Prospective Bidders Questions and Answers

QI: In the Response Package section of the RFP, it requires that everything be submitted in the order listed, but it does not list the MOU or DSA documents. Any guidance on where these fit in to the line-up?

AI: The MOU and DSA were provided as attachments to the RFP, for potential grantee's reference and for them to utilize during conversations with their community college partner. These do not need to be submitted with potential grantee's proposals.

Q2: This section does include a request to include "historically underutilized business (HUB) status: include proof of status, if applicable. Submission Label: HUB Status, but I cannot find any additional information about this form or proof of status. Please explain.

A2: Please disregard this request.

Q3: In Narrative – Question 13, what is meant by "random assignment procedures"? I'm guessing this has something to do with selection of participating and control group students, but not sure.

A3: Random assignment procedures refers to allowing eligible interested students to be assigned to a "treatment group" or "control group" by a virtual lottery. The random assignment of students into these groups will be controlled by CCFW/LEO. Grantees will responsible for ensuring that students are communicated their correct randomization results, and students assigned to the control group do not receive services from the program team beyond providing a brief list of campus/community resources to the student.

Q4: Regarding the control group of students: who is responsible for tracking and submitting the data that LEO will need for this group?

A4: LEO coordinates directly with the community college to obtain access to data on the control group through administrative records (National Student Clearinghouse); therefore, LEO will be responsible for obtaining this information.

Q5: What is the financial process for this program – is it a regular invoice submission of expenses or upfront funding based on the budget prepared with the application?

A5: Funding will be provided through a cost-reimbursable contract. Grantees will submit a monthly invoice to the *Stay the Course*™ Replication Program Manager by the 15th of each month.

Q6: In the budget, is agency occupancy and IT support considered part of the 10% allowable administrative allocation, or may they be included in the program costs?

A6: Administration (indirect cost) expenses should be based on your agencies latest indirect cost rate agreement that has been negotiated with a cognizant federal agency. If your agency does not have an approved indirect cost rate you can include your agencies indirect cost, as long as there is consistent treatment across your agency. These cost should be shared cost for the benefit of your entire agency. They can include, but are not limited to, occupancy, IT support, human resources, accounting and executive management, etc. If there are certain administrative cost that are directly related to the program they can be included under other direct expenses.

Q7: What are the FERPA requirements, if any, of the service provider agency? Or does FERPA compliance lie with the Community College partner?

A7: FERPA is a federal law that permits the community college to share student data with LEO, as they are a research organization that will be conducting research on behalf of the college; however, all entities that will have access to the student data, including the service provider, will be responsible for ensuring compliance with FERPA. FERPA compliance will require the service provider to follow practices that maintain security and confidentiality of all student records.

Q8: In the budget, can we include transportation costs to get students to and from the community colleges? Such as, contracting with a van service?

A8: No. The *Stay the Course*™ program does not provide transportation for students in the program; however, Navigators will work with students to eliminate or alleviate any transportation barriers that may pose a risk to a student's ability to persist in school and complete their degree.

Q9: When calculating the unemployment rate and poverty rate for the service area, can we look at census tracts instead of the entire county? Would we still receive preference for that data?

A9: No. CCFW will use county data to evaluate unemployment and poverty rate and determine whether applicant meets the criteria outlined in the RFP.

Q10: We are exploring the idea of bring together a coalition of three community colleges and two nonprofits for this project. If one of the community colleges is in an urban location and the other two are not, would we still receive preference?

A10: For this RFP, only one 501(c)(3) non-profit social service organization may apply to receive funding, for each award available. The applicant may partner with more than one community college, if needed to meet the full-time Pell-Grant eligible student population required. Should an applicant decide to partner with more than one community college, they must specify in their application whether the community colleges are affiliated with one another (e.g., same system, different campuses) or separate institutions and demonstrate that a clear plan has been established on how the organization plans to operationalize and implement the program at three locations. In the scenario provided, CCFW would evaluate how many students would be recruited from the urban location in comparison to the rural locations, to determine whether preference would be awarded.

Q11: Do MOUs and Data Sharing Agreements need to be completed at the time of submission?

A11: The MOU and DSA were provided as attachments to the RFP, for potential grantee's reference and for them to utilize during conversations with their community college partner. These do not need to be submitted with potential grantee's proposals.

Q12: Do we need to attach letters of commitment regarding our funding match?

A12: Applicants are encouraged to include relevant information regarding how they will support the *Stay the Course*™ program in their Letter of Support, which may include their match commitment.

Q13: Can we submit our application just via e-mail or do we have to send a hard copy as well to the address provided?

A13: Proposals may be submitted through e-mail or a hard copy can be submitted through the mail. Applicants may decide their preference for submission.

Q14: If awarded, when will the first annual training occur, during the "prepare to launch" phase or after that and will the training take place in Fort Worth?

