NEW MEXICO
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

The State of New Mexico Literacy Institute

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

RFP#
27-92400-00003

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

This document includes questions and answers to inquiries received by email. Repeated questions have been consolidated for organization and clarity. Questions that the PED is unable to answer are not included.

II. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

A. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Purpose

Q: What problems is the literacy institute intended to solve?

A: The Literacy Institute of New Mexico is intended to address persistent and unequal literacy outcomes across the state and the lack of a coordinated statewide structure for literacy support. New Mexico has multiple literacy initiatives, providers, resources, and areas of expertise, but they are not always connected through a common operating framework.

The Institute will serve as a statewide hub for literacy excellence by coordinating existing efforts, identifying service gaps, expanding access to evidence-based literacy practices, supporting educators and families, developing partnerships, and improving the use of literacy data. The Institute is also intended to improve access to services in rural, Tribal, and other communities that may not have local literacy resources.

2. Intended Age of Leaners

Q: Is the institute intended to focus on early childhood learners, K12 learners, or adult learners, or will it serve learners of all ages?

A: The Institute is intended to serve learners of all ages. Its long-term scope may include early childhood literacy, K–12 literacy, family literacy, adult literacy, English language development, digital literacy, and literacy connected to workforce and postsecondary readiness.

3. Founding Leadership

Q: To what extent have founding leadership (e.g., governing or advisory board, executive director) been identified? If not yet identified, is board/staff recruitment part of the consultant scope of work?

A: Founding leadership has not been fully identified. The selected contractor will be expected to recommend an organizational structure, governance model, leadership roles, staffing plan, job descriptions or position profiles, and a recommended recruitment and onboarding sequence.

The scope does not currently require the contractor to conduct the full recruitment or hiring process.

4. Steering or Advisory Committee

Q: Has a steering or advisory committee been established to inform the planning process?

A: A formal steering or advisory committee structure has not yet been established.

The selected contractor will be expected to recommend the committee's purpose, membership, responsibilities, meeting structure, and relationship to PED and Institute leadership. The advisory structure should include representation from educators, families, students, Tribal communities, higher education, state agencies, community organizations, literacy experts, workforce partners, and other relevant stakeholders.

5. Legal Structure

Q: What will be the legal corporate structure of the institute? I.e., Will it be a new public agency, a program of NMPED or another public agency, a public-private partnership, a 501(c)3, etc.? Or, if this is not yet known, is determining and establishing the legal structure part of the consultant scope of work?

A: The Institute's long-term legal and organizational structure has not been finalized. For planning purposes, offerors should assume that the Institute will initially operate in coordination with and under the authority of PED. Establishing a separate legal entity is not required under the current scope unless separately authorized by PED.

6. Staffing

Q: Given the statement that "The Institute is scheduled to open in January 2027," is it NMPED's expectation that the institute will be fully staffed and serving the public in January 2027?

A: PED does not expect every proposed position or program to be fully operational by January 2027. PED expects the Institute to have sufficient leadership, staffing, operational systems, partnerships, and initial programming to support a credible public launch. The contractor will recommend a minimum viable staffing and operating model for the opening, followed by a phased staffing and service expansion plan.

7. Existing Decisions

Q: What decisions have already been made regarding the Institute's mission, governance, staffing, location, funding, branding, or launch priorities?

A: The following decisions and planning assumptions have been established:

- The Institute will have a physical location in Albuquerque.
- The facility is anticipated to be ready in December 2026, with a public opening or ribbon-cutting anticipated in January 2027.

- The Institute must serve communities statewide and cannot function solely as an Albuquerque-based program.
- The Institute is intended to support literacy for all age levels.
- The Institute should be grounded in evidence-based literacy practices, including Structured Literacy and the Science of Reading where applicable.
- The Institute should support students, educators, families, communities, and literacy partners.
- The Institute should give particular attention to improving the literacy rates of all New Mexicans with particular emphasis on Native American students, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and communities identified as being historically underserved.

Decisions have not been made regarding the governance structure, detailed staffing model, complete program portfolio, final branding and visual identity, long-term funding structure, or the sequencing of services. Developing recommendations in these areas is part of the selected contractor's work.

8. Construction Status Update

Q: Can you provide an update on the status of the construction of the institute?

