



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
External Evaluator of U.S. Department of Education
Disability Innovation Fund Grant

ADDENDUM ONE

The following questions and answers are hereby incorporated into and are considered to be an integral part of Wor-Wic Community College's Request for Proposals for an external evaluator for a USDE Disability Innovation Fund grant.

	Questions	Answers
1	On page 9 of the proposal, section 3 (c) mentions that no travel costs can be included in the project. Are we correct that this refers to travel costs related to the bidding process, not the project itself for the successful bidder?	The statement about travel costs on page 9 is related to the bidding process. For those who are invited to submit price proposals, travel costs associated with performance of the external evaluation shall be listed in the price proposal.
2	Starting on page 11, the RFP provides proposal organizational guidance and lists out the following sections: a) Title page, b) Firm Qualifications, c) Staff Qualifications, d) Project Proposal, e) References, f) Financial Stability, g) Contractor Information Form, h) Conflict of Interest Statement, i) Ethics Statement, and j) Bid/Proposal Affidavit. However, starting on page 12, you list a new order: a) Title page, b) Firm Qualifications, c) Staff Qualifications, d) Financial Stability, e) Project Proposal, f) References, g) Conflict of Interest statement, h) Ethics Statement, and j) Bid/Proposal Affidavit Form. Which order is correct? And if it is the second order, where does the Contractor Information Form fit?	The order starting on page 11 is correct. Pages 12-13 provide additional explanation of the required sections, but does not reflect the order of submission. The Contractor Information Form is required and is attached to this Addendum One.
3	What are the expected page limits for the technical proposal? We want to ensure we are as responsive as possible to Appendix A within the appropriate limits.	There is no page limit for the technical proposal. The proposal should be clear and concise, yet thorough enough to demonstrate the qualifications and experience of the company and staff that would be assigned to this project.

4	Are there any formatting requirements for the proposal such as page limits, paragraph spacing, font, font size, page margins, etc.?	There are no formatting requirements.
5	On page 10, the following are listed as being worth 70% of the proposal's score. Are the criteria weighed equally? If not, how will they be weighed? Additionally, what is meant by "effectiveness of outcome" listed in these criteria?	Of the 70% weight of qualifications and experience, the scoring weight will be allocated as follows: 10 points- demonstrated understanding of the scope of work; 20 points- firm's qualifications; 15 points- staff qualifications; 20 points- example evaluation plan; 5 points- feedback from references. Please disregard the effectiveness of outcomes listed in the criteria as that does not apply to this RFP and project.
6	Under organization of proposal on page 12, "g" is the contractor information form. Where do we get a copy of that form?	The Contractor Information Form is attached to this Addendum One.
7	I find mention of the Contractor Information Form. This form doesn't seem to be included in the RFP materials. Is this a required document?	The Contractor Information Form is attached to this Addendum One. It is a required document.
8	Where does the "project proposal form" mentioned on page 12 get included in proposals?	The Project Proposal Form is item d. on page 11. The form is located on page 15. The example evaluation plan mentioned under F on page 12 must be included as part of the Firm's Qualifications section.
9	Under organization of proposal on page 11, "d" is "project proposal." The sections after this describe the other sections of the proposal, but there isn't further detail about what should be included in the project proposal. Is it correct that this should be our proposed evaluation plan building off the one included in Attachment A?	The Project Proposal Form is item d. on page 11. The form is located on page 15. The example evaluation plan mentioned under F. on page 12 should be included as part of the Firm's Qualifications section.
10	Can you please clarify what information would be adequate to confirm financial stability, particularly for stable, long established small businesses that would not have lines of credit, audited financial statements, or D&B ratings because of the size of the business?	Balance Sheets, Profit and Loss statements, and tax returns for the past three years are acceptable documents to demonstrate financial stability.

