# Questions and Answers Re: *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) in Correctional Institutions (Planning Grant)*

***Submitted for Posting on 12/22/20***

**Q1**. May Community Corrections apply for the funds if they partner with a community-based agency or do they also need to partner with either the DOC or Sheriff’s Departments to satisfy the “correctional institution” component?

A1. Yes, if the community corrections agency meets the definition of a correctional agency shown in footnote 1.

**Q2.** Is the potential $200k award for each recipient or is the approximate amount of $200k split amongst all recipients?

A2. The latter. It is a conservative estimate of the amount to be split: however, if more Perkins funding is available for new corrections programs in FY22, the amount to split will be increased.

**Q3**. The RFP posting states at least one cohort of 10 or more students.  Due to physical space and potential Covid precautions with spacing can 10 or more students be served in more than one cohort?  In other words, instead of doing one class (cohort) of 10, are two classes (cohorts) of 5 each acceptable?

A4. Yes.

**Q4.** Pertaining to **Section A.** **Grant Profile** as shown below, what is supposed to be filled in after the colon next to the proposed industry/career pathway (please see highlight)?

A4. See sample responses below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Proposed Industry**  **/Career Pathway** | IT: Coding; CAD\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_    Architecture/Construction: Hardscaping\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_    Hospitality: \_Culinary; Baking\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_    Agriculture/Food/Natural Resources Hydroponics; Landscaping\_  Other:  \_Manufacturing; Automotive\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

**Q5**. Pertaining to **Section D. Essential Program Expertise**, is there a space limit for the response in the description of expertise?

A5. No, but it should fit within the table and not be submitted as a full narrative response.

**Q6.** Pertaining to the letter of commitment for partners on the external planning committee, can a template of what you would like be provided, or alternatively detail about what should be contained in the letter of commitment?

A6. There is not template or requirements of such a letter beyond a minimal commitment to collaborate in planningthe design or redesign of the proposed career and technical education programs

**Q7**. Just want to confirm that it is not required to submit a match budget as the budget forms do not have the areas to put in the 10% match.

A7. That is correct, given current fiscal constraints correctional institutions are now facing, no match will be required for the planning grant nor will it be required for the implementation grant in FY22. The language regarding the required 10% match should have been removed from the RFP. We will update the RFP accordingly.

**Q8.** What is the anticipated start and end date of the planning grant?

A8. We anticipate a February start date and June 30 end date.

**Q9.** What is the anticipated timeline for release of RFP and start date for the implementation grant?

A.9 We hope to post the RFP in August/September 2021 with a October/November start date.

**Q10**. Can the lead agency subcontract funds to committee partners to reimburse them for their time on the planning activities?  Would this be considered a contract or consultant category?

A10. In most, if not all cases, funds would appear on line 6 to pay individuals as consultants.

**Q11.** In section C. LOCAL AREA EMPLOYER DEMAND, what is meant by “only one is required for the planning committee”?

A11. The phrase should read: “only one submission is required from the employer who is named in the External Planning Committee Overview”.

**Q12.** Can you clarify who needs to sign the letter of commitment?  Is it the authorizing official, or actual representative involved?

A12. Ideally, it should be signed by the representative who will participate on the committee; however, a letter from the organization promising to send a representative will also suffice.

**Q13**. We are partnering with a community college on the design as that agency is the technical provider. Our plan is to contract with the college to reimburse the staff time devoted to the program design. As the college is not an individual, would this be considered a contract?

A13. Yes, but just as with individual consultants, the costs would appear in your draft budget as contractual services.

**Q14**. Does the essential program component expertise refer to just the external partners of the planning committee, or both the external partners and the lead applicant?  Also, just want to confirm that you do not want the lead applicant listed on the external planning committee table, and thus no letter of commitment is required from the lead applicant.

A14. In most cases it would be both, since at least one area of expertise is likely to be held by the lead applicant. For example, expertise in transition support services may be held by re-entry program staff with the county sheriff’s office or by transitions program staff at a community college. In such cases, a letter of commitment from re-entry or the department head should be submitted.

**Q15**.Will the bidders conf be recorded? If so, will that recording be made available?

A15. It is our intention not record it and post the link to the recording on the [ACLS webpage.](https://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/rfp/)

**Q16**. The RFP states a combination of face to face and distance learning instruction.  Is the understanding correct in interpreting that language is that 100% face to face is plan A, and distance learning is a plan B if shut down happens?

A16. No. The program must be designed, in part, to be delivered remotely.

**Q17**. As a grant consultant for Somerville, the Correctional Planning Grant may be of interest to the school administration and teaching faculty. However, it is my understanding in reviewing the grant that the grant has to be initiated by the correctional institution. Is this correct?

A17. The grant does not have to be initiated by the correctional institution. However, a “local area education or training provider” (e.g., vocational HS, community college) must be able to “demonstrate past performance in the design and delivery of career and technical education programs for individuals in correctional institutions.”

**Q18**. Does the employer on the advisory committee have to also be on the labor market demand chart (please note we will have two on the labor market chart, just not on the advisory committee per se)?

A18. Yes. The language found in the narrative template in **Section C. LOCAL AREA EMPLOYER DEMAND** (i.e.,*A minimum of 2 submissions is required: however, only* ***one is required for the planning committee****.)* was meant to convey this. However, we now see that this would have been clearer had it read—“one is required **from** the planning committee employer member”.