A: The facility and construction work are being managed separately from this planning procurement. PED currently anticipates that the facility will be available in December 2026, with a public opening or ribbon-cutting in January 2027.

9. Programming and Staffing Determination

Q: How does PED expect the physical location of the institute to determine the institute's programming and staffing?

A: The physical location should inform, but not solely determine, the Institute's programming and staffing. The Albuquerque facility may support in-person training, family programming, tutoring or demonstration services, convenings, technical assistance, resource access, and administrative functions. Staffing recommendations will be based primarily on the Institute's mission, priority services, statewide responsibilities, and expected level of demand rather than the size of the building alone.

10. Physical Location

Q: Has PED identified a physical location or facility for the Institute, or should offerors assume that part of the work includes recommending facility use and/or a statewide, regional, hybrid, or distributed service delivery model?

A: PED has identified Albuquerque as the location of the physical Institute and is managing the facility through a separate workstream. Offerors should not include identifying, leasing, or acquiring a facility in their proposals.

11. Operational Readiness

Q: What does PED consider the minimum required operational readiness for the Institute to "open" in January 2027?

A: At a minimum, PED expects the Institute to have:

- An approved mission, vision, operating framework, and initial service priorities;
- A defined governance and decision-making structure;
- Core leadership or an approved interim leadership arrangement;
- A minimum viable staffing plan and recruitment schedule;
- An approved Year One operating budget and financial controls;
- Initial policies, procedures, and operating protocols;
- An implementation and launch schedule;
- Initial partnership agreements or service-delivery arrangements;
- A public communications and outreach plan;
- Basic technology, data, scheduling, and customer-service systems;
- Initial programming or services that can be offered at or shortly after opening; and
- A plan for phased program expansion after the public launch.

Opening does not mean that every long-term program, partnership, or staff position must be fully operational by January 2027.

B. DETAILED SCOPE OF WORK

1. Project Management and Collaboration

Project Lead

Q: If PED awards different components to multiple contractors, how does PED anticipate coordination among contractors will occur? Will PED designate a lead contractor, designate an internal PED lead, or expect the contractor awarded Component 1 to manage cross-component coordination?

A: PED will designate an internal project lead or Contract Manager who will retain responsibility for approvals, contract administration, policy decisions, and resolution of issues among contractors.

If Component 1 is awarded separately, the contractor responsible for Project Management and Collaboration will be expected to maintain the integrated project schedule, coordinate shared meetings, identify dependencies, track cross-component risks, and support the integration of deliverables. The Component 1 contractor will not have authority to approve another contractor's work, direct changes to another contract, or make decisions reserved for PED.

All contractors will be required to participate in shared coordination activities and provide timely information necessary to maintain an integrated work plan.

2. Research, Assessment, and Stakeholder Engagement

A. Existing Research

Q: What research, data, feasibility studies, stakeholder findings, program concepts, or other planning materials have already been developed and will be provided to the selected contractor? Should offerors assume responsibility for independently locating and analyzing all publicly available data?

A: PED anticipates providing the selected contractor with relevant materials available to the Department.

- The selected contractor will also be responsible for locating and analyzing relevant publicly available research, state and national models, demographic information, funding sources, and other data necessary to complete the work. The contractor should begin with existing materials, identify gaps, and avoid unnecessarily duplicating completed work.

B. Level of Stakeholder Engagement

Q: What level of stakeholder engagement should Offerors include in their approach and cost, including the anticipated number and type of interviews, roundtables, regional sessions, Tribal engagement activities, or other outreach efforts?

A: Offerors should propose and price a robust but feasible hybrid stakeholder-engagement process sufficient to produce statewide findings within the required timeline.

At a minimum, the approach should include:

- Interviews with key PED leaders and relevant state agencies;
- Engagement with ECECD, PED and HED;
- Engagement with literacy experts, higher education institutions, educator preparation programs, libraries, community organizations, and workforce partners;
- At least two educator-focused roundtables;
- family, student, or community-focused roundtables;
- Engagement representing rural, urban, Tribal, and frontier communities;
- A process for gathering input from Native American communities consistent with PED's Tribal engagement; and
- Opportunities for stakeholders who cannot attend live sessions to provide written or survey-based feedback.

