

Questions and Answers on the Competitive Request for Proposals
ABE Transition to Community College – Fund Code 668
February 21, 2012

**1. CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS TO THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND THE
TRANSITION GUIDELINES**

- Please note correction to the Required Program Information, Section V.B, question 2, bullet a. The text should read: “Provide a list of occupational training or certificate programs completed by any student. For each ~~certificate~~ program listed, provide . . .” (delete the second usage of the word “certificate”). This correction replaces the text in the RFP.
- Proposal Date Due: Friday, February 24, 2012
- NOTE: Proposals must be delivered to the Department by 5:00 p.m. (changed from 3 p.m.) on the date due.
- Narrative responses may be single-spaced.

2. TABLE 1 FUNDING ALLOCATION CHART

Q. Should applicants assume that the \$842,372 available for this grant program will be divided up among fifteen grants (one for each community college)?

A. This is a competition; it should not be assumed that every applicant will receive a grant. Eligible applicants are the 15 Massachusetts public community colleges.

3. LETTER OF INTENT TO APPLY

Q. How many applicants returned their letter of intent for the RFP?

A. See the List of Agencies that Sent Letters of Intent to Apply updated 2/7/12 on the ACLS home page under Hot Topics.

4. NEED FOR ABE AND ESOL BY CITY AND TOWN (TABLE)

5. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

6. PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES

Q. In priority #4, is the term “cohort model” defined? If the program has multiple classes, day and evening, does the ESE cohort have to be in one class or can they be split between day and evening classes?

A. Please refer to p. 11 in the *Transition Guidelines* for information regarding the use of a cohort model.

7. ELIGIBILITY

Q. On pages 7-8 regarding student eligibility it states that a student must be able to show in SMARTT one semester at a learning center. What is your definition of one semester? What happens if a student receives the GED credential before completing the “semester”?

- A. The policy on page 7 of the Transition Guidelines reads, “Recipients of ESE Adult Basic Education Transition to Community College grants will be required to maintain a minimum enrollment of 15 ESE-funded students per semester.” Semester in this context refers to a college fall and/or spring semester. Student enrollment in a Transition program (fund code 668) means Transition students must be enrolled in one full-semester Transition course. Another related Transition enrollment policy states that 80% of Transition students must be former ESE-funded adult education students; proof that that 80% of newly enrolled Transition students had formerly been enrolled in an ESE-funded adult education program is verified by a SMARTT ID number.

8. FUND USE

- Q. Currently, our Community College is funding Transition to College evening classes with local college funds (Credit Tuition and fees and non-credit tuition) on a year-to-year basis. Item #2 under Fiscal and Data Assurances states: “The grant award funds will not be used to pay for expenses that have been paid for by any other state or federal award.” College funds used in FY 11 and FY 12 to support our evening Transition to College classes were not state grant award funds or federal grant award funds. Are we in compliance with assurance Item #2 if we apply for DESE finding for this Transition to College class in FY 13?*
- A. Federal grants may not be used to match federal or state ABE funding. See the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 80.24. State policy applies the same restrictions to state funding (federal funds may not be applied to matching requirements).
- Q. Is student transportation an allowable expense?*
- A. Yes; however, any proposed allocation for student transportation will be evaluated based on the rationale provided and cost effectiveness.
- Q. Are applicants for Transition grants still required to subcontract 10% of their grant award to ABE programs?*
- A. No. Community college recipients of ABE Transition grants are required to collaborate with two or more ESE-funded ABE programs to facilitate the successful transition of former ABE students to the community college, and maintain Memoranda of Agreement with their partners. No exchange of funds is required.

9. PROJECT DURATION

10. REQUIRED FORMS AND APPENDICES

- Q. Does the Organizational Chart required as Appendix A count towards the 12 page limit? (referenced in Required Program Information Section II, question #3, page 115)*
- A. Appendices do not count toward the 12-page limit.
- Q. Do all of the required appendices factor into the points assigned?*
- A. Yes; all appendices will be evaluated, and each will count toward the score for the section in which it is referenced.

