

Transcript

CSDE Technology Grant RFP Bidder's Teleconference

Friday, May 29th

1:00 p.m.

Welcome—Thanks for calling in.

Today we will start with a few overall comments, and then we will open this up for questions.

If we do not know the answer to a question today, that is OK. We will write down your question, find out the answer, and produce the information in an FAQ.

The way the grant was structured the first time through would have resulted in too few districts getting money, leaving the vast majority of applicants with nothing.

To remedy that, the first major difference between the way this RFP is written and the last round is that there are now clearly defined limits on how much money can be awarded to each district based on how much money there is to grant and the amount of likely interest in applying for funds.

Minimum. The minimum amount that should be requested is \$10,000.00. If you do not want at least that much money, than please do not bother applying. We will only consider requests that are for at least \$10,000.00. If your district's name appears on the list in Appendix C, then you ARE allowed to apply, but if your maximum request falls below \$10,000.00 when calculated by the simple formula of \$22.00 per child, then please ask for exactly \$10,000.00

Maximum. We are taking the guesswork out of the maximum allocation for which you are allowed to apply. Simply multiply the number of students that you have by \$22. That is your ceiling. Your request can be for less than this total as long as it is for at least \$10,000. Please do not ask for more than this amount as applications that exceed this maximum will not be awarded funds. The population of your district, for purposes of this grant is captured in Table C which is based on the official October 2014 PSIS. Use these numbers and no others when calculating your maximum award.

Because of these new limits, this grant is no longer a matching grant. Originally we asked districts to partially fund projects using the 80-20 scale. This is no longer a requirement. Obviously districts are free to find additional funding for projects elsewhere, but it is no longer a requirement of this grant that you identify additional funding.

Appendix B of this grant provides you with an important aid to successfully applying for grant. It includes all the necessary pieces of the grant application. These are required pieces of any successful application. Failure to include any one of these pieces will result in rejection of the entire application. In brief, these pieces are:

- a. A limit of one grant per LEA.
- b. A deadline. 3:00 p.m. on July 17, 2015. This includes both electronic copy AND three hard copies of the application received.
- c. A proposal cover page.

- d. A rationale that links spending to the CCS and the associated statewide assessments
- e. A proposal narrative not to exceed five pages that includes:
 - i. Program need and program plan
 - ii. Teaching and Learning component
 - iii. Project timeline.
 - iv. Project evaluation plan.
- f. Completed ED 114 (Note, do not worry about the funding numbers at the top of this form.)
- g. Budget Narrative with two-year sustainability plan (No more than a total of three pages including the ED 114)
- h. Stay within the minimum and maximum award amounts as described.
- i. Be sure to include a statement of assurances.

You no longer need to seek official board approval for requesting these funds as this is no longer a matching-fund grant.

The grant applications will be reviewed in house by Department staff. Grants that are missing any required piece of the application will be rejected. Please follow all rules regarding font size and margin size.

Once the awards have been determined, then it is up to the Bond Commission to approve those decisions. Grants awards are not final until an award letter has been received by the applying district.

If you wish, you may fill in the application electronically by using the form provided on the CSDE Web site.

The actual technology you request will be based on local needs, however, whatever devices you select need to be justified in terms of both supporting the CCS instructionally as well as supporting the district's ability to administer the new computerized statewide tests.

That about wraps it up for the main points. We will now open the floor for question.

First Question.

Aaron Herold of New Fairfield:

Q: I have a question about the ED 114. There are several budget codes on there, you know 340, 530, 650, and 734. But the grant proposal specifies that it is only supposed to be used for hardware; so the other codes would not be used?

A: The two points of the RFP include both devices and infrastructure, to the extent that those budget codes would be within those two areas of needs, that's the only time that you would use them. There are descriptions of the budget cods on page 9 of the RFP that would need to match the purposes of the grant.