Offerors may recommend additional interviews, regional sessions, focus groups, or other activities if they believe those activities are necessary. The proposal should clearly identify the process

C. **Stakeholder Meetings Deadline**

Q: Is there a required date by which stakeholder input must be completed to inform the 60-day Research, Assessment, and Stakeholder Engagement Summary?

A: The primary stakeholder-engagement activities needed to inform the 60-day summary should be completed early enough to allow the contractor to analyze and incorporate the findings. Offerors should generally assume that the core engagement activities will be completed within approximately the first 45 calendar days after the notice.

Engagement may continue after the 60-day summary when additional input is needed to refine the operating model, implementation plan, communications products, or post-launch recommendations

D. **PED's Role in Stakeholder Engagement**

Q: What role will PED play in identifying stakeholders, making introductions, scheduling sessions, issuing invitations, and supporting engagement with state agencies, Tribal governments, educators, families, and other partners?

A: PED will provide an initial stakeholder list, identify priority groups, make reasonable introductions, and support invitations sent through official PED communication channels. The contractor should expect that PED will guide engagement with Tribal governments and communities.

The contractor will be responsible for developing the detailed engagement plan, schedules, materials, agendas, facilitation approach, documentation tools, surveys, accessibility arrangements, and summaries. The contractor should also maintain a stakeholder-engagement tracker and identify participation gaps requiring additional outreach.

E. **In Person or Virtual Stakeholder Meetings**

Q: Does PED expect stakeholder engagement activities to occur in person, virtually, or through a hybrid approach? Should offerors include travel assumptions in the cost proposal for stakeholder engagement across New Mexico?

A: PED expects a hybrid engagement approach. Virtual engagement should be used to increase access and reduce unnecessary travel, but the plan should include meaningful in-person engagement, particularly when working with rural, Tribal, family, student, or community stakeholders.

Offerors should include reasonable travel assumptions and related costs in their proposals. The cost proposal should clearly identify the number and general type of in-person sessions assumed.

F. **Primary Project Lead**

Q: Will PED identify a primary project lead or decision-making team responsible for day-to-day coordination, stakeholder coordination, deliverable review, approvals, and timely feedback to contractor(s)?

A: Yes. PED will designate a Contract Manager or primary project lead and an internal decision-making team. The project lead will coordinate day-to-day communication, organize PED review, facilitate access to information, and communicate approvals or required revisions.

G. **Language Access Expectations**

Q: Are there language access, accessibility, or translation expectations for stakeholder engagement materials and meetings?

A: Yes. Stakeholder materials and meetings must be accessible to individuals with disabilities and should follow applicable accessibility requirements. Offerors should plan for accessible electronic documents, virtual accessibility, and reasonable accommodations.

Offerors should include Spanish-language access for family and community engagement when appropriate. The contractor should also work with PED to identify when Indigenous language interpretation, translated materials, or other language supports are needed. Any significant interpretation or translation assumptions should be clearly identified in the cost proposal.

3. Institute Framework and Operating Model

A. **Existing Decisions**

Q: What decisions, if any, have already been made regarding the Institute's governance, legal or organizational structure, physical location, facility use, leadership, initial programs, and relationship to PED?

A: PED has established the Institute's Albuquerque location, statewide purpose, anticipated opening period, initial state funding, and broad commitment to evidence-based literacy support across the lifespan. For additional information please see 1A and 2A above.

B. **Branding and Communications Products Expectations**

Q: Does PED expect the contractor to develop final branding and communications products, such as a visual identity, logo, website content, and public materials, or only recommendations regarding identity, messaging, positioning, and communications strategy?

A: PED expects launch-ready communications recommendations and materials, not a full-scale branding or website-development engagement unless specifically authorized. A final logo, full website design, website programming,

paid media campaign, or extensive brand standards manual is not required buy may be included.

C. **Existing Branding and Communications Products**

Q: Are offerors expected to create original branding recommendations only, or will PED provide existing identity, naming, messaging, or communications parameters?

A: PED will provide applicable state and Department communications, accessibility, and visual standards.

A final visual identity, logo, tagline, and complete messaging framework have not been developed. Contractor will recommend identity and messaging approaches that are consistent with the established name, the Institute's statewide purpose, PED requirements, and the findings from stakeholder engagement.

