Expanded Learning, Inc., is the supplemental curriculum that will be used to implement the intervention program for the Illinois Striving Readers Project. A ninth grade cohort of 75 randomly selected, struggling readers within each school is required to be provided with other activities such as study hall or electives that do not involve supplemental reading instruction in each of the three (3) project implementation years to provide a control group for the evaluation design.

Background

- The second key goal of the Striving Readers program is to help build a strong, scientific, research base around specific strategies that improve adolescent literacy skills by carrying out an independent evaluation of the implementation of the supplemental literacy intervention that uses a rigorous experimental research design and meets the other requirements established in the June 11, 2009 *Federal Register* notice found at: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-13755.pdf>. Toward this end, ISBE seeks to contract with a qualified external evaluator to conduct an independent evaluation of the implementation and impact of Passport Reading Journeys™ and supplemental literacy interventions in six Illinois high schools.

Background

- Striving Readers is subject to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) which requires participants to set targets for performance, measure progress toward those targets, report on whether or not the targets have been met, and describe future strategies for continued striving toward those targets. Under GPRA, ED has established the following two measures for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the Striving Readers program:
 - The percentage of adolescent students reading significantly below grade level who demonstrate a gain in their reading achievement at a minimum of one grade level or its equivalent after participating in an intensive literacy intervention over an academic year; and,
 - The percentage of students in schools participating in the Striving Readers program who score at or above proficient on their State's reading/language arts assessment.

Background

- More information about GPRA can be found at:
- US Department of Education <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>, “The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, Public Law 103-62,”
- <http://www.ed.gov/programs/nathawaiian/gpra.pdf>.
- Interested bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the requirements of this project before submitting proposals. Further information about the federal Striving Readers program and the Illinois Striving Readers Project is available at the following websites:
- Illinois State Board of Education <http://www.isbe.net>, Curriculum and Instruction,
- <http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/default.htm>.
- US Department of Education <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>, “Striving Readers,”
- <http://www.ed.gov/programs/strivingreaders/index.html>.
- *Federal Register*, Vol. 74, No. 111, Thursday, June 11, 2009
- <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-13755.pdf>.
- US Department of Education <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>, “Striving Readers Frequently Asked Questions,” <http://www.ed.gov/programs/strivingreaders/faq.html>, questions 26-34.

Scope of Work

- The evaluator will be expected to work collaboratively with staff from those schools chosen to participate in this project to access data regarding student achievement in order to better identify and assign struggling readers, to access information regarding the intervention implementation, and to gain access to other school personnel and classrooms. In addition, the evaluator will be expected to work closely with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) project director, management and ED's technical assistance providers.
- As described in the grant application located at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/strivingreaders/applicant.html>, ED has identified specific requirements for the rigorous and independent evaluation in the second, third, and fourth years of the Illinois Striving Readers Project. Specifically, the evaluation must:

Scope of Work

- Be carried out by an independent evaluator whose role in the project is limited solely to conducting the evaluation;
- Use a random lottery to assign eligible struggling readers in each school in the project either to the supplemental literacy intervention or to other activities in which they would otherwise participate, such as a study hall, electives, or another activity that does not involve supplemental literacy instruction;
- Include rigorous and appropriate procedures to monitor the integrity of the random assignment of students, minimize crossover and contamination between the treatment and control groups, and monitor, document, and, where possible, minimize student attrition from the sample;

Scope of Work

- Develop research questions, data collection methodologies, and an analysis plan using appropriate analytic techniques including the use of prior years' test score data as covariates and appropriate techniques to address clustering;
- Measure outcomes of the supplemental literacy intervention using, at a minimum:
 - The reading/language arts assessment used by the State to determine whether a school has made adequate yearly progress under Part A of Title I of the ESEA (This requirement is waived for high school grades in which a State assessment is not administered.);
 - A nationally normed, reliable, and valid outcome reading assessment that is closely aligned with the literacy skills targeted by the supplemental literacy intervention;
- Use rigorous statistical models to analyze the impact of the supplemental literacy intervention on student achievement, including the use of students' prior-year test scores as a covariate in the model to improve statistical precision and also including appropriate statistical techniques for taking into account the clustering of students within schools;

Scope of Work

- Include an analysis of the fidelity of implementation of the critical features of the supplemental literacy intervention based on data collected by the evaluator;
- Include measures designed to ensure that the evaluator obtains high response rates to all data collections;
- Include no fewer than 750 struggling readers per year in all of the schools and grades served by the supplemental literacy intervention, and include at least 150 struggling readers per year in each school in all grades served by the intervention; and
- Be designed to detect no less than a 0.10 standard deviation impact of the supplemental literacy intervention on student achievement, which represents approximately 3 to 5 months' growth in reading achievement on standardized assessments for the typical students in sixth through twelfth grades.

