

RFP QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

HIGHER EDUCATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN THE DES MOINES METRO AREA

The following are questions sent to the Board of Regents as of Wednesday, September 23, 2015, by prospective consultants. Questions are listed in order of receipt.

- Has an assessment of this type been conducted for the board of regents or for any member school in the past? **No**
 - If so, why is the board requesting proposals for this study and has the previous supplier been invited to submit a proposal? **NA**
 - If not, has any members of the board ever commissioned a study of this type at another school? **No**
 - If so, has the vendor for that study been invited to submit a proposal for this project? **NA**
- If an assessment of this type has been completed in the past for the board, could you share a copy of the report with the potential bidders? **NA**
- There are some standard measures, format, and methodologies with this type of research. Is the board open to alternative methodologies and techniques from other industries which could better address the needs outlined in the project scope? **Yes**
- Could you share an estimate budget for the project? **The board does not have an estimated budget.**
- Does the Board of Regents (BOR) have a pre-established set of criteria used to identify an optimal location for RRCs, or will the selected consultant need to establish such criteria? The Board or Regents does not have a defined set of criteria. **The Board does not necessarily expect the consultant to designate the best location(s). The Board does expect the consultant to determine what location(s) various stakeholder groups (prospective students, business leaders, etc.) see as optimal and why. The Board also expects the consultant to consider the attractiveness of various locations based on secondary data, such as population demographics, projected population growth, ease of access (roadways, public transportation), etc.**
- RFP page 2, end of 1st paragraph: The RFP requests that the selected consultant provide “environmental scan data from comparable markets.” Has the BOR identified those markets or will the consultant need to do that? How many markets are expected? **The Board has not identified comparable markets and expects the consultant to do so. The number of comparable markets is up to the consultant.**
- RFP pages 2 & 3, Section C.1.2 List of Stakeholders: The RFP identifies a list of students and related groups, employers and related groups, and policy makers. Will the BOR be able to provide e-mail contact information for samples or full listings of each of those groups? If not, what contact information is available? **The Board will provide contact information for the employers, policymakers and education institutions. The consultant may need to go beyond the specific contacts provided to secure the information necessary from a particular company or institution and it will be up to the consultant to make those additional contacts. The consultant is responsible for securing a list of students and prospective students, students’ parents, and high school counselors.**

- Will web-based surveys for each group be acceptable to the BOR? ***The methods used are up to the consultant, but the Board expects the consultant to justify the methods and the Board expects the results to be valid and reliable.***
- RFP page 3, Section C.3 Location of the RRC: The desirability of the AIB site is to be assessed against other general locations in Des Moines metro area. Have other locations been identified? If so, how detailed and specific is the identification the “other locations?” ***Specific alternative sites have not been identified, so alternative sites would be defined in general terms; e.g., downtown, west suburbs, east side. The Board will work with the consultant to define the general areas.***
- RFP page 4, Section D: The RFP identifies a project duration of Nov. 9th through Feb 1st when a first draft of the needs assessment report is due. This represents a three-month project window that includes several holidays and academic breaks, making access to and inclusion of various identified stakeholders difficult. Is there any flexibility in the ending date of the study? ***The Board is open to extending the deadline, but would want a clear alternative schedule with justification provided by the consultant.***
- RFP page 5, Section 3 Fee Structure: The proposer is asked to provide a cost based on time and materials “not to exceed.” The RFP also states that reimbursement for travel expenses and other out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed with receipts per the terms of the contract. Should an estimate of travel and out-of-pocket expenses be included in the “not to exceed” cost proposal, or should these expenses be in addition to the “not to exceed” cost? ***Travel and out-of-pocket expenses should be included in the “not to exceed” cost.***
- RFP page 10, Item # 8 Sample Documents: Our typical needs assessment reports are fairly lengthy. Will one hard copy suffice, or may we submit an electronic version on a flash drive? ***An electronic version is adequate.***
- Is being located in Iowa a requirement? If not, is it a factor that will be considered in deciding on the award? ***The Board is seeking the firm that can deliver on the project objectives at a reasonable cost. The location of the firm is not a factor.***
- Will research entities governed (directly or indirectly) by the Iowa Board of Regents be allowed to bid on this study? ***No.***
- Can you confirm the geography of the Des Moines Metro Area (counties and/or ZIP codes)? ***Nine counties: Polk (Des Moines), and the eight contiguous counties; Boone, Story, Marshall, Jasper, Marion, Warren, Madison, and Dallas.***
- What are the comparable markets Des Moines typically uses for benchmarking? ***This is up to the consultant to determine.***
- Does the AIB site currently include any on-campus housing? ***The Board does not anticipate having a traditional residential campus at RRC (AIB campus). The universities may use some of the existing dormitories for specialty populations, such as students who are doing internships in Des Moines or medical students doing rotations in at Des Moines hospitals.***
- To what extent do lists of stakeholders include email addresses? ***The Board will provide contact information for the employers, policymakers and education institutions. The consultant may need to go beyond the specific contacts provided to secure the information necessary from a particular company or institution and it will be up to the consultant to make those additional contacts. The consultant is responsible for securing a list of students and prospective students, students’ parents, and high school counselors.***