Q. If my college is funded to provide ABE classes, may one of the ABE partners be the ABE program within the same community college, and if so, would that affect our Appendix C? (Required Program Information, Section III.A)

A. An ESE-funded Transition program may partner with the same college's ESE-funded ABE program. Memoranda of Agreement (Appendix C) are required for collaborations with all ESE-funded ABE program partners, to formalize and clarify the expectations and responsibilities of the Transition program and the partnering ABE program.

11. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS AND PAGINATION DIRECTIONS

See pagination questions in Section 11, above.

Part III – Required Program Information

12. NEED

Q. Should applicants use the Need for ABE and ESOL by City and Town Table on p. 4-16 the bound RFP to discuss need?

A. It is up to the applicant to determine how to respond to the need questions.

13. AGENCY BACKGROUND, EXPERIENCE, STRUCTURE

14. STAFFING

15. PRE-ENROLLMENT PROCESSES

Q. If my college is funded to provide ABE classes, may one of the ABE partners be the ABE program within the same community college, and if so, would that affect our Appendix C? (Required Program Information, Section III.A)

A. An ESE-funded Transition program may partner with the same college's ESE-funded ABE program. Memoranda of Agreement (Appendix C) are required for collaborations with all ESE-funded ABE program partners, to formalize and clarify the expectations and responsibilities of the Transition program and the partnering ABE program.

16. INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Q. If our program is a two-semester program, are we required to offer the College for Success and the Technology for College courses both each semester? (p. 116, Section III.B, Profile of Proposed Services - Instructional Services, question #2)

A. Transition Programs are required to offer full-semester *College for Success* and *Technology for College* courses. The intent of the policy is for all Transition students to complete a full-semester *College for Success* course and a full-semester *Technology for College* course while enrolled in the Transition Program.

Q. Are we required to offer both College Success and Computer classes each semester? Or can we offer one in the Fall and the other in the Spring semester?

A. See answer to previous question.

Q. Under Profile of Proposed Services, the syllabi for the proposed instructional courses can be no longer than two pages. Is it okay if some of the syllabi in the Appendix D are longer than two pages? Many course syllabi are routinely longer than two pages

because they contain standard information across all syllabi which covers instructor contact info, course goals, grading policy, grading breakdown, homework policy, attendance policy, plagiarism policy...etc., along with the standard course description, goals and objectives.

A. No, a syllabus of no more than two pages for each course must be included in Appendix D.

Q. *Can you explain what you mean by “in all or part of the program design” in section III, B, Instructional Services, question #1 (p. 116)?*

A. In all aspects of the program design or in some aspects of the program design.

Q. *Is the requirement to use the cohort in every part of the program?*

A. No. Refer to the *Transition Guidelines*.

Q. *Is it sufficient to have one cohort strategy?*

A. No; the Department requires two or more cohort strategies. See the *Transition Guidelines*.

Q. *Does 80% of each cohort have to be students from ESE programs?*

A. Recipients of ESE Transition grants will be required to maintain a minimum enrollment of 15 ESE-funded students per semester, no less than 80% of which will be former (or current) ESE-funded adult basic education (ABE) students, as verified by a SMARTT ID number.

Q. *Could the required 15 ESE students be in more than one cohort?*

A. It is up to the applicant to determine the strategies they will propose.

Q. *If our program is a two-semester program, are we required to offer the College for Success and the Technology for College courses both each semester? (p. 116, Section III.B, Profile of Proposed Services - Instructional Services, question #2)*

A. Refer to the *Transition Guidelines*.

Q. *If our program is a two-semester program, and I don't have a new cohort of different students in the second semester—what should I do?*

A. It is up to the applicant to determine.

Q. *Is it permissible to combine the technology class with our writing classes that will take place in the computer labs?*

A. It is up to the applicant to determine.

17. ADVISING

18. EVALUATION / CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Q. *Should we base student objectives in newly enrolled students for this funding cycle or the previous funding cycle? What to do for Transition students who are continuing?*

A. Projected participant outcomes are for students enrolled in FY13 and FY14 regardless of whether they were enrolled prior to FY13. See the Transition Guidelines for the definition of enrollment.

