

NYSED RFP # 23-004

Questions Received (by 7/21/22) and Responses Provided

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- 1. Our agency currently operates two HSE Test Centers, each with its own contract. We would like to submit one application that identifies one of the two test centers as the principal center, and the other as the addendum. Both Test Centers would be fully staffed with qualified and trained staff, administer CBTs in accordance with RFP23-004, and would meet all other qualifications/eligibility criteria and performance standards identified in RFP23-004. May we submit one application along the lines above: one principal Test Center, and the other an addendum Test Center?**

The RFP permits submitting a single proposal for more than one test center within the same Test Service Area, with subsequent test centers serving as addendum sites. Please refer specifically to the language in the RFP which addresses including addendum sites within the proposal. Applicants may submit proposals to administer testing in more than one TSA, however a separate proposal, clearly labeled, must be submitted for each TSA. More information can be found on page 6 of the RFP, under *Project Description*.

- 2. I wanted to know if my testing location is an approved testing center currently or do we need to complete the proposal? We haven't been able to give the GED exam this year due to system issues and a lack of staff. We are moving to another room and will be doing the Pearson testing requirements again to begin testing in the fall.**

The currently funded "Public HSE Testing Reimbursement" contract - RFP #19-004 - ends 12/31/22. All test centers interested in receiving funds under this contract must submit proposal(s) to apply for funds under #23-004. This contract will provide funding to reimburse test centers offering HSE testing in sites open to the public, as delineated in the narrative of the RFP. Funding under this RFP is for 1/1/2023-12/31/2025.

All test centers must be approved to administer the GED to be eligible to apply for funds under this RFP. Please finalize your approval to deliver exams under Pearson VUE so that you will be able to administer exams by the time this proposal is due. It is understood that you may not begin administering the exams until the fall, as explained in your email.

- 3. We currently have an approved test center that is private. Do we have to submit a proposal for this test center?**

Proposals funded under #23-004 will reimburse test centers offering high school equivalency testing in sites open to the public, as delineated in the narrative of the RFP. Funding under this RFP is for 1/1/2023-12/31/2025. The currently funded "Public HSE Testing Reimbursement" contract - RFP #19-004 - ends 12/31/22. All test centers which meet the criteria for funding must submit a proposal by the due date of 8/25/22, to be considered for funding beginning in 2023.

- 4. Can we get a copy of how we responded to this RFP the last time it was issued?**

Please submit a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request to obtain a copy of the proposal submitted by your organization to the NYS Education Department (NYSED). Information can be found at: <http://www.nysed.gov/new-york-state-education-department-foil-requests>.

5. **A) Please confirm that formerly approved TASC examiners / proctors (NOT chief examiner or Coordinator) that do not have a bachelors will be able to serve as an examiner. (My understanding was that they would be “grandfathered” in.)**

The HSE Office website conveys information on the NYSED requirements for test center staffing qualifications: <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/hse/hse-test-center-coordinators-and-examiners>. The coordinator must have a bachelor’s degree and an examiner must have a bachelor’s degree or may have an associate degree, as any examiners approved prior to the increase in NYSED staffing qualifications will continue to be approved, i.e., grandfathered, to serve in their ongoing role.

- B) Pearson approved our test center with 50 computers for only 21 candidates. Should we request additional paper-based exams? We prefer computer based, but is this an option?**

Computer-based testing (CBT) is preferable to paper-based testing (PBT) for many reasons. If your test center has 50 computers, but was only approved for 21 testing computers, it most likely was due to Pearson VUE’s determination that the approved testing room only had sufficient spacing for 21 computers and could not accommodate all 50. If this is the situation, an additional space would be needed to accommodate more candidates.

- C) Will our test center stay the same 3 digit # or do we use the Pearson 5 digit # ?**

You will use the Pearson 5-digit code. We are tying together your prior 3-digit code, with the new 5-digit code, in the HSE database.

- D) Will Pearson be closing their private test locations once we are up and running?**

The Pearson VUE test centers that were delivering an array of certificate tests in NYS, before the GED was adopted as the NYS HSE exam, began offering the GED® Test in January 2022 to provide sufficient testing options while Pearson VUE onboarded new test centers. It is anticipated that once enough NYSED approved test centers are operational, the supplemental Pearson VUE centers will no longer be offering the GED® Test.

6. **A) Throughout the application, the term “bidding” is used. Is our bid supposed to be calculated as a percentage of the total annual reimbursement, or as a dollar amount?**

The term, bidder, refers to the agency, i.e., test center, submitting a proposal in response to the RFP. The agency’s bid includes the amount of funding being requested based on prior testing and their capacity to deliver testing over the next 3-year contract period, 1/1/2023-12/31/2025. Two years of testing history, for currently funded test centers, can be found on pages 6-8 of the RFP. Therefore, contract awards will be calculated based on the amount of testing anticipated to be delivered, at the reimbursement rates delineated on pages 8-9 of the RFP. The process through

which test centers are reimbursed is explained on page 9, and the links to the reimbursement forms posted on the HSE website, for currently funded test centers, are also included.

B) On the top of Page 16, and elsewhere, it asks for the name of bidder; would that be the name of the school district?

Yes, the name of the bidder is the agency or organization operating the test center and submitting the proposal in response to RFP23-004. The bidder would be the name of the school district, as per the question above.

C) (Page 16 – Section C) The District is approved for PBT until end of 2022, can we continue it for 2023 and beyond?

The GED Test delivered through paper-based testing (PBT) is extremely limited in 2022 and will become even more limited in future years. Test centers that do not deliver testing to incarcerated individuals will need to convert from PBT to computer-based testing, as conveyed when applying to the NYSED HSE Office to administer PBT in 2022. Test centers granted permission to deliver PBT were advised that they will be required to submit a plan for how they intended to convert to CBT, beginning in 2023 and beyond.