4. Implementation and Sustainability Planning

A. **Expectations of Financial Model**

Q: What time horizon should the financial model cover, and should Offerors develop multiple operating and funding scenarios that address state appropriations, federal funds, philanthropy, partnerships, earned revenue, facilities, staffing, technology, and program costs?

A: The financial model should cover a minimum of five fiscal years. It should include a detailed Year One operating budget and annual projections for Years Two through Five.

The model should include, at minimum:

- Staffing and benefits;
- Program and instructional costs;
- Technology and data systems;
- Professional learning and travel;
- Community engagement;
- Communications;
- Contracted and partnership services;
- Supplies and operating costs;
- Recurring facility operating costs, when applicable;
- Evaluation and reporting;
- Administrative costs;
- Contingency and inflation assumptions; and
- Potential funding sources.

Major facility acquisition, construction, build-out, and furniture are addressed separately and should not be incorporated into the Institute's Year One operating budget unless PED later directs otherwise.

5. Implementation Timeline and Deliverables

A. Implementation Plan Clarification

Q: Please clarify the required distinction between the 90-day draft Institute framework and operating model and the 120-day Final Implementation-Ready Plan. Should these be separate component deliverables or progressively developed versions of one integrated plan?

A: The 90-day draft should present the recommended mission, vision, priorities, governance, organizational structure, program model, service-delivery approach, staffing model, partnership structure, and preliminary financial and implementation recommendations.

The 120-day Final Implementation-Ready Plan should incorporate PED and stakeholder feedback and add the level of detail necessary for implementation. The final plan should include finalized recommendations, position sequencing, an organizational chart, a detailed budget and financial model, implementation responsibilities, timelines, dependencies, performance measures, risk-mitigation strategies, launch activities, sustainability recommendations, and practical tools or templates required to move into operation.

B. Review and Revision Cycles

Q: How many formal PED review and revision cycles should Offerors plan for each major deliverable, what review period should be assumed for PED feedback, and what specific start and end dates should be assumed for post-launch strategic advisory support?

A: These are separate but progressively developed versions of one integrated plan. For additional information refer to 5A

C. Draft Deliverables Turnaround Time

Q: What turnaround time should offerors assume for PED review and feedback on draft deliverables?

A: Offerors should assume that PED will provide consolidated feedback within seven business days after receiving a complete draft deliverable. More complex deliverables may require additional review time. PED and the contractor may adjust individual review periods through the approved project plan when necessary to maintain quality and meet required deadlines.

C. PROPOSAL CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

1.Proposal Formatting

Q: Does PED impose a maximum page limit for the Technical Proposal? If so, please clarify whether the table of contents, resumes, required forms, financial statements, appendices, and supporting materials count toward that limit. Please also confirm any required font size, margins, spacing, and page-numbering conventions.

A: PED has not established a maximum page limit beyond the requirements stated in the RFP. Offerors should provide a complete but concise response and organize the proposal according to the required sections and components.

Proposal materials should use a readable font and layout, include page numbers, and clearly label attachments and appendices. Required forms, financial information, resumes, and supporting materials should be included as directed in the RFP. Excessively lengthy or repetitive submissions may make it more difficult for evaluators to identify the information necessary to award points.

D. COST RESPONSE

1. Anticipated Budget

Q: Has PED established an anticipated budget, funding ceiling, or target cost range for the full scope or for each individual component? If so, please provide that information so Offerors can develop appropriately scaled staffing, stakeholder engagement, travel, and deliverable plans.

A: The amount will represent the combined maximum value of the procurement, whether PED makes one award for the full Scope of Work or separate awards by component.

The anticipated period of performance is approximately five months or less. Offerors should develop a focused and efficient approach that can be completed within the required timeline and available funding.

Offerors may submit proposals for the full Scope of Work or for selected components. Cost proposals must clearly identify the price for each component and include all personnel, travel, stakeholder engagement, materials, subcontractor, administrative, and other costs necessary to complete the proposed work. PED may negotiate the scope and cost of services as permitted by the RFP and applicable procurement requirements.