Q. The RFP asks applicants to identify the program objectives and outcomes for FY2013, 2014 and 2015; but one of those years is not funded. Is this correct? (Section IV Evaluation/Continuous Improvement, question #1, p. 117)

A. Yes. Although the funding cycle spans FY13-FY14, applicants are asked to project outcomes through FY15.

Q. Is the information on participant outcomes supposed to follow the student from one funding cycle to the next?

A. Applicants must set measurable objectives for participant outcomes for FY13, FY14, and FY15 with regard to students enrolled in the program in FY13 and FY14.

Q. If we include a logic model in our response to Section IV, Evaluation/Continuous Improvement, in which appendix should we put it?

A. There is no appendix for Section IV; the applicant's response to questions in Section IV must be answered within the 12-page limit.

Q. Is an evaluation component required?

A. Yes, all grant recipients are expected to annually evaluate the effectiveness of their services.

19. PAST PERFORMANCE

Please note correction to the Required Program Information, Section V.B, question 2, bullet a. The text should read: "Provide a list of occupational training or certificate programs completed by any student. For each ~~certificate~~ program listed, provide . . ." (delete the second usage of the word "certificate"). This correction replaces the text in the RFP.

Q. In section V.B., programs are asked to report on student outcomes for students who started their college career no earlier than 9/1/2009. (a) Should we also report outcomes from students who started earlier? (b) Also, what about outcomes for students who were not previously in ESE funded programs? (c) Are all those students' outcomes not counted at all?

A. (a) No. (b) No. (c) Yes.

Q. Is the request for enrollment data by semester for previous Transition grant recipients (first bullet under Section V.A), for enrollment by semesters for the college, or semesters for the specific Transition program?

A. Enrollment by semester in the ESE-funded Transition program.

Q. Can you explain the second bullet in Section V.A, Past Performance – Enrollment?

A. The annual percent of enrolled Transition students previously enrolled in ESE-funded adult education programs is based on the enrollment by semester numbers. ACLS will assign enrollment past performance points for previous recipients based on the percent of

Transition students who were previously enrolled in ESE-funded adult education programs as verified by a SMARTT ID and calculated annually.

Q. Is the request for information on student outcomes referring to Transition students or the general college and not necessarily Transition students? (Section V.B. Past Performance - Student Outcomes)

A. The question is intended to apply to both new applicants for ABE Transition to Community College grants and previous recipients. Each applicant should determine what data to use to answer the question.

Q. Under Section V, Past Performance, in the note before A. Enrollment, can you say more about what you mean by “data that is unreliable or of questionable validity”?

A. Refer to the *Transition Guidelines*, in particular, the Policies and Procedures to Ensure Data Quality section.

Q. Are all Transition programs collecting student data the same way?

A. The *Transition Guidelines* address the Department’s data collection requirements for ABE Transition to Community College grant recipients.

20. BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

Q. Is there a DESE recommendation on the rate of pay for the Transition Project Director/Coordinator positions, either full-time or full-time pro-rated, or does the applicant determine the rate using locally developed guidelines/union mandates?

A. It is up to the applicant to determine.

Q: Are the financial forms on pages 111-114 in the bound copy of the RFP available in Excel with formulas?

A. Yes. The electronic copy of the RFP includes links to all required forms <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/grants/grants13/rfp/668.html>. There are also a number of important resources on the on the ACLS RFP webpage <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/rfp/>.

Q. Does ESE have a number or range in mind of what would be a “cost effective” cost per student?

A. It is up to the applicant to determine.

Q. Should applicants assume that the \$842,372 available for this grant program will be divided up among fifteen grants (one for each community college)?

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Q. Are applicants for Transition grants still required to subcontract 10% of their grant award to ABE programs?

A. No. Community college recipients of ABE Transition grants are required to collaborate with two or more ESE-funded ABE programs to facilitate the successful transition of former ABE students to the community college, and maintain Memoranda of Agreement with their partners. No exchange of funds is required.

21. MATCH AND MATCH NARRATIVE