D)(Page 17 – Section F) The overhead costs to administer the GED in your city (i.e., staffing) is quite high, and the reimbursement for 15 students will not cover these. Therefore, we would like to increase the number of students per test day to 25-30. This will not only help cover costs but also allow us to serve more students. So, are there exceptions to 15:1 staff ratio for test administration?

Your city can deliver testing 2x daily testing and serve 2x the number of students So, while there aren't exceptions to the 15:1, they could have 2 certified administrators serving 30 students if their spacing permits. However, PBT will not automatically be increased above the number of tests granted by the HSE office.

E)(Page 17 – Section H) Our District has approval to administer the GED at two sites. Therefore, can we hold test sessions for both sites on the same day? Example: Thursday/Friday at one site (day-time) and Thursday/Friday at the other site (evening time).

Yes, if a test center is approved to administer the GED Test in different locations, these locations may opt to offer testing whenever they opt to do so.

F) What specific costs can be covered with the reimbursements we receive? Is it only for staffing, or can it be used to cover the purchase of equipment, furniture, a safe, etc?

The reimbursement issued for test administration may be used for any expenses incurred by the agency/test center.

G) What are the formatting guidelines for writing the technical proposal? Are there guidelines for length, number of pages, margins, font size, etc.?

Please use standard formatting guidelines, including standard one-inch margins and 12 font- type. There is no pre-designated length for the proposal, rather its length should represent a fully developed proposal that is responsive to the criteria presented in the RFP.

H) In regard to the Submission Documents, we have the following questions: a. As a School District, do we need to fill out page 6? b. Since we are not a partnership, do we need to fill out page 7? c. Do we need to complete both Forms A & B? d. Can you clarify what “Employment Category” refers to on these forms?

a. Pages 5, 6 and 7 in the Submission Documents go together. All bidders applying as a single entity should complete and sign Page 6 of the Submission Documents.

b. Pages 5, 6 and 7 in the Submission Documents go together. Only partnerships need to complete and sign page 7.

c. Neither Form A nor Form B is needed in response to this RFP.

d. Employment Category is a column on the Form A, which is not needed for this RFP.

- 7. A) Under section A, please clarify what info you are looking for with the question: “Describe how the agency will provide a test center environment over the course of the proposed HSE Test Center Reimbursement contract that includes the relevant provisions identified under Full Testing Support Services.”**

The proposal should delineate how each of the items identified on page 10 of the RFP, *Full Testing Support Services*, will be addressed by the bidder. These items include: 1) Provide testing support services to all examinees; 2) Offer convenient testing schedules that are frequent enough to meet community needs; 3) Have an established emergency plan for handling any testing interruptions and irregularities; 4) Provide information, guidance, and services regarding testing accommodations approved by GEDTS; 5) Advise and support candidates to make informed decisions about testing, remediation, and transitioning to post-secondary education; 6) Demonstrate a commitment to the value of the HSE testing program; and, 8) Keep detailed records.

B) Under section e, does the applicant refer to the agency applying for the grant or to the examinee?

The applicant is the agency (not the examinee) applying for funding under RFP23-004.

C) Under section e, is our second test center considered a public addendum site, even if it is also a Public School location?

A public test center and/or public addendum site is a site which enables additional public testing. Therefore, the second test center should be considered an addendum site if testing serves the public.

D) Under section I, please clarify how to answer, “How will the test center effectively engage with GEDTS and Pearson VUE (PVTC)?”

The bidder should describe their interaction with GEDTS and/or Pearson VUE, the process through which they were approved to deliver the GED® Test and their ongoing efforts, if applicable, to address any issues or questions with GEDTS and/or Pearson VUE. .

8. Page 11-Vendor Responsibility: Previously we received reimbursements through RF system, will it be the same going forward? What is VendRep System?

We do not know what the RF system is. However, after proposals are reviewed and scored, and contracts awarded, the NYSED fiscal office can provide additional answers to specific questions regarding “Vendor Responsibility,” page 21 of the RFP, which states: *NYSED recommends that vendors file the required Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire online via the New York State VendRep System. To enroll in and use the New York State VendRep System, see the [VendRep System Instructions](#) or go directly to the [VendRep System on the Office of the State Comptroller's website](#).*

9. In regards to Form A, Contractor’s Planned Employment, do we have to bill all of the staffing expense involved with the HSE to the allocation we will receive?

The Form A is not required with proposals for this RFP.

10. How will the District receive reimbursement for the State Exam?

The directions and forms required to submit for reimbursement can be found under the Test Centers Reimbursed for Administering HSE Exams heading on the NYSED [High School Equivalency \(HSE\) website](#).

11. On Page 5 of the submission documents, it reads “The person signing on behalf of the bidder ...” However, there is no place on this page for a signature. Where does the signature go?

Pages 5, 6 and 7 in the Submission Documents go together. Most bidders do not need page 7 and thus sign on Page 6.

12. On page 12 of the submission documents, it asks for “PR/AWARD NUMBER AND / OR PROJECT NAME.” Is the RFP # and name a sufficient answer?

You may leave this box blank or enter “HSE Test Centers”.

13. On the same page it also asks for a “CONTRACT NUMBER.” Where does this come from?

This box can be left blank or you may enter “RFP 23-004” in that box.

14. Are the attached documents [not seen in the Q&A], which we received from our Human Resources Dept, sufficient for #17 and #20 of the Submission Documents?

Certificates that provide acceptable proof of insurance are listed and described on pages 24 and 25 of the RFP and on the checklist (page 2) of the Submission Documents. Bidders are encouraged to include proof of insurance with their proposals.