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**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA**  
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**RFP 245-042221 Vendor Questions and Answers**

**Content**

1. Will there be a single workgroup to consult with concerning all aspects of the study, e.g., both Deliverables 2 and 3 mention a workgroup—will the workgroup be the same? Will the workgroup have representatives from all 15 institutions plus VCCS?

A: The main workgroup that the contractor will work with regarding direction and oversight of the deliverables will be staff to the Op Six (Secretary of Education, Secretary of Finance, SCHEV Director, Department of Planning & Budget, House Appropriations, and Senate Finance & Appropriations Committee). In addition there will be a consultative workgroup composed of representatives from institutions but not all institutions. SCHEV will select institutional representatives based on missions of institutions, specialty and student demographics. Both workgroups will contribute to both deliverables.

2. Regarding Deliverable 1, Q1, does SCHEV have a definition of “successful?” If so, what are the criteria? Or does the contractor define it (with input from the workgroup)?

A: Successful means the fundings strategies are transparent, accepted by stakeholders, and eventually used to advance the goals of the Virginia Plan.

3. Regarding Deliverable 1, is SCHEV looking for a comprehensive review of other states, e.g., a 50-state compilation, or is a subset of the states (those most like Virginia and/or implementing strong policies) sufficient?

A: The review should focus on effective models and not an entire scan. SCHEV can request existing 50-state scans from membership groups like SHEEO.

4. Regarding Deliverable 2, what are expectations about gathering information about efficiencies and effectiveness efforts? Is there a definition of “effectiveness” beyond contributing to the SCHEV strategic plan?

A: SCHEV is looking for effective practices that have increased retention and graduation rates and time-to-degree etc, especially from students of underrepresented populations. Strategies to reduce the overall cost to produce degrees is also of interest. SCHEV staff can provide the contractor with Virginia-specific scans of shared service models, bulk-purchasing agreements, and cost efficiency tactics.

5. Regarding Deliverable 2, Q5, what is the current level of shared services?

A: Currently Virginia Community College System has a shared service center for its 23 colleges. SCHEV does not have information whether there is any coordination and cooperation in services among 4-year institutions. This is a task the contractor must do, i.e. to “survey and compile Virginia institutions’ practices related to efficiency and effectiveness in their operations.” (Deliverable 2)

6. Regarding Deliverable 3, Q2, does SCHEV have an agreed-upon set of peers for each institution, or is the contractor expected to develop them?

A: Virginia public institutions each have 25 national peers for the average teaching and research faculty salary at the institutional level. These were negotiated between state government officials and institutions many years ago to compare faculty salaries. They were sometimes used for other comparative studies such as expenditures. These peers will need to be reassessed, and the contractor can also conduct additional national comparisons by Carnegie classification, IPEDS comparison group or other methodologies as identified.

7. Regarding Deliverable 3, Q5, has SCHEV developed 10- and 20-year enrollment projections?

A: By Code of Virginia, SCHEV does six-year enrollment projections every two years. The 2014-2020 Virginia Plan - Virginia higher education strategic plan used the US census population data and estimates of high school graduates by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education to project Virginia enrollments by 2030 (Source: WICHE Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates, 2016).

8. Can we assume that SCHEV will facilitate the fulfillment of any data requests, including any requests for data from the institutions, e.g., institutional data on credit hours enrolled and completed?

A: Yes. SCHEV will provide the Virginia data. SCHEV has collected student level data for twenty years and maintains hundreds of interactive dashboards on research.schev.edu. SCHEV staff will also collect, organize and distribute finance data that is not posted on SCHEV’s research website.

9. Regarding Deliverable 4, is the expectation that the requested model simply how state funds will be distributed to institutions and in what proportions, or a quantitative model that permits stakeholders to change assumptions (about proportions, enrollments, etc.) and see the resulting impacts on the allocation of resources?

A: As stated in the RFP, Virginia has used a formula funding model for institutions’ base operation for 20 years. The ratios and costs in the model are out-dated. This study needs to decide whether to revise the current model or establish a new model as there are new considerations and components must be incorporated into the funding model. In sum, the study shall establish a funding model that is composed of (1) measures for funding needs for base operation; (2) methods of outcome-based funding; (3) methods of funding for state needs and aspirational goals. Method (2) can be part of the base funding or an addition to the base funding. Method (3) is an addition to the base funding. Inevitably, policymakers will appropriate state funds outside of the new model to support specific projects and goals, but we hope that the basic tenets, assumptions, and goals of the new model will be firmly established.

10. Is there an expectation for the length of the proposal, e.g., number of pages not to exceed? Is there a page maximum for the narrative component of the proposal?

A: No.

11. Is the council currently engaged with other consulting/professional services firms at the moment? If so, who?

A: Currently SCHEV has two RFP in progress and none is finalized.

12. Has the council engaged any company in the past regarding similar work to the Cost Study RFP? Specifically, the RFP mentioned that the Commission engaged a national consulting firm to do the 1998 funding work, can you please answer which firm?

A: Virginia used MGT as the consultant firm for the 1998 funding study.

## Technical / Contracting Questions

1. In the pricing schedule, it states, "Offeror should also supply labor category pricing for as-needed, additional related work on a time and materials basis." Should we provide this as a new element to the table or include it in each of the objective table sections?

A: An additional list or paragraph stating what those costs would be would be ideal. Not to be included in the grand total.

2. What qualifies as "additional related services" for which invoices should be submitted?

A: We are striking that phrase from the RFP and the section for Method of Payment shall now read:

*A valid invoice, sufficiently detailed to allow review and verification of services, shall be submitted to SCHEV by the tenth of the month following the month of acceptance of a deliverable in accordance with an approved Statement of Work. Payment will be made in accordance with the Prompt Payment Act of Virginia.*

3. On the vendor data sheet, must we list an eVA vendor ID and a DUNS number?

A: Only if you have them readily available. It is important to note however, that should your proposal be chosen for contract, you will be required to register with the Commonwealth of Virginia's e-procurement program, eVA. There is no cost to register and it only takes about 3 days to be approved and active. Info can be found here <https://www.eva.virginia.gov/register-now.html>

4. Can references include companies who have worked with the subcontractor(s) or only with the prime?

A. Either , both is best

5. Do you require an MOU or partnership agreement with subcontractor(s)?

A. There is no direct contracting between the Purchasing Agency and subcontractors. There are however certain elements of the subcontracting agreement between the prime and subcontractors that our Contract Administrator will ensure is occurring.

6. As a small, non-profit organization, which is ineligible to be certified as a small business by the VA SBSB, is there an expectation that we need to subcontract with one or more certified small businesses in order to earn the points for the "small business subcontracting plan?" If so, do we need to identify those subcontractors by name in the proposal, or simply identify which elements of the response we expect to subcontract? Is there a requirement that any small businesses that are subcontractors operate out of Virginia in order to get the points?

A: In order to earn points for the Small Purchase Subcontracting Plan, the offeror must identify the SWaM Contractor(s) on the correct form that can be found as an attachment in the RFP. The offeror does not have to operate in Virginia. It can be based anywhere but need to be SWaM certified in Virginia in order to be eligible for points.

7. Only small businesses certified by SBSB at the time the proposal is due on May 28 will count towards the points awarded for the small business subcontractor plan.

A. This is correct. All certifications must be approved and active on the date the proposals are due in order to be counted.

8. SBSB's website states that it take approximately 60 business days for it to take action on an application for certification, meaning that any potential small business subcontractors that we might want to include in the project will not be certified in time to earn our proposal the points, if they aren't already certified?

A. Confirmed this timeline with SBSB, and yes, this is accurate