Scope of Work

- The timing of the 2009 grant awards will enable the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the participating high schools, and the selected contractor to have a planning period to refine the intervention and evaluation plan. The schools will implement the supplemental literacy intervention during the 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13 school years, and the evaluator will collect and analyze data from treatment and control group students for all three years of implementation and provide required performance reporting.

Scope of Work

- During the 2009-10 year, ED will require ISBE and its independent evaluator to sign a cooperative agreement. The cooperative agreement requires the evaluators and ISBE to submit a complete project management plan with specific activities and timelines; and draft and finalize versions of the revised evaluation design reports; draft and finalize versions of three evaluation reports; and two reports on the integrity of random assignment. The cooperative agreement also requires ISBE and its evaluator to work with ED's Technical Assistance providers to strengthen and successfully implement the experimental design evaluation of its Striving Readers program through monthly technical assistance phone calls and attendance at the annual 2009 Striving Readers recipients and evaluators conference in Washington, DC (1-2 days).

Schedule of Services

- The services provided by the contractor must be performed in accordance with the schedule outlined and the ED approved project management plan.

Proposal Format

- **Part I: Narrative Description** (Cost information must not be included within the narrative description.)
- **1. Cover Page:** Must be signed by the official authorized to submit the proposal.
- Each cover page must contain the name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address of bidder; the name and telephone number of contact person; and the Federal Employer Tax Identification Number (FEIN) for the entity as well as a list of any proposed subcontractor(s) and their FEIN number(s).
- In addition, a business or organization that is a division or subsidiary of another organization must provide the following:
 - the name and address of the parent company;
 - the name of chief executive officer;
 - the parent company's website address;
 - length of time the parent company has been in business;
 - its annual sales for most recently completed fiscal year (July 1, through June 30), if applicable;
 - the number of full-time employees;
 - types and description of business; and
 - the parent company's FEIN.

Proposal Format

- **2. Proposal Abstract:** Briefly describe the overall objectives and activities of the project. page(s) **(Optional)**.
- **3. Work Plan: (limit to 50 pages, to include any attachments, addenda, charts, or other materials):** Describe the plan, including detailed timelines, for accomplishing the work specified under “Scope of the Work,” addressing each component of the contract separately. Display each year of the contract separately (i.e. no sooner than January 15, 2010 through June 30, 2010; July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011; July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012; July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013; and July 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013) and project approximate timelines for future funding cycles.

Proposal Format

- **4. Exceptions to the RFSP:** Each bidder must carefully review and understand the contractual terms and provisions set forth. The proposal must clearly identify suggested exceptions if any, to the contractual terms and provisions. **Suggested exceptions to requirements and contract modifications, while allowed, are discouraged. ISBE is under no obligation to accept exceptions or modifications suggested by the bidder (or any subcontractors), and any exceptions or modifications will affect ISBE's evaluation of the proposal and may result in rejection.** If the bidder (or any subcontractors) does wish to suggest exceptions or modifications, then all such exceptions or modifications must be submitted with the proposal. Failure to resolve exceptions to the contractual terms within three (3) business days from ISBE's first contact with the bidder regarding the exceptions may preclude ISBE's further consideration of the bidder's proposal.

Proposal Format

- **5. Contractor's Qualifications:** The proposal must include:
- a description of the contractor's organization;
- the qualifications and experience of the contractor and any staff assigned to the contract in performing work of a similar nature;
- a list of all contracts (including contract numbers) that the contractor has had with the State Board of Education during the past five years (do not include contracts with public entities such as ROEs, schools, etc.); and
- the names, addresses and telephone numbers of four business references from companies where similar services have been provided (these references should not be from Illinois State Board of Education employees or members of the Board). List the type of services performed and dates of service.

Proposal Format

- **Part II: Cost Proposal**
- **1. Cover Page:** Each cover page must contain the name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address of bidder; the name and telephone number of contact person; and the Federal Employer Tax Identification Number (FEIN) for the entity as well as a list of any proposed subcontractor(s) and their FEIN number(s).

Proposal Format

- **2. Budget:** A complete budget for the contract should be included. If personnel costs are allowed, then include the number of days for each staff member and the cost per day. Describe the expenditures for the entire contract period, displaying each deliverable separately. **Indirect costs are not allowed.** The budget format used must provide the following information. ***If at all possible, a budget for each deliverable should be included, and each fiscal year should be shown separately for multi-year contracts. Sample budget language is shown on the next slide.***

Proposal Format

- **Personnel costs:** Itemize the following for each category of personnel involved (management, professional, technical, and support):
 - estimated days of service,
 - rate per day, and
 - total cost per category and for all personnel.
- **Supplies and materials:** Itemize.
- **Travel:** Separate travel and per diem. Estimate the number of trips.
- **Production Costs:** Itemize.
- **Subcontracting information, if applicable:** If subcontracting is proposed, then the following information is required:
 - name(s) and address(es) of subcontractor(s);
 - need and purpose for subcontracting;
 - measurable and time-specific services to be provided;
 - associated costs, i.e., amounts to be paid under subcontracts;
 - Federal Employer Tax Identification Number for each subcontractor.
- **Other Costs:** Specify.
- **Total Costs.**
- **Indirect costs are not allowed.**

Proposal Format

Part III: Certification and Assurances (Attachments): Each bidder is required to submit the following forms. These must be signed by the official authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the bidder to its contents, as applicable.