E. Evaluation- see D1 for additional information

F. FUNDING AND CONTRACT AWARD LOGISTICS

1. **Anticipated Contract Value**

   Q: This RFP does not state an anticipated contract value, not to exceed amount, or available budget for the Institute's planning, budgeting, and launch strategy services. Can PED provide the anticipated budget range or ceiling for this procurement, whether for the full Scope of Work or by individual component, to help Offerors appropriately scope their proposed level of effort and staffing?

   A: PED may make one award using state funds for the full Scope of Work, separate awards by component, or multiple awards covering different combinations of components, as determined to be in the best interest of the agency and subject to the availability of funding.

   The anticipated period of performance is approximately five months or less. Offerors should propose a level of effort, staffing model, stakeholder-engagement approach, and project methodology that are realistic within the anticipated period of performance and the resources required to successfully complete the proposed work. Offerors proposing on multiple components must provide a separate cost for each component so PED can evaluate different award combinations.

2. **Funding Sources**

   Q: What are the initial and ongoing funding sources for the institute?

   A: There is state funding for the planning and launch of the Literacy Institute of New Mexico. The funding is to be used for the planning, budgeting, and launch-strategy services procured through this RFP. The remaining funding may support Institute staffing, programming, instructional and operational supplies, technology, professional learning, travel, data and evaluation, and other approved launch and operating costs.

   Long-term funding has not been finalized. The selected contractor will be expected to recommend a sustainable funding strategy that considers continued state appropriations, available federal funding, public and private grants, philanthropy, partnerships, in-kind resources, and appropriate earned-revenue opportunities. The strategy should clearly distinguish recurring operating expenses from one-time start-up or capital costs.

3. **Primary Point of Contact**

   Q: Who will be the primary points of contact on behalf of the State for this project? Who are the decisionmakers who will approve the recommendations of the consultants?

   A: During the procurement process, offerors must communicate only through the Procurement Manager identified in the RFP.

   Before contract execution, PED will identify a Contract Manager or primary project lead. PED will also establish an internal leadership and decision-making team responsible for reviewing recommendations and approving deliverables.

Final approval authority will remain with PED and other authorized state officials, as applicable.

4. **Amount of Contract Awards**

   Q: Does PED currently anticipate making one award for the full scope or separate awards by component? If separate awards are made, how will PED coordinate and integrate the work of multiple contractors?

   A: PED reserves the right to make one award for the full Scope of Work, separate awards for individual components, or multiple awards covering different combinations of components.

   If multiple awards are made, PED will designate an internal project lead. The contractor responsible for Project Management and Collaboration, if awarded separately, will maintain the integrated work plan, shared schedule, risk and dependency tracking, and cross-contractor coordination process. PED will retain authority for contract administration, deliverable approval, and resolution of conflicting recommendations.

5. **Contract Amendments**

   Q: The draft contract at Appendix C, Paragraph 3 states the Agreement terminates on January 31, 2027. However, Section IV.A.5 describes Strategic Advisory Support occurring weekly during the first month following the Institute's opening in January 2027, and Final Presentation and Submission of Final Deliverables due within 30 calendar days after completion of the Strategic Advisory Support period. If the Institute's opening or the Strategic Advisory Support period extends past January 31, 2027, will PED amend the contract term to accommodate these deliverables, or should Offerors assume all services, including Strategic Advisory Support and Final Deliverables, must be completed by January 31, 2027, regardless of the Institute's actual opening date?

   A: Offerors should assume that Strategic Advisory Support will occur during the first 30 calendar days following the Institute’s actual public opening and that the final presentation and final deliverables will be due within 30 calendar days after completion of that support period.

   PED intends to align the contract term with the required services and deliverables. PED may revise the final contract term before execution or process an amendment, subject to applicable approvals and available funding, if the actual opening date requires services to continue beyond January 31, 2027. Offerors should price the full required period of post-launch support rather than if all services will end on January 31, 2027.

6. **Future Institute Projects**

   Q: Would selection as a contractor for one or more planning components affect that contractor’s eligibility to be considered for future strategic partnership,

implementation, programming, professional learning, or operational support opportunities related to the Institute?

A: Serving as a Contractor for this work will not automatically disqualify a contractor from competing for future Institute-related opportunities. Future services will be procured in accordance with applicable state procurement requirements. No contractor selected under this procurement is guaranteed future work.