

**State Cooperative System Special Task Order
Request for Proposal
Fiscal Year 2004/2005**

Introduction

The general purpose of State Cooperative System Task Orders for fiscal year 2005 (FY 2005) is to improve federal-state cooperation in data collection, processing, analysis, and reporting. In order to accomplish this goal, work will be supported in the general area of electronic data collection and reporting. Examples of such work include, but are not limited to:

- Changing the state's education information system to meet the accountability requirements of No Child Left Behind;
- Assessing the information system's capacity to provide the data needed;
- Revising existing data systems to improve the quality and timeliness of data reported to the U.S. Department of Education, in particular the CCD, and other federal agencies;
- Establishing and implementing standard data item definitions or reporting standards across the agency;
- Merging information systems and cross walking data to include existing data (e.g., separate program data files) that are currently not readily accessible;
- Developing and/or improving information systems to enable reporting school-level data; and
- Establishing consortia of states to address common issues and interests in data collection and reporting, including federal program data requirements.

General Requirements

These tasks are issued under the Cooperative System contracts between the Department of Education and state education agencies. In order to be considered for a task in FY2005, a written proposal following the outline described in this document must be submitted to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). All proposals will be reviewed by representatives from the National Forum on Education Statistics, who will recommend proposals to NCES for funding; NCES will decide which states will be issued FY2005 task orders.

Proposal Cut-Off Date. Proposals must be received by NCES no later than 5:00 p.m. September 24, 2005. Proposals must be submitted electronically as a Word™ document to ghedam.bairu@ed.gov. If this is not possible, contact Ghedam Bairu at 202-502-7304.

Task order amounts. The amount of funding for any task order will reflect the resources needed to carryout the work. However, no task order will be funded in an amount exceeding \$80,000.

Deliverables.

A state will be reimbursed for making progress as described in the Statement of Work, on NCES approval of the specified deliverable items and receipt of a voucher from the state.

The state agrees to:

- Deliver written progress reports at intervals specified in the statement of work.
- Produce a voucher requesting payment of funds at the intervals specified in the statement of work with the completion of each deliverable.
- Present an annual progress report on the task order work at an NCES sponsored meeting.
- Provide a written final report suitable for distribution to members of the National Forum on Educational Statistics.

Dates of initiation and completion. Work on any task order issued for FY2005 must be begun within FY2005, that is, before September 30, 2005. All work must be completed by the end of the contract under which it is issued.

Other considerations. NCES will place priority on issuing FY2005 task orders to states that have not received a special task order in the past and have no work outstanding under prior Cooperative System task order awards. NCES will place priority on funding task orders that involve collaboration among several states, or between a state education agency and the state's school districts.

Proposal Requirements

The proposal should be technically sound, seem feasible, and give the reviewer enough information to understand what work is being proposed and judge whether it addresses the objectives described above. A short proposal can address all of these points. The following outline should be used in writing a proposal.

- I. Cover Sheet:* The cover sheet should contain the title of the proposed project; the name, mailing address, work phone number, fax number and email address of the person submitting the proposal; and the amount of award requested.
- II. Background and Objectives:* This section should contain (a) very brief description of the proposed project; (b) description of how the project relates to the areas of interest, as described in the Introduction, for FY2005; (c) an explanation of why the project is needed; (d) a description of relevant past activities, or acknowledgment that there are none; (e) the goals of the project, including a statement of the final desired outcome; (f) the objectives of the project, with expected specific products or changes that will lead to the accomplishment of the goal(s).
- III. Activities:* The activities to be included are (a) the major tasks to be carried out in the project; (b) a timeline including anticipated beginning and ending dates, and dates (or number of weeks from project start-up) of major products or accomplishments within the project; (c) time(s) at which plans, progress reports or accomplishments will be submitted with voucher; (d) a description of anticipated products or accomplishments.
- IV. Staff:* Include (a) the names and/or titles, and relevant qualifications of persons who will carry out the project; (b) an indication of the amount of time each person will devote to it (be sure to include in-kind staff resources provided by the agency).
- V. Budget:* Budget categories should include salaries, benefits, supplies, purchased services such as consultants, travel, and fee or overhead charges (if applicable) as well as any other substantial cost areas. Indicate what amounts are from the requested task order and what amounts are from other sources. Note that task order funds may not be used for equipment purchase totaling \$1,000 or more.¹

¹ Task orders do not provide funds for purchasing proprietary software; if this expense is included in the budget please use the Activities Section to describe the role of the software in the project.

Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed based on the following criteria; the maximum number of points awarded for each criterion is noted. The qualities commanding the maximum number of points are described for each criterion. The proposal section in which the criterion is expected to be addressed is shown in parentheses. Your proposal must include answers to the following questions:

1. Are all items in the proposal requirements included? Does the proposal correspond to the sections in the request for proposals? How does the project address the scope of the topics as described above (II-b)? Does the proposal explicitly identify the topical area addressed and clearly show how the proposal relates to it? 20 points.
2. Are the activities plausible and sufficient for meeting the objectives of the proposal (III-a)? Are the activities clearly stated and linked to the objectives? Will the activities described logically lead toward achieving the objectives of the project? 20 points.
3. Do the Identified personnel have the position, expertise, and sufficient time commitment to see that the work gets done (IV-a, IV-b)? Does the proposal list all project personnel describing their responsibilities in the project, describing aspects of their current position and/or experience and education that qualify them for this role? Does the proposal state how much time each person will commit to the project? Are the personnel appropriate and of sufficient number to complete the work? 15 points.
4. Are the needs and anticipated outcomes important enough to justify the project (II-c, II-e, II-f)? Does the proposal describe pre-existing conditions that make the projected work important? Does the proposal describe expected negative consequences if the work is not done? Is the anticipated effect upon the state described clearly? How does the value of this anticipated change contribute to the goals of this task order and how does the value outweigh the costs and/or burden of doing the project? 10 points.
5. Will the results be applicable to, or usable by, other states (II-e, II-f)? Is there a clear statement of how the results of the project can be used by other states? 10 points.
6. Is the timeline logically sequenced (III-b)? Does the proposed time appear sufficient to accomplish the work? 10 points.
7. Is funding sufficient and will task order funds be used appropriately (V)? Is there a table to link the project costs to project activities? Are costs identified by type of expenditure (e.g., salaries, benefits, supplies, purchased services, travel)? Are task order funds used to purchase equipment? If so, is the amount less than \$1,000? Are supplemental funds, if any, identified? 10 points.
8. Is there a sufficient institutional commitment to the project (II-d)? As relevant, does the proposal describe past work in the state, past or current legislation, programs, or regulations (if appropriate)? Does the proposal include letters of support and commitment that evidence a willingness beyond that of the proposal writer to carry out the project? 5 points.