A14: CCFW will coordinate with all *Stay the Course™* grantees to determine a date for the two-day orientation/annual training. This will occur *prior* to the Fall 2019 academic school year for all sites, if possible.

The two-day orientation/annual training will occur in Fort Worth, Texas in 2019; however, locations are subject to change in subsequent years.

Q15: Are you looking to replicate the program in communities outside of Tarrant County? Or is CCFW looking for a qualified agency to further CCFW's STC work with TCC in Tarrant County?

A15: For the this RFP CCFW is looking to replicate the program in communities outside of Tarrant County, as CCFW currently operates the *Stay the Course™* program at all five Tarrant County College campuses. Interested applicants in the Tarrant County area are encouraged to consider neighboring counties. Additionally, there may be future opportunities to replicate this program in the Tarrant County area, as CCFW will be looking to implement variations of the program.

Q16: Will there be another RFP issued in 2019 for replication partners?

A16: CCFW plans to continue replicating and expanding the *Stay the Course™* program over the next few years; however, at this time, the process for selecting future replication sites has not been determined.

Q17: What suggestions does CCDFW have when the community college partner has a variety of student support programs, but does not offer any program similar to *Stay the Course™*.

A17: CCFW recommends highlighting to the potential community college that *Stay the Course™* is an *evidence-based* program that is researched through Notre Dame's Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunity. The *Stay the Course™* program focuses on helping students navigate personal and institutional obstacles, (which is two of the four reasons cited by research for why students do not persist and complete their degrees) which is unique in comparison to other support services traditionally offered to students at community colleges. Our recommendation would be to encourage your potential community college to evaluate their existing programs and assess the needs of their students to determine whether this program would be a good fit.

Q18: Is there an estimate for the time commitment required by the community college for data collection and submission?

A18: There is no existing estimate for the time commitment required by the community college for data collection and submission. This will likely vary depending on the community college and their capacity; however, existing partners have reported this to be a relatively easy request to fulfill.

Q19: Is there available funding to offset the cost of the community college for data collection?

A19: If the community college requests compensation for compiling and submitting data these costs would be allowable and should be included in your budget.

Q20: In the data sharing agreement (attachment E) is the community college providing data for all enrolled students (20,000 students), including non-Pell Grant eligible students.

A20: No, the community college will not provide data for all enrolled students, only those eligible for the *Stay the Course™* program. With respect to income, the eligibility requirement is that students are either eligible for the federal Pell-Grant or they family income falls below 200% of the federal poverty line.

Q21: According to the program design, student selected for the intervention meet with their Navigators bi-weekly. This seems like a lot for this demographic of student. Have you found it difficult to hold students to bi-weekly meetings?

A21: As a part of the informed consent process, students are informed of the service intensity of the program, including contact requirements, before they are asked whether they want to participate and complete required enrollment paperwork; therefore, students who sign-up for the program have committed to meeting bi-weekly face-to-face throughout their participation. However, there are circumstances (e.g., illness, competing priorities, etc.) that do prevent students from meeting their bi-weekly meeting requirement occasionally. Navigators are encouraged to be strategic (e.g., walk students to class) and "meet students where they are" to assist students with meeting this requirement.

Q22: Question 46 of the Internal Control Structure Questionnaire Section II. D is missing. Please confirm that this is a typo and there is not a question to be answered.

A22: This is confirmed as a typo. There is a no Question 46 on this questionnaire.

Q23: In the Service Provider Response Form, questions 5 & 8 refer to an August 1, 2018 program launch date. Please confirm that this is a typo and should be August 1, 2019.

A23: This is confirmed as a typo. Questions #5 & #8 on the Service Provider Response form should read August 1, 2019.

Q24: Re: Section II. E. of the Internal Control Structure Questionnaire: Does this section ask whether we subcontract *the provision of human services*, or whether we subcontract *any services* (i.e., IT, HR, administrative, etc.)

A24: II. E. of the Internal Control Structure Questionnaire is referring to the subcontracting out the provision of services under the *Stay the Course*™ RFP. Purchasing of general services or professional fees would not fall under this section.

Q25: If we are not awarded the grant, will we have an option to replicate the model anyways?

A25: If an applicant is not awarded a grant and is still interested in replicating the *Stay the Course*™ program, please contact Natalie Jacobs (njacobs@ccdofw.org) at CCFW after conclusion of the RFP process, to discuss what potential opportunities are available.

Q26: What geographic strategy exists, if any, for where CCFW is looking to replicate the *Stay the Course*™ program?

A26: For this RFP, CCFW is looking to replicate the *Stay the Course*™ program in communities outside of Tarrant County (although there may be opportunities to replicate a variation of the program in Tarrant County in the future). 501(c)(3) non-profit social service organizations from across the nation are welcome and encouraged to submit a proposal. While the RFP does reference preference to be provided to a site that meets a certain rural classification, that does not mean that this is a requirement to apply.