

Submitted Questions and Answers Regarding the

RFP FOR PROVIDING AN ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN VERMONT

Issued June 30, 2020

Response to submitted questions

Questions Submitted as of 3 p.m. July 8, 2020

1. *What are expectations regarding contractor presence at Committee and Steering Committee meetings?*
 - a. *At all meetings?*
 - b. *In person? Or can participation be accomplished electronically?*

The Steering Group will decide how frequently the contractor should attend Committee and Steering Group meetings. The Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) anticipates that participation will be expected at many if not all meetings and that participation can be accomplished electronically.

2. *What will be the role of the contractor at those meetings?*
 - a. *Presenter of materials/results of analyses?*
 - b. *“Expert Witness”?*
 - c. *Facilitator?*

The Steering Group will determine the role of the contractor at Committee and Steering Group meetings and will be guided, in part, by the bid responses it receives. JFO expects that the contractor will present materials and results of analyses, act as “expert witness” on occasion, and possibly help to organize the meetings.

3. *What is the expected role of the contractor in outreach to stakeholders?*
 - a. *Observer?*
 - b. *Presenter of background information?*
 - c. *Facilitator?*

JFO expects that the contractor will be involved in some outreach to stakeholders, but the extent of this work will depend on the contractor and the Steering Group.

4. *Please elaborate on the role that NEBHE staff will play in the project.*

The study language provides that NEBHE shall provide project management support to the Committee. Specifics as to the level of their involvement remain to be determined.

5. *Process for acquiring data from VSCS and UVM—will JFO serve as intermediary or will we have to work directly with institutions?*

To the extent possible, the consultant will work directly with the public higher education institutions. JFO will provide contact information at VSCS and UVM and assist as necessary.

6. *Is there a “do not exceed” amount for the contract? What is the budget for the project?*

There is no “do not exceed” amount for the contract. The proposed price relative to the quality and value of the proposed work will be among the considerations in choosing the winning bid. The overall budget for the project will be based on the bid chosen, the contributions of NEBHE, and the project demands once the Steering Committee is put in place.

7. *Will VSC have an institutional researcher (IR) point person available to pull together and provide non-public data for fast facts?*

We assume that the VSC and UVM will provide support to this effort. The specifics of that support will be up to the institutions. The Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) will also provide a point person to assist with data acquisition, and NEBHE will offer contact information at the state and national level as well.

8. *Will VSC facilitate consultant engagement with key admin officials (e.g. Presidents, Provosts, Vice Provosts, Deans, Career Service/Workforce Development Directors, Community/Employer Partnership Directors) to gather and compile qualitative information?*

JFO expects that VSC, UVM and state agencies such as the Agency for Commerce and Community Development will cooperate fully with the contractor to provide contact information and access to key administrative officials. NEBHE will assist with contact information at the state and national level as well.

9. *What level of geographic or institution specific breakout analyses are required for this project? In other words, does the vendor need to provide analysis and recommendations specific to each VSC institution or just institution-wide analysis and recommendations?*

As stated in the RFP, the scope of work includes “Fiscal analysis related to VSC, the public higher education structure, and the constituent institutions.” The reports therefore should include analysis specific to each VSC institution.

10. *For the current RFP, does it require or even assume that the consultant is implicitly an expert in the Vermont higher education system?*

No. The RFP assumes that the consultant be experienced in higher education structure and research and will quickly develop an understanding of the Vermont higher education

system, its issues and future policy directions which are at the core of the contract's purpose. We would expect that the consultant will explain their experience and appropriateness to manage a contract designed around the goals to "assist the State of Vermont in addressing the urgent needs of the Vermont State Colleges (VSC) and develop an integrated vision and plan for a high-quality, affordable, and workforce-connected future for public higher education in the State."