Educators for the 21st Century 2016-17 Professional Development Grant Program
Technical Assistance Q&A Document
Dated 3-30-15
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Introduction

This Q&A document is intended to provide potential applicants to Request for Proposals 17-RFP077 with technical assistance. The Q&A document is organized into sections corresponding to major features of the RFP. It includes questions deemed by the RFP Coordinator to be of interest to multiple bidders.

A. Eligible Partnerships

Grants are awarded to eligible partnerships, consisting of at least the 3 required partners described at the bottom of page 6 and top of page 7 of the request for proposals (RFP), plus other optional partners if a partnership wishes. Each eligible partnership must include:

1. a private or public institution of higher education (IHE) and its division that prepares teachers and/or principals (the IHE and its division that prepares teachers and/or principals count as a single partner for purposes of meeting requirement 1);
2. a private or public IHE's school of arts and sciences that offers one or more academic majors in disciplines or content areas corresponding to the academic subjects in which the teachers served by the project teach; and
3. at least one high-need local educational agency.

Related Q&A:

A-1 Can a school district not identified in RFP Appendix F count as a high-need LEA?
No. Only those in Appendix F count.

A-2 If a school district from appendix F (or a high-need LEA tribal or charter school) is a partner, may other school districts not identified in Appendix F participate?
Yes, as long as a high-need LEA in a target region is participating as a required partner, other school districts and schools in that target region may participate too as optional partners.

A-3 Are there advantages to including more than one high-need LEA in an ESD region? *Yes, because if you include two, then your partnership remains legal even if one drops out. Also, your participants get the advantage of additional collaboration across districts.*

A-4 Does the first required partner have to prepare both teachers and principals?
No, it has to prepare either teachers or principals or both.

A-5 Can the same university provide required partners 1 and 2?
Yes, but the partners may also come from two different universities if the project wishes.

A-6 Why is there a tenured/tenure track faculty requirement?
The tenured/tenure track and significant instructional role requirements are intended to increase the likelihood that the project will impact not only the K-12 participants but also postsecondary programs offered by the higher education partners.

A-7 Do postsecondary faculty have to be the main instructors?
They don't necessarily have to be the "main" instructors, but they do need to have significant instructional roles. Please see the response to question A-6 above.

A-8 Can a math education professor who teaches math classes satisfy the "school of arts and sciences" requirement? *The analysis is done at the departmental level rather than the individual level. In other words, the partners are departments rather than individuals. To answer the question, we need to determine whether the math education professor truly represents the math department. If the math education teacher merely teaches a couple of math courses but does not have a faculty appointment within the math department, then the requirement would probably not be satisfied. However, if the math education teacher has a faculty appointment in the mathematics department, and it is ok with the math department for that faculty person to represent it in the partnership, then the arrangement would probably work.*

B. Collaboration

B-1 The RFP requires projects focused on Since Time Immemorial to work in collaboration with one or more of Washington's federally recognized tribes. Does this include tribes, such as Nez Perce, outside of Washington State that have agreements in place affirming government-to-government relationships with Washington State?
Yes.

B-2 Can you explain what "community-based organizations" means?
There is a definition of community based in the glossary on page 11 of the RFP: Community-Based Organization – a public or private nonprofit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that: (A) is representative of a community or significant segments of a community; and (B) provides educational or related services to individuals in the community.

C. Participants

The list of participants eligible to receive professional development under the program is fairly short: in-service K-12 teachers, highly qualified, principals, and assistant principals. Generally, professional development is for practicing educators, not pre-service educators. However, there is one exception: a pre-service teacher who is also a highly qualified paraprofessional may be a participant.