Second Question:

Jack Zamery of Monroe:

Q: Are the rubrics going to be updated at all in particular regarding the sustainability section. Right now it speaks to the completeness of the response, but it doesn't give any specificity regarding the quality of the response. Specifically if the sustainability is about professional development, financial sustainability or the device sustainability?

A: Are you referring to the rubric or the checklist? The rubric in the original RFP or the new checklist?

Q: The original rubric.

A: I want to be very clear that what was considered in the original RFP no longer pertains. The scoring will be based exclusively on the checklist in Appendix B of the RFP. Do not be distracted by any expressed needs in the previous rubric. The checklist will be used for this new version. The revised document is now the only document with any pertinence. Nobody should be looking at the initial document, that won't have any bearing on the outcomes. Everything is exclusively in the revised document.

Third Question:

Jennifer Byars of Ledyard:

Q. I have a question about the timeline. We are looking at a fairly significant project, and we will be using district monies for most of that, but the grant might be one portion of it. Is there an issue if the timeline actually starts before either the grant award date or even the submission date? Because, given summer vacation, some of our work would have to be done almost immediately as soon as school lets out.

A: We provided a timeline in the RFP. The bond commission will meet on August 28th. The awards will be done in September. One thing that is important about bond funds is that they cannot be used for reimbursement of any projects. It is really a prospective type of funding. To the extent that this funding is going to be used for projects in the future, that would be the most important thing. If you were to, for example, buy 20 Chromebooks today, the use of this money should not be to *reimburse* for those 20 Chromebooks. It should be used instead for the portion of the project that occurs after the grant payments have been made which will hopefully occur in September.

Fourth Question:

Jennifer Law of Canaan:

Q: I have a question about the fund allocation limits. I am the principal of the Kellog School in the town of Canaan. We are on Appendix C. You see that our enrollment there is 78. So, what we are asking for does meet the minimum requirement of ten thousand dollars. But it does not meet the maximum of \$22.00 per student. For us that's \$1716.00. Does that mean we are not eligible at all to participate?

A: No. You can go ahead and ask for \$10,000.00.

Fifth Question:

Doug Casey of CREC:

Q: Going over to Appendix B on page 14, the Checklist, the fourth item down links spending to Common Core and associated statewide assessments. Is this in a similar spirit to the first version of the proposal where the reason for investing in infrastructure is to support the rollout of Common Core? In other words, what I am trying to get at more directly is that you are not asking us to go down to the level of looking at, say, for example, pilot scores from last year or anything like that? I mean it's not specific data; it's more the rollout of the Common Core?

A: First, the spirit of the non-fiscal side of the request has not changed too much. Much like the first go round where we wanted you to create a link between the hardware and the infrastructure and show how it is going to help with the implementation of the assessments and the Common Core; that has not changed. Yes, that is really all we asking you to do. We are not asking you to somehow link this to any field testing or something like that. We are not asking you to put that out there at all. You *might* reference data in your need area to make the argument that you do need these devices. While this RFP is a fresh start, the guts of what we are asking are almost identical. To the extent that you can carry these ideas over from the earlier attempt, that is fine. We are just asking you now to stay within the funding allocations that we've outlined.

Sixth Question:

Chris Boulanger—grant writer:

Q: My question is regarding the funding the purchase of new devices; would that also include Chrome carts for storage and charging?

A: It is not so much what device you buy. It's justifying it in terms of the purpose of the grant.

Seventh Question:

Steven Manly of ACES:

Q: I am wondering whether there is any correlation between this morning's news about 11th graders that we need to worry about when submitting this grant. I am specifically looking at the High School for one of my proposals and I want to make sure that is still a valid choice.

A: The impact of any announcement (the legislature is considering a new law related to the assessment of 11th graders) has no connection to this RFP. Whatever may happen at the legislature is a separate issue.

Eighth Question:

Barbara Gilbert of Colchester:

Q: It has been O.K. to request new devices that would justify the instruction of Common Core, so, in other word, devices for teachers.