**Q19**. Will you send attendees the presentation materials used during the bidder’s conference?

A19. Yes, anyone interested in receiving copies may request them of Karen DeCoster at [KarenA.DeCoster@mass.gov](mailto:KarenA.DeCoster@mass.gov).

**Q20.** Can you confirm community corrections is a required partner? How are you defining community corrections and their role in this?

A20. The only “required” partners for this planning grant are the external partners noted in Section B of the narrative. However, as stated in the RFP Purpose, collaboration could include communication corrections: **The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education seeks to fund FY21 competitive federal funded planning grants to facilitate** **collaborationbetween *correctional institutions; community corrections; career and technical education (CTE) providers; and local area employers* in planning the design or redesign of career and technical education programs.** As stated in the Priority Section of the RFP: **Competitive priority will be given to planning grant applicants that demonstrate capacity and commitment to support distance learning and transition support services, pre and post release.** [Community Corrections Centers](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-out-how-community-corrections-centers-work) may be equipped to support program continuity and seamless transition for students post release, but they may not be the only area providers who can. For example, there are community-based agencies that provide similar support services (e.g., Whittier St Health Center, Office of Returning Citizens).

See question 29 as well.

**Q21**. The funding section of the Fund 452A webpage states there is funding available for up to 8 planning grants. In FY22 it states that there is only $200K available for 1 implementation grant. Will there be additional funds for implementation in later years?

A21. The $200K estimated to be available in FY22 could support 2- 4 implementation grants ranging from $500-100K. Should additional funds be available, we would support more implementation grants. Subject to federal appropriation, the Department intends to provide support and funding for Perkins programs in corrections in FY23 and beyond.

**Q22**. May this program be initiated in a community corrections center for recently released men and women or for those who have been given a probation disposition from the court as an alternative to a prison or house of correction sentence or must it begin behind the wall?

A22 Yes, provided they meet the definition of a correctional institution shown in the RFP: *Any building, enclosure, space or structure used for the custody, control and rehabilitation of committed offenders and of such other persons as may be placed in custody therein in accordance with law. (Massachusetts definition per MADOC’s Policy, Development & Compliance Unit).*

**Q23**. May a community college that provides career and technical education programs but has only provided ABE to incarcerated individuals be the lead applicant?

A23. Yes

**Q24.** Are we to cite evidence-based practice in this proposal or is this a planning design activity?

A24. No, this would be an activity/outcome of the planning committee.

**Q25**. Are you looking for the sustainable living wage be defined in the planning grant proposal?

**A25.** No, this would be an activity/outcome of the planning committee.

**Q26.** How do you define “course?” That is, what would be the minimum/maximum hours in a “course”?

A26. Guided by the Perkins Checklist, grantees should rely on the committee’s employer partner(s) to determine the size, scope, quality, and number of courses required for entry level employment in the career pathway. If the program results in an industry recognized credential, the credentialing body would also advise.

**Q27**. Would the planning grant support a subscription to Burning Glass?

A27. No, because the local area workforce development partner, a required committee member, will have these subscriptions.

**Q28.** How many students are we expected to enroll and are you requiring a cohort model, or may these courses be designed as open-ended when applicable?

A28. The expectation is a minimum of 10 per year participating in a cohort model as described in the RFP materials. See question 30 as well.

**Q29**. Would the National Career Readiness Certificate offered through the WorkKeys Curriculum be considered a recognized credential?

A29. Yes, if the credential was recognized by local area employers.

Q30. Is it a requirement that students continue training after release, or can the program concept be pre-release with the goal of a direct linkage to employment?

A30. It is not a requirement; however, recent reform laws have resulted in detainees and committed offenders moving through the system at rates that make it challenging to implement CTE programs that students can complete during their commitment. The final proposal for a FY22 implementation grant must have a plan for students to finish the program if they are released before completion.

Even if students are able to complete the program during their commitment, there should be planned transition support activities and services to facilitate employment in the career pathway or enrollment in further education and training.

**Q31**. Can a cohort have less than 5 (in our case 4) due to space issues, but still ultimately add up to over 10 during the year.

A31. As shown in the Perkins checklist, the minimum cohort size for a Perkins program in high school and community college programs is 6. Given the minimum requirement of 10 students/year for a CTE program in corrections, the minimum is 5.

**Q32.** Can we use the Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test as pre-post assessment?

A32. No, the Bennett is an aptitude test not an assessment of technical skills.

**Q33**. How does DESE define “distance learning expert” on the external committee member list.

A33. We leave that up to you; but given the unique challenges inherent in supporting distance learning in correctional settings, it should be someone with knowledge of the security needs and limitations found these settings.

**Q34.** Can we use a local union (e.g. Sheet Metal Workers) for labor market demand?

A34. Yes, you could list them in Section C of the narrative.

**Q35.** Does section D in the planning grant contemplate what the lead agency has done in the past or should the lead agency address what they intend to incorporate in the proposed program?  For example, in “Contextualized Academic Instruction”, should the lead agency state how they contextualized academic instruction in past programs or how they intend to provide “Contextualized Academic Instruction” for the proposed program.

A35. The writing prompt in Section D asks you to “*Describe the expertise of the planning committee supported by* ***past*** *performance data.”* Therefore, the written response should be a description of what the lead applicant and/or committee members have done in the past.