

An Evaluation of Alignment Between State CTE Standards and the CCTC: Questions About the RFP

Organizational Overview

Q: The RFP asks in Section 3 under Organizational Overview for a 'description of past and current litigation, if any.' Can you clarify why this is necessary and what type of litigation qualifies? Are we anticipating being sued or does this relate to legal support we have provided?

A: The goals are twofold: to identify litigation that would impact your organization's ability to enter into a legal contract and to identify litigation that relates to your organization's performance. There is no need to include routine litigation, such as worker's compensation, personal injury or employment cases.

Summary of Qualifications

Q: We assume proposals may include subcontractor(s), subject to NASDCTEC approval of the proposed subcontractor(s). Will you confirm.

A: Yes, proposals may include subcontractors. We request that all responses identify subcontractors, provide a summary of the qualifications of the subcontractors and include costs associated with the use of subcontractors in the proposed budget.

Methodology

Q: There is a difference in standards listed in the PDF file of the CCTC and the database. Which is newer?

A: The list of standards is the same in both. However, there are some display issues on standards above 9 from the database that display numerically different (e.g., HT-LOD 10 displays after HT-LOD 1, but before HT-LOD 2). Additional tweaks to the database displays are ongoing, but the standards are the same. The database also contains suggested performance elements and sample indicators, as well. A final set of the CCTC standards can be accessed at: <http://www.careertech.org/career-technical-education/cctc/info.html>.

Q: What data is expected to be gathered in Phase 1, beyond the policy scan? Does this include student achievement data?

A: We do not anticipate the need to gather additional data, such as student achievement results.

Q: Is the level of comparison against state standards intended to include the performance levels of the CCTC (as made available in the database)?

A: The gap analysis should represent an analysis of the Career Clusters™, Career Pathway and Career Ready Practices. The gap analysis does not include alignment to the Career Cluster™ performance elements or measurement criteria.

Q: Would the alignment involve only a state's generic CTE standards such as the CDOS standards in New York or is the intent of the RFP to link to each state's career/program standards that might be found or imbedded in the state's approved curriculum for each CTE program?

A: The gap analysis should represent an analysis of the Career Clusters™, Career Pathway and Career Ready Practices. The CDOS standards might represent one aspect of the standards, mostly aligned to the Career Ready Practices, but would not represent a complete analysis for the state.

Q: Do you want to map to smallest learning objects in each Pathway statement, or to the Pathway statement as a whole (i.e. some Pathway statements could hold multiple learning objects within them, which could then alter how well or not a particular state standard matches that Pathway statement)?

A: The answer to this question will be best be determined as the gap analysis alignment study is conducted and will depend on how the state standards are constructed. The CCTC standards are program level standards

Q: Postsecondary standards are mentioned as a potential alignment point with the CCTC. However, Postsecondary standards could be determined by each individual institution and not by a state board. Which would result in the scope of aligning the CCTC with Postsecondary could range from 50 to thousands. Can you define what Postsecondary CTE standards should be a part of the alignment study for the CCTC?

A: The answer to this question is difficult given the diverse nature of the postsecondary delivery of CTE among the states. The gap analysis should represent an analysis of the Career Clusters™, Career Pathway standards and the Career Ready Practices needed to be fully competent at the end of a program of study, which may include both secondary and postsecondary. Where appropriate and available, states that have program level expectations across all institutions this alignment would be simplest. It may be appropriate to do a sampling of the postsecondary level standards available to conduct this aspect of the alignment study.

Q: At the K–12 level, as noted in the RFP, CTE standards may be defined at a State or LEA level. Does the scope of the project include providing alignment to LEA Standards if standards at the state do not exist? For example, if a state does not have “state–level” standards, do you want to apply that state’s districts standards instead? If yes, which districts would you want to include (ex. Do you want the largest districts standards?) Or, do you want all “district” standards? (this, of course, would dramatically increase the scope of work)

A: A final decision on this will be made on a case–by–case basis, however our current preference is to consider state level standards, standards associated with state approved programs, state licensing standards, state approved industry standards/certifications, not to conduct sampling of LEA or district level standards.

Q: A policy scan will review status of CTE standards in each state and territory. Please clarify which territories: eg, American Samoa, Guam, Marianas, Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands all included? Any others like Midway Islands or Wake Islands?

A: This includes the territories that are eligible for funding under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act: American Samoa, Guam, Palau, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The District of Columbia should also be included in the policy scan, along with the 50 states.

Q: Can you define “policy scan”?

A: The goal of the policy scan is twofold: first, it is intended to identify the state/territory policy infrastructure for CTE (for example, are there state adopted program standards for CTE?); second, it is intended as a checkpoint for the contractor and NASDCTEc to collectively determine whether any mid-point corrections are necessary before proceeding with the data collection and analysis.

Q: Is there any database management component requested or required of the vendor?

A: There is no database management component, beyond whatever is needed to gather data, verify accuracy and consistency of the data and analyze the data. However, consideration of how the information will be presented and the usability/accessibility of the information collected will be considered in the selection of the contractor.

Q: What approximate weights would the Association give to analysis of state CTE standards vs. implementation of the standards through delivery systems ranging from career academies to regional technical schools.

A: The goal of the study is to focus on standards alignment, not fidelity of implementation.

Q: Could NASDCTEc describe a bit more detail about expectations for inclusion of data from all 50 states plus territories? While it appears document review and other data collection methodologies that can be done virtually or remotely could provide a lot of information to inform the analysis, are there expectations for interviews, focus groups or other face-to-face meetings with state directors? Would the Association allow for time when the group of state directors convenes at normal meetings for additional data collection to occur?