- We received this RFP through a notification form The Green Book. How else has the RFP been distributed? ***The RFP went to consultants listed under certain categories on the Green Book site and to a few other firms.***
- Can you provide a list of vendors submitting questions? ***The Board has posted all of the questions asked by consultants, along with responses. The Board will not identify these firms.***
- You mention several types of stakeholders you're interested in interviewing. Are you looking to do interview with all of them, or are some priorities over the others? ***The Board expects the study to meet the objectives of the project and the stakeholders listed seem to the Board to have information that would help meet the objectives. It is, however, up to the consultant to determine the stakeholders and to provide justification.***
- Would the Board of Regents be providing us with any of the sample or would it be up to us to procure our own sample sources? ***The Board will provide contact information for the employers, policymakers and education institutions. The consultant may need to go beyond the specific contacts provided to secure the information necessary from a particular company or institution and it will be up to the consultant to make those additional contacts. The consultant is responsible for securing a list of students and prospective students, students' parents, and high school counselors.***
- Would the prospective respondents be limited only to people in Des Moines or all of Iowa, or is the geography broader? ***Respondents would be limited to stakeholders in nine counties: Polk (Des Moines), and the eight contiguous counties; Boone, Story, Marshall, Jasper, Marion, Warren, Madison, and Dallas.***
- As far as environmental scan data, would you clarify what you mean – do you have markets in mind, and would it be secondary or primary data that we are obtaining from other markets? ***The Board does not have other markets in mind. This would be determined by the consultant. The Board expects that all or the vast majority of the data from other markets would be secondary data, but this is up to the consultant.***
- Is there a proposed sample size you're looking for, or should we propose it? ***This is up to the consultant to propose.***
- What kind of deliverables are you seeing – data tables, report & full analysis, etc.? ***The Board expects a report and full analysis, along with the data files for any quantitative data. The Board does not need endless summaries of data tables. Clear and incisive interpretation of the data as it relates to the study objectives are preferred.***
- Is there a particular budget in mind as we consider the logistics of the study? ***No.***
- How many suppliers were sent this RFP? ***The RFP went to consultants listed under certain categories on the Green Book site and to a few other firms.***
- What historical and current data do the three schools have now, e.g. students success by program and student characteristics? Does this data reside in one place or does it vary across the three schools, e.g. centralized vs decentralized? ***The following are links to Board of Regents reports - <http://www.regents.iowa.gov/Meetings/DocketMemos/14Memos/October2014/enrollmenttables2014.pdf> (enrollment) and <http://www.regents.iowa.gov/Meetings/DocketMemos/15Memos/March2015/graduationandretentiontables2015.pdf> (graduation)***

- Do the schools have any data on non-matriculated students, e.g. why did they choose not to attend and where did they matriculate? ***The schools have some data from the National Student Clearinghouse on where students who applied by did not matriculate ended up going.***
- What Des Moines metro area data (employment, housing, etc.) does the Board or the schools have now? ***The Board and the schools do not have these data, but the Board can put the consultant in touch with Des Moines area agencies who have these data.***
- What stakeholder groups have decision rights on the final location of the RRC and the programs to be launched and what are their approximate numbers? ***The Board of Regents, State of Iowa. There are 9 Regents.***
- The RFP states that the period of the engagement will be from November 9-February 1 (12 weeks), yet the final presentation to the Board is on February 24-25. Does the period of performance end of February 1 or 24/25 (the latter makes the length of the project 16 weeks)? ***The Board anticipates receiving a first draft on February 1. This draft can be refined jointly by the consultant and the Board office in anticipation of having a final report to the Board of Regents at their February 24-25 meeting. The Board is open to extending the deadline, but would want a clear alternative schedule with justification provided by the consultant.***
- Have you allocated any funds for this project? ***No.*** If so, what is the intended budget for this work? ***NA***
- Do you have a state mandated rate card? ***We do not have a state rate card; we have a state per diem rate for allowable expenses.*** We do not charge our clients or staff our engagements based on number of hours overall or by phase. Instead we prefer to allocate team members to projects on a percentage FTE basis and then put in the hours that are needed to make sure that clients' needs are met and to ensure that the deliverables are excellent. Under this scenario, we would price this project with one aggregate number and provide you with a ceiling for our expenses. Is that possible here? ***Yes***
- What percentage weight do you give project fees in your vendor selection evaluation criteria? ***There is no percentage weight.***
- Should our legal counsel have any amendments to the *Assurances, Representations and Authorization to Release Information* form may we submit them to you for review prior to the RFP submission date? ***Yes***