Related Q&A:

C-1 Clearly Leadership is a key component of each track. Can you add more about leadership and what do you see as the role of the central office? *All three of the tracks have a component focused on instructional leadership. We do not have a specific definition of that term, so it is open to reasonable interpretation by projects. It includes things like providing direction, coordination, and resources; planning (especially data-based planning), coaching, prioritizing, guiding, providing feedback and support to teachers, etc. The role of the central office depends on the district being served. In some districts, superintendents are also principals, so the grant can pay for their professional development. However, superintendents who are not also principals are welcome to participate on a space-available, no-additional-cost-to-the grant basis.*

C-2 Is the inclusion of the IHE teacher/principal preparation program partner intended to include teachers-in-training in the professional development?
Generally not. The professional development is for in-service teachers, with one exception. The exception is pre-service teachers who are also highly qualified paraprofessionals. A highly qualified paraprofessional is a paraprofessional who has not less than 2 years of experience in a classroom; and post-secondary education or demonstrated competence in a field or academic subject for which there is a significant shortage of qualified teachers. If your project is serving paraprofessionals, you need to get a certification from them that they meet the definition of highly qualified paraprofessional and keep the certification on file in case you are audited. However, you do not need to submit the certification with your proposal.

C-3 Can postsecondary faculty be participants? *For purposes of this program, postsecondary faculty, including community college faculty, are providers rather than participants and are not included in participant numbers in RFP forms 1-3. Although faculty will learn a lot as a result of their involvement with the project, they must play instructional roles in the project; and grant funds are to pay for their time as providers rather than as learners.*

C-4 Can superintendents and assistant superintendents be participants? *Yes, if they are also principals/assistant principals, which can sometimes happen in small districts.*

C-5 Who is considered to be an "assistant principal?"
The Elementary and Secondary Education Act does not define the term, so local definitions apply. It is safe to assume that a person with the words "assistant principal" in his or her job title is an assistant principal. Projects contemplating serving administrators without those words in their job title must document that that such individuals meet the local definition of the term.

C-6 If there is space available in a professional development session and people (e.g. school or district personnel, or pre-service teachers), who are not participants but who would benefit from the training want to attend without any cost to the grant, may do so? *Yes, on a space-available basis at no additional cost to the grant, as long as they are not displacing any eligible teachers, highly qualified paraprofessionals, or principals/assistant principals.*

C-7 Can coaches be participants? *The grant cannot pay for coaches as participants, unless the coaches are also classroom teachers of core academic subjects (in addition to their coaching role) where they work. The classroom teaching must be in the core academic subject area that the grant is focusing on. Regardless of whether or not they have a classroom teaching role, the grant may pay for coaches as providers rather than participants, for work done by the coaches in an instructional role in the professional development activities provided by the project.*

D. Required Project Goals

The required project goals for each track are listed on pages 5 and 6 of the RFP. Projects must address both the teacher and principal/assistant principal goals for each professional development track they are offering.

D-1 Does a project offering track 1 have to offer professional development in all core academic subjects? *No, but it must cover at least one.*

E. Professional Development Activities and Evaluation

E-1 The second paragraph of Section 3.3.1 on page 25 of the RFP says "Each project must provide intensive and ongoing professional development activities that add up to at least 48 contact hours per track for each teacher and 12 contact hours per track for each principal/assistant principal (and highly qualified paraprofessional, if served by the project) participating in that track. Contact hours may be either face-to-face or online." What do you mean by "contact hours?" *The term "contact hours" is left open to reasonable interpretation. Contact hours may be delivered face-to-face, online, or through a mixture of delivery modes. RFP Form 1 splits the hours into face-to-face and online components. Face-to-face means "in the same room." On-line delivery includes videoconferencing, teleconferencing, Web-based, Blackboard, and other activities involving electronic media.*

E-2 Can teachers receive more than 48 hours of training? *Yes, the 48 hours described in the RFP is a floor.*

E-3 Is there an advantage to addressing multiple tracks? *There are potential learning advantages for participants if you can find synergy across tracks. Also, there could be economies of scale in terms of being able to ask for two tracks' worth of money for small marginal cost in terms of administrative structure. However, the proposal review criteria <u>are not</u> designed to favor multi-track over single-track projects.*

E-4 Is an external evaluator required?
No, the evaluation may be external or internal. For example, a university partner may have faculty with evaluation expertise on its staff. Such faculty could evaluate the project. Whether internal or external, evaluators must be selected consistent with federal, state, and organizational conflict of interest rules.