- Standard Certifications (Attachment 1)
- Disclosure of Conflict of Interest (Attachment 2)
- Department of Human Rights Public Contract Number (Attachment 3)
- Drug-Free Workplace (Attachment 4)
- Business Enterprise Program (Attachment 5)
- Disclosure of Business Operations with Government of Iran (Attachment 6)
- Vendor's Federal Taxpayer Identification Number, Legal Status Disclosure Certification and Contract Addendum (Attachment 7)
- Certification Regarding Debarment (Attachment 8)
- Certification Regarding Lobbying (Attachment 9)
- State Board of Elections Official Certificate (if required, see item #3 of the Standard Certifications)

Part IV: CDs

Part V: Redacted Version (including Narrative Description and Cost Proposal)

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

- Each narrative description of all proposals received will be evaluated and ranked independently of each cost proposal of all proposals received. The Illinois State Board of Education may require offerors to give oral presentations or demonstrations in support of their proposals or to exhibit or otherwise demonstrate the information contained therein. Additional clarification may be requested from bidders as needed during the proposal review process.
- The review criteria for each activity are listed as follows. Total possible points for the Narrative Description will be 1,000.

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

- **Part I. Criteria for Narrative Description – 1,000 points**
- The degree to which the proposal provides convincing evidence that the bidder has the ability, capacity, experience, knowledge and skills to complete the evaluation and requirements of the cooperative agreement.
- *Soundness of the Technical Proposal* (400 points)
- Demonstrated understanding of the purpose and context of the study, the major issues and study objectives, and how they relate to each task.
- Quality of the activities proposed to accomplish each task, including the clarity, feasibility, creativity and soundness of plans for carrying out each task, the identification of any design improvement, anticipated problems, and recommended solutions.

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

- *Technical Qualifications of Proposed Staff* (400 points)
- The following qualifications may be met by a team comprised of a Project Director, Co-Project Director, and/or Principal Investigator.
- Experience and skill in managing complex program evaluations which involve problematic issues of design and implementation of random assignment methodology preferably in schools; training and experience in educational research including assessment of the implementation of literacy and/or reading programs; adequacy of time commitment; evidence of successful work conducting previous studies of a similar nature; knowledge of literacy instruction for adolescent and similar issues.
- Project staff experience, technical training and other qualifications are appropriate for the task assignments; experience in survey development and administration, records collection, analysis of student assessment data, selecting sites for a random assignment evaluations and/or conducting random assignment evaluation; substantive knowledge of adolescent literacy issues and literature; and time commitments of key staff.

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

- Management of Tasks and Study Procedures (50 points)
- Procedures for performing tasks to meet RFSP requirements in an efficient manner; procedures for controlling work performance, coordinating work of sub-contractors and ensuring work quality and timeliness.

- Related Evaluation Experience (150 points)
- Evidence of prior successful experience in conducting large scale and complex educational evaluations, particularly those using random assignment.

- Part II: Criteria for Cost Proposal

- Cost will be the deciding factor between otherwise substantially similar proposals.

Due Dates for Project Evaluation Reports for 2009 Cohort of Striving Readers Grantees

- Evaluation Design Report: Draft, 30 days after award, Final, March 1, 2010
- Reports on Integrity of Random Assignment: September 30 and October 29, 2010, September 30 and October 29, 2011 and September 30, and October 29, 2012.
- Report on Year 1 implementation: Draft, March 1, 2012, Final, June 1, 2012.
- Report on Year 2 implementation: Draft, March 1, 2013, Final, June 1, 2013.
- Report on Year 3 implementation: Draft, October 20, 2013, Final, December 20, 2013.

Participating Illinois High Schools Striving Readers Project

- **Danville High School, Danville, IL**
- **Kankakee High School, Kankakee, IL**
- **Macarthur High School, Decatur, IL**
- **Eisenhower High School, Decatur, IL**
- **Lanphier High School, Springfield, IL**
- **Springfield Southeast High School,
Springfield IL**

Contact Person

- For more information on this RFSP, contact Tammy Stone, Fiscal and Procurement Division, at 217-785-8777 (voice) or 217-782-5727 (FAX) or **tstone@isbe.net** (e-mail). All questions regarding the background and scope should be put in writing. Questions will be accepted up to five (5) business days prior to the due date of the proposal.