

**REFUGEE SUPPORT SERVICES (RSS)/RSS SET-ASIDE  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)  
OFFEROR'S CONFERENCE  
MAY 9, 2023**

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

1. Can proposals include more than one proposed activity?

**Answer:** No. Each proposed activity requires its own, individual proposal.

2. How does a provider determine a refugee's English language proficiency level is sufficient enough to enroll into the Employment Services Stand-Alone activity, which is for refugees that are not in need of English language instruction?

**Answer:** Providers will be required to administer an English Language Assessment to each refugee enrolled utilizing an industry recognized assessment tool (e.g., CASAS, BEST, TABE).

3. How do you define "English language proficiency Student Performance Level 3 (SPL-3)?"

**Answer:** If utilizing the CASAS for language literacy assessment, CASAS has a conversion chart that aligns with SPLs, and provides detailed descriptors of an English Language Learners (ELL) general language capability at each CASAS/SPL. (*see attached chart*)

4. Per page II-6, it is indicated that as part of assessment, providers will need to collect the "self-reported" English language literacy capability for family members ages 16 and over. Is it expected that refugees will need to self-report literacy levels using CASAS scores or SPL?

**Answer:** No. Family members will "self-report" language capability by indicating one of the following:

- No English language capability at all
- Not well
- Well
- Very Well

5. The Planning Calendar and page I-11, paragraph 19, "Start-up and Program Operation", indicates that the start date for program operations next year is Tuesday, October 2, 2023. Shouldn't it be October 1, 2023?

**Answer:** There is a correction to this date. The first date of program operations for next year is *Monday*, October 2, 2023, not Tuesday. The RFP has been corrected and updated.

6. What date must an audit be submitted if utilizing it in lieu of the Certification of Accounting System form, Attachment #8?

**Answer:** An audit, or the Certification of Accounting System form, Attachment #8, must be submitted by the prequalification deadline of May 31, 2023. Be advised that the submission of an audit does not immediately satisfy prequalification requirements. If utilized, audits must be reviewed and deemed acceptable by SETA's Administration Deputy Director.

7. Audits do not appear to be on the list of prequalification forms due by May 31, 2023. If a non-profit is unable to collect a signed Certification of Accounting System form, Attachment #8, from a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), can an audit be submitted at the time funding is awarded, and prior to the execution of the contract?

**Answer:** No. As indicated, audits are sometimes utilized by organizations *in lieu* of the submission of the Certification of Accounting System forms, Attachment #8; therefore, are not listed in the RFP and are offered as an option. However, like the Attachment #8, they are required to be submitted by the prequalification deadline of May 31, 2023. Failure to do so will result in an organizations inability to continue onto the next phase of the procurement process.

8. For English language assessment, our agency uses a Canadian software called Robotel. What indicates SPL-3 level, and is this assessment tool acceptable to SETA.

**Answer:** SETA is unfamiliar with this assessment tool and, therefore, does not know how SPL-3 would be determined using Robotel. It is recommended that organizations proposing the use of an English language assessment tool other than those universally recognized, such as the CASAS, BEST, and TABE, make sure to describe, in great detail, the software, and its capabilities in their proposals.

9. If including an "indirect cost" in the proposed Budget and Cost Allocation Plan, is the letter of the approved indirect rate from the cognizant agency required with the submission of the proposal?

**Answer:** Yes, however, in lieu of the letter from the cognizant agency of an approved rate, organizations may download a copy of their approved rate from the California Department of Education's website to attach to proposed Budget and Cost Allocation Plans.

10. Can you provide more clarification on maximum funding levels requested on page V-20.

**Answer:** As indicated in the RFP, funding is subject to increases each year based upon availability of federal funding, therefore, funding awards may include increases in funding levels that exceed a provider's year one proposed funding level. In the event final, annual allocations from the CDSS-RPB result in increased funding, we'd like providers to indicate their **maximum** funding levels per year to enable us to award funding amounts that exceed those proposed budget amounts. For example, if an organization submits a VESL/ES proposal with the proposed budgeted amount of \$200,000, they may indicate \$400,000 under Maximum Year One Funding, \$500,000 under Maximum Year Two Funding, and \$600,000 under Maximum Year Three. By doing so, if SETA's 2022-24 or future program year funding awards from CDSS-RPB are significantly more than estimated in the RFP, SETA will be able to award providers up to the maximum amounts indicated in their proposals mitigating the need for a new procurement to award the additional funds. Providers should be liberal when indicating highest, or maximum, amounts.

11. When entering total number of clients to be served on page V-3, do proposers include planned enrollments and their family members, or just include the numbers of planned enrollments?

**Answer:** Proposers are to only include the number of clients planned for enrollment. This ties directly to the cost per enrolled participant.

12. Can the Certification of Accounting System form, Attachment #8, be completed and signed by a Certified Management Accountants (CMA) as opposed to a CPA?

**Answer:** No, the form must be signed by a licensed CPA.

13. If an organization is currently funded by SETA under CSBG, not the RSS grant, does that consider them a current provider mitigating the need to complete Exhibit D, References?

**Answer:** Yes. If currently funded under any of SETA's grants, proposers do not need to completed Exhibit D, References.

14. Since RSS is a federal grant, are indirect rates limited to 5 percent?

**Answer:** No, the indirect rates are not limited to 5 percent. They are only limited to an organization's approved rate.

15. If all On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts are executed containing 640 hours of training, providing reimbursement to employers at 100 percent would be extremely expensive. Is there flexibility to negotiate reimbursement rates with employers for longer-term training opportunities?

**Answer:** Yes, there is flexibility. Providers have the ability to negotiate rates for reimbursement, as well as the number of hours that will be reimbursed if an OJT is a longer-term training. For example, if training hours for an OJT total 500 hours based on the actual training elements and the skills gaps of a participant, a provider could negotiate with an employer to reimburse up to 300 of the hours with the assurance from the employer that the remaining 200 hours would be completed, tracked and reported. Also, providers have the latitude to negotiate different reimbursement rates with each employer. For example, one OJT contract may include a 30 percent employer reimbursement, and another OJT could include an employer reimbursement of 100 percent.

16. Are "Additional" Support Services described on page II-7 different than the five percent required to be set-aside in the Support Services line-item in proposed Budget and Cost Allocation Plans?

**Answer:** Yes, they are different. The five percent required to be set-aside under employment activities for support services is intended to cover ancillary supports, such as work boots, tools, uniforms, etc., as well as license and registration fees, the translation and evaluation of foreign degrees and credentials, and transportation assistance, to name a few. If funding is available, the "Additional" Support Services are intended for housing, utilities, and technology supports. As indicated in the RFP, proposers do not need to apply for these additional supports. Funds permitting, awards will be made to providers under each employment program based on the number of refugees to be served and the established cost per participant at the time of award.