F. Budget

F-1 Please clarify the maximum amount of funding that can be requested. Is it $100k per ESD region per track or $100k per district per track? *$100k per ESD region per track. For purposes of this RFP, the ESD regions are just geographic regions on a map. Your project can serve an ESD region without including an ESD in the partnership. If a tribal school or charter school geographically lies within an ESD region, it is considered to be part of that region for funding purposes, even though it may be a stand-alone LEA.*

F-2 Under eligible costs, can we pay contractors (like coaches, facilitators, speakers) to help deliver professional development? *Generally no. However some exceptions are explicitly allowed. For example, you may contract for independent project evaluation or for cultural competency-related services provided by tribes and/or community-based educational or cultural organizations that are not partners in the partnership. No other contractual fees may be included in the budget without the AGENCY's prior written approval. If you attempt to work around this requirement by temporarily hiring people as employees rather than independent contractors, such employees must be compensated at pay rates commensurate with what employees doing comparable work in your organization are paid.*

F-3 Can only one partner charge indirect costs? *That is up to the partnership. However, if one partner charges indirect on a particular direct cost, other partners may not.*

F-4 Should we submit a budget that funds what we really want to do, or one that complies with the budget limits in the RFP?
Comply with the limits in the RFP. If we receive a proposal with budget out of compliance, we will ask for a correction to be made within 24 hours, before forwarding the proposal to proposal reviewers. Although there is a chance that we might have extra money available because few projects apply, resulting in more funding being available, that would be addressed after proposals are received.

F-5 Can tuition be charged to the grant?
Tuition is a complex issue. Item 6 on page 24 of the RFP lists as ineligible "Costs of scholarships, fellowships, and other forms of student aid at IHEs, except for tuition remission that meets the requirements of Uniform Guidance section 200.466." As with other ineligible costs, applicants may request an exception, but this must be done proactively, before the proposal is submitted. The response will depend on facts and circumstances and also on guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, which is still pending as of 3/30/16. If you are contemplating charging the grant for tuition, please contact the RFP Coordinator as soon as possible for guidance on whether you may include tuition in your proposal's budget.

F-6 Can grant funding pay for equipment, such as video equipment?
Equipment is listed as an ineligible cost in the RFP, and the federal rules governing equipment purchases are extensive and not user-friendly. As with other ineligible costs, applicants may request an exception, but this must be done proactively, before the proposal is submitted. The answer will depend on facts and circumstances. For example, inexpensive purchases, such as inexpensive software or hardware necessary for participants to participate in professional development delivered

online or for real time coaching, are easier to justify than expensive items. The availability of non-purchase alternatives, such as limited duration software licenses or subscriptions, or equipment rentals will be a factor too because it is more difficult to justify a purchase if non-purchase alternatives are available. Do not include equipment purchases in your budget without prior WSAC approval.

F-7 Can grant funding pay for technical support staff?
One of the federal rules that apply generally across all costs is that costs, to be allowable, must be reasonable and necessary. This rule applies to technical support staff too. If the technical support staff are necessary for the project to succeed (for example, to help record sessions for online delivery), and their pay is reasonable, then the budget may include them.

F-8 Can grant funding pay for the cost of a professional grant writer? *No. That is an example of a pre-award cost. Pre-award costs are borne by the applicant.*

F-9 Which column on the budget form do evaluation costs go in?
Evaluation costs are considered to be "used" by the fiscal agent partner for purposes of the 50 percent rule and should be included in the corresponding column on the budget form.

G. Proposal Format

G-1 Is it ok to include tables and figures in the proposal narrative?
Yes, as long as they obey the formatting requirements, including 1" margins and 12 point Calibri font.

H. RFP Process

H-1 Will the WSAC conduct a risk assessment prior to awarding a contract to an Apparently Successful Bidder? *Yes. This is a federal requirement, and Apparently Successful Bidders must comply with risk assessment information requests.*