

RFP # 853 – Addendum

This document represents an addendum to RFP #853 regarding the *Sheff v. O’Neill* Comprehensive study. This document includes all questions from prospective proposers regarding this RFP along with responses from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).

Question:

Approximately by what date does the state anticipate awarding the contract, and by what date does the state have as a target for project completion? Does the state have a hard date in mind by when work must be completed on the contract?

SDE Response:

The anticipated contract term is April 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. The CSDE will award the contract as soon as practicable following the proposal due date of Feb. 21, 2025.

Question:

Any for profit or non-profit entity with expertise in school lottery systems will almost certainly have done substantial contract work related to lottery systems and such work will be a past and future source of revenue. Do you have advice concerning this natural source of conflict of interest among bidders with expertise in this area?

SDE Response:

Conflict of interest issues are addressed in Section IV. G. of the RFP. As noted in that section, proposers must include a disclosure statement concerning any business relationships within the last 3 three years that pose a conflict of interest as defined by Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 1-85. As further provided in RFP Section IV. G., the existence of a conflict of interest “is not, in and of itself, evidence of wrongdoing” but may become a legal issue “if a proposer tries to influence, or succeeds in influencing, the outcome of an official decision for their personal or corporate benefit.” It is not a conflict of interest simply to have done past, present, or future work for the CSDE in school choice or in other areas.

Question:

Are there any specific Connecticut state or local officials or employees (current or retired) including local education agencies, or past or current participants in the on-going *Sheff* legal case, who are not eligible to act as consultants on this project? If so, can you please provide guidance for compliance with this requirement.

SDE Response:

As noted above, as articulated in RFP Section IV. G, proposers must include a disclosure statement regarding conflicts of interest as defined in C.G.S. Section 1-85. Should proposer(s) represent that conflict(s) of interest are present, the Department of Education will consult with the Office of State Ethics to determine appropriate action regarding issuance of the contract award. In addition, the Department believes an entity that is party to the *Sheff v. O’Neill*

litigation would be unable to exercise independent judgment in carrying out the duties of this contract and thus would be ineligible for selection.

Question:

What is the originating source of funds (e.g., state/legislative funding, federal flow through)?

SDE Response:

The funding source is State funding from the *Sheff* settlement account.

Question:

Will this be a fixed price agreement, or is the inclusion of 'proposed costs must be fixed' in reference to rebudgeting at post-award?

SDE Response:

This is a fixed price agreement with a total of \$1 million in funding available.

Question:

Could you please list the qualitative and quantitative data sources that would be readily available to the selected organization? Are there any restricted use data that could be made available to the selected organization? If yes, could you please discuss any data sharing requirements?

SDE Response:

The selected organization will have a host of data, both qualitative and quantitative, available to it. The CSDE's EdSight database – an interactive portal containing data regarding Connecticut's public districts, schools and programs – is publicly available on the CSDE's website and contains extensive data regarding *Sheff* magnet schools and other programs that serve the *Sheff* initiative. Data regarding magnet schools are disaggregated by district of residency of enrolled students. In addition, the CSDE will make available data concerning magnet school enrollment and composition, as well as previous reports that have been conducted in recent years, many of which were based in part on qualitative data including surveys and focus groups.

To the extent the State determines it is necessary, the State may make available to the selected organization data that is personally identifiable student information that is protected under federal and state privacy laws and policies, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The State would share such information pursuant to an agreement that authorizes the disclosure of such information under FERPA in connection with the study being conducted.

Question:

Are you able to share the results of the Met Demand assessment for Hartford-resident minority students?

SDE Response:

Below is the Demand assessment for 2024-25, which is based on the most recent data available.

Hartford Demand Student Report			
Year: 2024-25 School Year			
Grade	Number of Demand Applicants Receiving an Offer	Total Demand Applicant	% Demand Met
PK3	492	528	93%
PK4	255	346	74%
KG	388	420	92%
06	479	587	82%
09	806	877	92%
<i>Entry Grades Subtotal</i>	<i>2,420</i>	<i>2,758</i>	<i>88%</i>
01	136	199	68%
02	104	160	65%
03	82	187	44%
04	100	184	54%
05	108	198	55%
07	113	229	49%
08	103	160	64%
10	130	195	67%
11	68	103	66%
12	35	69	51%
<i>Non-Entry Grades Subtotal</i>	<i>979</i>	<i>1,684</i>	<i>58%</i>
Grand Total	3,399	4,442	77%
<i>*Fewer PK4 seats were offered than in prior years due to the new age cut-off for kindergarten.</i>			

Question:

In the RFP, the *Sheff* system is defined as the framework currently in place to meet the goals of the stipulations resulting from the *Sheff* litigation. Is there a document that outlines the key components of the *Sheff* system or the *framework*, that's different from the Comprehensive School Choice Plan?

SDE Response:

The *Sheff* framework was developed over the course of many years, following the Connecticut Supreme Court's 1996 decision in *Sheff v. O'Neill*, in which the court directed the legislature and the executive branch to remedy the State Constitutional violations identified in that case. Since that time, the *Sheff* plaintiffs and the State have entered a series of court-ordered stipulations – known as the Phase I through Phase V agreements – in which the parties put in place the infrastructure now known as the *Sheff* system that exists today. The Phase V agreement – also known as the Comprehensive School Choice Plan (CCP) – is the most recent, and currently operative, agreement between the parties in the *Sheff* litigation. The CCP and the court-ordered permanent injunction in the *Sheff* matter are attached here.

In addition to the CCP and preceding stipulations, the *RSCO School Choice Family Reference Guide*, available at the following link, and the RSCO website chooseyourschool.org, provide an extensive overview of the educational programs available, eligibility information, placement criteria, transportation details, and other general information about the *Sheff* system as currently constituted: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/school-choice/rsco/rscofamilyguide.pdf?rev=3c5165802a4243ed8bb0f1d9f8b480e8&hash=926561CEC21EB1BC955DB87E40D7A4E8>.