A: Our goal is to identify the most effective and efficient methodology for data collection. There is no requirement that your organization must incorporate interviews, focus groups or face-to-face meetings with CTE State Directors. We expect a methodology that will ensure accuracy and consistency across states and territories and one that will not place the bulk of the burden for data collection on CTE State Directors or NASDCTEc staff.

The next convening NASDCTEc is sponsoring for the CTE State Directors is not until April 2013, well beyond the anticipated timeframe for data collection. However, NASDCTEc has the ability to convene the membership virtually through webinars and/or conference calls as needed.

Q: Has NASDCTEc identified the states that will provide data for the pilot analysis and are data sharing agreements in place for the this?

Q: The description of the narrative for Methodology on page 6 of the RFP describes the gap analysis methodology and processes, and refers to the pilot study in one point. Who is responsible for identifying the sample states and territories? Should a methodology for selection of the states and territories be included?

A: Currently, the states are signing declarations of planning and engagement forms to express their interest in moving forward the awareness and engagement of the CCTC. This process will continue through the end of December 2012 and yield the target states for the pilot. There are several states that are in the middle of different revision or update processes regarding standards and are eager to participate in the gap analysis work, as well. NASDCTEc will work with the selected contractor to identify 4-6 states for the pilot study, help to coordinate with those states, provide state contacts and other communications regarding the project. The goal will be for the selected pilot states to reflect a variety of standards scenarios - a state with state developed CTE standards, a local control state, involvement of both secondary and postsecondary leaders.

Q: The RFP notes: The second phase will be a pilot phase to analyze data from a small sample of states before moving to the large-scale study of all states and territories. To be clear, this RFP does not include the large-scale study, correct?

A: Incorrect. The scope of work for the RFP includes both the pilot and the large-scale study.

Q: To what degree does the Association have 50-state buy-in or pockets of state director resistance to fully participating in the data collection exercise? Who will be responsible for encouraging and ensuring as close to 100% state participation as possible?

Q: What participation can be expected from the states and territories to provide data?

Q: What support will NASDCTEc provide in gathering information from CTE Directors?

A: Our goal is to have all 50 states and territories that receive Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act funding in the final analysis. With 42 states, D.C. and Palau participating in the development of the CCTC, and additional states participating, just not publicly, we believe that the vast majority of states will be willing participants.

Q: Since it is anticipated that CTE State Directors will have the full month of September to review final reports before release, is it anticipated that they will be provided an opportunity to make significant changes?

A: CTE State Directors will have the opportunity to identify factual inaccuracies that should be addressed before the public release in October 2013.

Q: As part of the reporting process, does the Association envision any sort of comparative “grading” or “ranking” of states or groups of states based on the CTE standards (and perhaps other criteria)?

A: No, we do not want the reports to include any comparative grading or ranking.

Q: Is NASDCTEc looking for two separate reports on each state (secondary & post-secondary)?

A: The reports should represent an analysis of the Career Clusters™ and Career Pathway standards and the Career Ready Practices needed to be fully competent at the end of a program of study, which may include both secondary and postsecondary.

Budget

Q: Do you have a funding range for this type of work?

Q: Could NASDCTEc provide a budget range for the project?

Q: What is the overall budget for this project?

Q: Has NASDCTEc developed a range to fund this project that they are willing to share?

Q: Will these funds be awarded as a grant or a contract or something else?

A: The evaluation is being funded by NASDCTEc, the non-profit association representing CTE State Directors. There is no grant funding.

Q: Is there a cap on indirect costs?

Q: After reading the RFP and looking at the budget spreadsheet, it is unclear as to whether or not indirect/overhead costs are permissible. Please advise.

A: Indirect costs and overhead are not prohibited. Proposed budgets should include as much detail as possible. NASDCTEc is interested in a proposal that is cost efficient and will produce the highest quality outcome.

Timeline

Q: Please confirm that the start and end dates are 1/7/13 and 8/31/13?

A: The start date for the contract is 1/7/13. The draft reports are due to individual states/territories no later than 8/31/13. The final summary report and individual state/territory reports will be publicly released in October 2013 (date TBD), thus the end date of the contract will extend to at least October 31, 2013.

Other

Q: Is there an incumbent organization or consultant that was involved in the development of CCTC that will play a role in this work?

A: No.

Q: Will the contractor awarded the contract for this RFP for An Evaluation of Alignment Between State Career Technical Education Standards and the Common Career Technical Core be precluded from responding to future assessment development RFP's resulting from this study due to conflict of interest?

A: No.

Q: To what extent are the current status of state technical skills assessments (TSAs), as well as the future development of TSAs based on CCTC, to be addressed in the RFP?

A: The role of state technical skill assessments as well as industry certifications and other end of program assessments that exist are indeed an important consideration for the future. However, the scope of this work is to focus on the gap analysis and alignment of the learning expectations or standards. The decisions associated with assessments and the outgrowth of assessments in the work that follows will be addressed at a later time.

Q: Will access to NASDCTEc communication technologies be permitted and used for electronic communications (i.e. WebEx) so that the connection to bidder and NASDCTEc appear more seamless?

A: Yes, to the extent feasible and practicable, NASDCTEc communication technologies may be used by the selected contractor. Please include in your proposal the type and frequency of communication technologies you anticipate using throughout the lifespan of the project.

Q: Is there a limited number of organizations invited to respond to this RFP? If so, are the invitations based on the materials on potential design and methodologies for carrying out an assessment of alignment and gaps that were previously submitted in response to the September 2012 RFI; and should this material and discussion be included as part of the response.

A: No, there was no limit on the number of organizations invited to respond to this RFP.

Q: Can you give us an idea what the “proposal scoring rubric” looks like?

A: Only complete proposals will be considered. Only proposals that comply with the page limits will be considered. In general, proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined in the RFP.

Q: Due to the storm and power outages, are you considering extending the deadline?

A: No.