

Request for Information

For

STATE-APPROVED HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY ASSESSMENTS

Release Date: August 27, 2013

Deadline for Written Submission: September 3, 2013 @ 5:00 PM PDT

Required Presentation to Review Committee: September 9, 2013

Nevada Department of Education Board Room

700 E. 5th St, Carson City, NV 89701

For additional information, please contact:

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I. Overview

A. Purpose of Request for Information

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to solicit responses for state approval for High School Equivalency (HSE) assessments, to be aligned to the Common Core State Standards, for the state of Nevada.

The vendor must demonstrate how it will provide a HSE assessment, paper- and/or computer-based, for use in a variety of testing centers throughout the state. Nevada currently has twenty official paper-based HSE testing centers, and a variety of addenda sites. These sites test approximately 7,000 individuals each year.

A review committee, appointed by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), will use objective criteria review such responses and to determine which assessments will be presented to the Nevada State Board of Education (NVSBOE) for approval as a pathway to a Nevada Certificate of High School Equivalency. With the consent of the NVSBOE, the NDE will prepare a list of *Approved High School Equivalency Assessments and Vendors*. The assessment would be approved for use in test centers that contract with one of the approved vendors. The list will be maintained by the NDE.

No funding is directly or indirectly associated with this RFI. Nevada will not reimburse vendors for any costs associated with their response to this RFI. This solicitation will not result in a contract with the NDE.

The information must be received by the NDE on or before 5:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time (PDT) September 3, 2013 to be considered for state approval. Electronic submissions are required.

B. Eligible Applicants

This RFI solicits responses from entities seeking to have a HSE assessment placed on the State's list of *Approved High School Equivalency Assessments and Vendors*. Nevada test centers may only contract with a HSE assessment provider on the approved list.

Successful vendors must demonstrate experience in developing and administering large scale assessments by paper and/or computer; training for test administration staff; and, printing and shipping a high volume of tests and test-related materials in a secure and timely manner.

Successful vendors must have a minimum of three (3) years of experience providing services for a large-scale (e.g. statewide or national) high-stakes testing program. A "high-stakes testing program" includes assessments used for federal and state educational accountability purposes, student graduation requirements, and college qualification or entrance exams.

Approved HSE assessment vendors will contract with test centers and will be responsible for meeting the terms of its agreement with the test center.

C. Reservations of Rights

The NDE reserves the right to: (1) reject any submissions not received in the format or within the specified guidelines; (2) withdraw the RFI at any time, at the agency's sole discretion; (3) require additional information as needed; (4) change any of the scheduled dates; (5) request more information on vendor cost estimates.

II. Submitting the Response

A. RFI Package

1. Responses must be signed by the chief executive officer or head of the submitting entity.
2. The response must be submitted in the order shown in Part III (Required Sections).
3. Font size should be no less than 12 point.
4. The total number of pages in the response is limited to 25 pages, single-spaced, (including appendices and/or other attachments).
5. Responses require an authorized signature and therefore must be submitted via mail or in person. Document originals must be signed in blue or black ink.
6. Failure to follow the format and directions provided may result in the response not being accepted by the review committee.

B. Submission Instructions

Email RFI response to: Michael J. Raponi, Director
Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education
mraponi@doe.nv.gov

C. Deadline

The response must be received on or before 5:00 p.m. PDT **September 3, 2013**.

D. Information

For additional information or technical assistance, contact Brad Deeds at the Nevada Department of Education at (775) 687-7289 or bdeeds@doe.nv.gov.

III. Required Sections

A. Vendor Contact Information

The vendor must provide contact information including company name, address, telephone, fax, email address, contact person (name and title within organization), website, and include required signature.

B. Cost Summary

The response shall outline the cost of administering paper-based and/or computer-based versions of the HSE assessment. This section must address the issue of retakes, scoring, scoring costs (if applicable), costs associated with shipping answer sheets, and reporting of the scores to the state. If the vendor is not going to provide scoring services, the response shall address possible alternatives for scoring, including any previous vendor agreements established.

C. Timetable and Assurances

HSE assessments must be ready for implementation in Nevada on January 1, 2014. Vendors must provide assurances that this deadline can and will be met. Vendors must provide detailed timetables outlining necessary deadlines for implementation, including deadlines for any necessary materials to be ordered, etc. for centers to be ready to be test on January 1, 2014.

D. Assessment Description and Development

The vendor must demonstrate how it will provide a paper-based and/or computer-based assessment. The vendor shall describe the manner in which test items will be developed and selected for the assessment, describe the norming process, and give information on the number of test forms available for test candidates to take in a calendar year. Any available foreign language options should be detailed in this section. The vendor shall provide documentation on how the assessment is research-based or evidence-supported to measure high school equivalency.

E. Alignment to the Common Core State Standards

The vendor shall provide detailed information on how the HSE assessment will be aligned to the Common Core State Standards. This information should include an explanation of content areas that will be covered in the test.

F. Accommodations

The assessment must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirement that any private or public entity that offers examinations relating to certification or credentialing for secondary or postsecondary education shall offer such examinations in a place and manner accessible to persons with disabilities or offer alternative arrangements for such individuals as special accommodations. The vendor shall describe how test accommodations for individuals with disabilities will be provided for both the paper-based and computer-based versions of the assessment, including a description of the process for approving accommodation requests.

G. Cut Scores

The vendor shall describe the process for establishing test cut scores, provide a recommendation for a minimum passing score, and an explanation of how dual cut scores would be developed to indicate high school equivalency and college/career readiness.

H. Policies and Procedures

The vendor shall describe the requirements for assessment administration; describe the qualifications, responsibilities and training required for testing staff; describe the procedures for opening and operating a testing center; and, describe the test-taker registration process.

I. Data Exchange and Ownership

The State of Nevada shall maintain ownership of its test-taker data and related archives. The vendor shall describe any demographic information that is collected by the assessment. The vendor must describe the ability of Nevada to own and control the data collected, and describe any file types and other data exchange requirements.

J. Available Resources

The vendor shall describe how various supplemental resources such as practice tests, connection to the current National Reporting System, and instructional materials will be made available.

K. Required Technology

The vendor shall describe the technology that will be required to provide paper-based and/or computer-based testing at local testing centers. Vendors must specify technical requirements for testing in correctional settings.

L. Supplemental Supports

The vendor shall describe any supplemental supports that will be available to the State of Nevada, adult education programs and test centers. These could include marketing materials and marketing campaigns aimed at the general public, business community, other educational institutions, employment agencies, other governmental entities including military services, and potential test-takers within the adult education system.

M. Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The vendor shall describe any available professional development assistance to the state adult education system.

N. Organization Legal Status

The applicant shall describe the legal status of the agency (Public/Private/Non-Profit/Other).

O. Portability

The vendor shall address the issue of national acceptance of the proposed tests by postsecondary institutions, employers and the military. Any approved HSE assessment would result in a Nevada state-issued HSE Certificate, and would be available for the waiver of credits towards a Nevada Adult Standard Diploma under Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 389.694.

IV. Review Procedures

The responses will be reviewed by a committee appointed by the Nevada Superintendent of Public Instruction. The committee will ensure that all information required in this RFI is adequately addressed by the vendor.