11	Could you please share a list of companies that have expressed interest in the project and their primary contact information to facilitate partnerships?	This RFP was publicly posted on eMaryland Marketplace Advantage, the college's website and Bid Locker. Companies are not required to express interest prior to submitting a proposal. This is a list of companies who submitted questions in response to the RFP, however there may be others who will submit a proposal. Head Start Solutions, TechnoMetrica Market Intelligence, Chrysalis Collaborations, WestEd, and Public Health Management Corp.
12	Will there be a preference for evaluators who have worked with Wor-Wic Community College and any of the project's partners previously?	No.
13	What are the expected contract start and end dates for evaluation of this project?	Assuming that the selected external evaluator is approved by Wor-Wic's Board of Trustees during their February 14, 2025 meeting, the expected start date will be no later than February 24, 2025. We expect the contract end date no later than June 30, 2029.
14	I did not see any W/MBE goals for this project, although the forms request an MDOT certification number. Please clarify if you have M/WBE goals for this project and if they are part of the evaluation criteria for the project? If so, how many points are awarded for M/WBE participation or firm ownership?	Participation by W/MBE is encouraged but not required. Prime contractors are encouraged to work with W/MBE firms. Proposals will be evaluated and scored based upon the qualifications and experience of the prime contractor and any subcontractors as outlined on page 10 of the RFP. Separate points are not awarded for W/MBE participation or firm ownership.
15	In attachment A, you propose an Environmental Survey to be done in Fall 2024. Can you provide clarity on a timeframe for this deliverable as we are approaching the end of the year and contractor award won't occur until January?	The Environmental Survey is in conjunction with work begun by the college's ADA Taskforce in Spring 2024 and taken over by its Committee on Disability and Accessibility (CDA) in Fall 2024. While the CDA has issued its preliminary survey overview, it will produce a full survey summary in Spring 2025.

16	Has the Phase 1 Environmental Survey task already been completed? If not, what stage of progress is it in? Are there ways Wor-Wic and its partners are envisioning the external evaluator supporting this phase?	The current project director has spoken with local agencies, but the environmental scan has not yet been fully completed due to staffing changes. The scan likely will not be completed until spring 2025 after a full-time project director is hired and the newly founded Committee on Disability and Accessibility (CDA) completes its ongoing survey of the state of Accessibility Across the Campus. The external evaluator is expected to use their relevant qualifications and past experiences to evaluate the comprehensiveness of Wor-Wic's environmental survey process in identifying strengths and opportunities/gaps in prevention and intervention efforts for youth with disabilities and justice-impacted youth. These opportunities/gaps are important and will ultimately drive the development of programming, services, and training under the DIF project.
17	According to the RFP, Phase 1 (environmental scan) was scheduled for fall 2024. Given that evaluation work won't be starting early 2025, how do you see this affecting the timing of the remaining phases of work?	The current project director has spoken with local agencies, but the environmental scan has not yet been fully completed due to staffing changes. The scan likely will not be completed until spring 2025 after a full-time project director is hired.
18	The RFP and attachment A refer to two overlapping populations, youth with disabilities and justice involved youth, both in K-12 schools and enrolled at Wor-Wic college. Please estimate the size of each of these populations that would be included in the study and if evaluation statistics would be kept on each group separately or combined?	We expect a total of approximately 434 participants served annually in Phase 4, with half of those participants "actively" participating in services. The breakdown between each strategy is dependent on student outcomes and postsecondary goals (e.g., justice-involvement rates, graduation rates, career vs. postsecondary pathway). However, we anticipate that the majority of participants will be served through the early intervention strategy in the K-12 school setting. Evaluation statistics should be disaggregated to the extent possible to assess the impact of services at each stage and on different populations.

19	Once fully implemented (Phase 4), how many participants do you expect will participate in each of the strategies (i.e., early intervention, pre-release, and post-release)?	We expect a total of approximately 434 participants served annually in Phase 4, with half of those participants "actively" participating in services. The breakdown between each strategy is dependent on student outcomes (e.g., successful early intervention will reduce arrest rates). However, we anticipate that the majority of participants will be served through the early intervention strategy.
20	Should the evaluator plan to seek approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB)?	The evaluator should plan to work with Wor-Wic's IRB to seek approval of the evaluation plan and address concerns, as needed.
21	For IRB and data collection purposes, what percentage of the youth involved in the project would be below the age of consent or under guardianship as youth with disabilities? Will the evaluator need to do a separate IRB application or will this be part of the College's IRB for the project?	The age breakdown of participants is dependent on those engaging in services offered. It is anticipated that the early intervention strategy will serve primarily youth below the age of 18 years. The college's IRB will review the project and evaluation plan, and may require adjustments depending on the data proposed and methods of collection.