A: If you are going to try to justify a particular device, do not ignore the fact that the purpose of the grant is not only for CCS instruction, that is part of it, but also you need to justify how this will help with the administration of the tests.

Q: So then you think we shouldn't request things only for teachers, but we should stick to devices for students primarily?

A: You can do both. As long as you can make the argument that the instruction being supported is central to student success on the assessment, then the funding allocation for teacher devices will be just fine.

Ninth Question:

Paula Haldeman of Groton:

Q: Our question is regarding the budget narrative. You indicate that selected grantees are required to participate in any state activities in order to identify promising practices and models for replication. Can you elaborate on that please?

A: In the event that we, at the state, read a grant proposal that is so great that we say "Wow, this is the cat's pajamas. We have got to let everybody know about what is going on in Xanadu district!" Then we reserve the right to publicize that good work for you. The RFP contains standard language that allows us to do those kinds of things that will trumpet good practices.

Q: So, it's nothing specific. It's just something in terms of allowing you to identify a fantastic program? O.K. Thank you very much.

A: Sure.

(Note: This is the point where Abe declared that the audio would be shared)

Tenth Question:

Cheryl Poltrack of Stamford:

Q: Our question is if the total grant request that you receive goes over the amount of money that you have budgeted, how would you select the districts?

A: Are you talking in the grand scheme, or at the district level.

Q: In the grand scheme. If every single district were to apply, there probably wouldn't be enough money, so what would be the determining factors. Is there a rubric other than the rubric that is in the application? Pointwise, how would you select? Or would you reduce everyone's amount?

A: There is a phrase in the grant that tells what would happen in the unlikely event that we run out of money. It is quite unlikely that the money will run out in this particular grant. But, if it does happen, there is a line in there that says that in that event we will reduce everyone's ask proportionally; except there is a caveat in there that says that we won't reduce below the ten thousand dollar minimum.

Q: Fantastic. Great. I missed that. Thank you.

Eleventh Question:

Michelle Leask of Bozrah:

Q: If I put in something for infrastructure wiring; there is equipment there, and there is labor there. So that kind of labor is allowable?

A: Yes. This is similar to questions that came around in the first grant. If contractor labor is required for successful installation of infrastructure, then this is O. K. Keep in mind that this is bond funding and the intent of it is for capital, but in this case, the argument can be made that a contractor would need to be hired to get that installed, so that argument is acceptable.

Q: But, in some cases, the contractors might quote so much per drop. And if it's that way, they may not pull it out separately. And in that case, how would it be reported?

A: Are you talking about in the budget?

Q: Yes.

A: And the contractor is quoting you per drop a dollar amount?

Q: Yes.

A: And this is all related, within that bundle, to the hardware as well?

Q: Yes.

A: Even if it is kind of imbedded, both the hardware itself, and the labor required to get it installed, this all falls within the purviews of the grant.

Q: OK. But if I had one price like that it would go under the hardware items?

A: Yes. Are you talking about disentangling this between the four budget allocations?

Q: Yes. Exactly.

A: I would put that under the hardware. Yes.

Q: And then, you mentioned this a little bit before, but somebody asked about carts, in other words, carts to store stuff as opposed to devices. I wasn't sure if you said yes they could be ordered, or they couldn't?

A: Once again, whatever device you want to use you just have to justify in terms of the central idea of the grant which is that this device is somehow going to help you with A) Getting the CCS content across to students and B) Helping with the assessment.

Q: But, the point is that this is related to a mobile device for example, but obviously the cart itself is not an electronic device. But you are saying it doesn't matter. If I buy a mobile device that comes with some kind of a warranty and it is sold as one piece, then that's acceptable.

A: Yes. It's based on local needs. If that is what you need in order to do this, then that is acceptable.

Q: O.K. Thank you.

If you do have further questions, email Abe or Steve. Thank you again for joining today.

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