22	Please estimate the size and number of training cohorts for the adult staff from various institutions that would participate in the training component of the project during each phase? Please clarify if after training follow up surveys would be expected as part of the evaluation plan and the role of the College/Participating institutions in providing contact information of any longitudinal data collection?	We anticipate three primary sources of training participants: Wor-Wic staff training to better serve those individuals with disabilities who transition to postsecondary education (Year 1 training and ongoing); Law enforcement officers who benefit from IPICD training funded through the DIF grant and provided at the college's Eastern Shore Criminal Justice Academy (Year 2 training); and training for employers of youth served through the program (likely Year 2 and ongoing). Wor-Wic employs almost 250 individuals, so this is the number to be trained if a required training can be developed and coordinated through the DIF project; we anticipate 20-80 law enforcement officers to receive IPICD training, after which they will be prepared to better provide new recruit and in-service training; Number of employers trained is reliant on buy-in, but we expect employers who are currently working with local community organizations to participate. Surveys will be administered by the college to everyone trained and results will be reported. The college will have contact information for those who attend training.
23	Attachment A discusses an administrative database Nuventive used by the college which appears will be used to collect data for this project. Please clarify if the contractor would play a role in modifying the measures in this database to meet the needs of the evaluation? How would administrative data be shared with the contractor? How would the contractor work with the database administration staff to coordinate any separate data collection for the evaluation (surveys, focus group recruiting, etc.?)	Nuventive is an assessment management system which is used to store, organize, and report assessment data. Nuventive is not an analysis/analytics or survey tool. The DIF grant program will be included in the college's annual assessment cycle, which ties in with sustainability/budgeting in future years.
24	Are there expected dissemination products beyond the annual and final evaluation reports (e.g., conference presentations, journal articles)?	The College will develop a project website for dissemination of program outcomes. Materials developed will also be provided to the DIF program as model resources. Since this project is not part of research funding, we do not anticipate any journal articles or conference presentations.

25	Would Wor-Wic Community College be willing to share a copy of the proposal that was submitted?	Yes, please see attached. Note that the positions in the proposal have changed (with U.S. Department of Education approval) to the following full-time positions: Disabilities Innovation Grant Director; Career Coach; Academic and Learning Support Services Coordinator; Outreach and Transition Services Coordinator; and Technology Accessibility Coordinator, as well as a part-time Data and Compliance Specialist.
26	How is Wor-Wic Community College envisioning that formative evaluation findings will be used? Are there certain data sources that would be more or less useful to have?	Formative evaluation will be used to assess the need for modifications throughout the project, potentially including scheduling, modality, and location of project activities. Interim outcomes based on the pilot will determine services and focus for full implementation. The college envisions a variety of data sources to be used in formative evaluation, including quantitative (e.g., attendance, pilot phase student outcomes) and qualitative (stakeholder feedback). Ultimately, student outcomes in competitive integrated employment and postsecondary education enrollment/ completion will determine the project's success. The potential external evaluator should define a plan with data sources identified based on their experience with similar populations and/or prior projects.
27	Is the external evaluator expected to include participant stipends in our budget?	This would be up to the evaluator to determine based on their experience with soliciting feedback from participants.
28	Who wrote the evaluation plan included in Attachment A?	The director of grants wrote the evaluation plan to provide the reviewers with a general idea of the information the evaluation is expected to provide. The contracted external evaluator is expected to develop a final evaluation plan based on their expertise.

29	Are there any budget restrictions such as a cap on indirect costs?	As per the application instructions for this competition, subgrants and contracts may not exceed 75 percent of the funds. The DIF program uses an unrestricted indirect cost rate. Because this award is issued to the college as a cooperative agreement, the college does not have the authority to transfer funds between budget categories without prior approval from the U.S. Department of Education. Those who are invited to submit Price Proposals as part of this RFP shall indicate all costs associated with the external evaluation. Price is 30% of the total RFP score.
30	Are incentives for survey and/or focus group participants allowed? If so, are there any restrictions (e.g., amount and type)?	This question has been forwarded but we have not yet received confirmation on whether incentives are allowed or not. However, we are concerned that our limited funding may inhibit providing incentives (if allowed) to large numbers of participants.
31	Do Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset County Public Schools have official review processes to approve evaluation activities occurring in their schools?	Following initial conversations with Somerset County, the Local Educational Agencies have collaborated in such evaluation activities for other projects. A MOU will be created between Wor-Wic and County Student Services offices, naming the evaluators assessing the project on Wor-Wic's behalf.
32	Does the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services have official review processes to approve evaluation activities occurring in their facilities?	This question has been forwarded, but we have not yet received an answer.
33	What languages, other than English, might participants speak? Should evaluation materials (e.g., surveys) be made available in languages other than English?	The top three languages in our area high schools are English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. However, we do not have breakdowns of languages of potential participants at this time. We do know we may need to prepare materials in other languages for families of participants especially with regard to surveys. However, we do not have numbers of potential "other languages" as of yet.

END OF ADDENDUM ONE