

NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

High School Equivalency Assessment

Competitive Request for Applications



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Request for Application

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1.0 Intent

The New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) (hereinafter referred to as the “Department”) is soliciting written replies from qualified vendors (hereinafter referred to as the “Respondent (s)”) to establish a term contract of which the term is anticipated to begin upon execution of the contract and be effective for three years thereafter. The resulting contract may be renewed for up to three (3) one-year terms. Award will be made to the responsible and responsive Respondent(s) that Department determines will provide the best value to the state.

1.1 Purpose of This Request for Application

The purpose of this Request for Application (RFA) is to solicit responses for state approval for high school equivalency (HSE) assessments that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), for the state of New Mexico (hereinafter referred to as the CCSS).

The Respondent must demonstrate how it will provide an HSE computer-based and/or paper-based assessment for use in a variety of HSE testing centers throughout the state. New Mexico currently has 32 computer-based testing HSE sites and five correctional/juvenile computer-based HSE testing sites. These sites test approximately 8,500 individuals each year.

A review committee appointed by the Department will use objective criteria to review such responses and determine which assessment(s) will be presented to the Department for approval as a pathway to a New Mexico High School Equivalency Credential. The assessment (s) will be approved for use in test centers that contract with one or more of the approved Respondents.

No funding is directly or indirectly associated with this RFA. The Department will not reimburse Respondents for any costs associated with their response to this RFA. The selection of a successful Respondent (s) will result in a contract (s) with Department.

The information must be received by Department on or before 5:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time (MST) November 10, 2014 to be considered for state approval. Electronic submissions are required.

1.2 Background Information

(NMSA 1978 Section 22-2-8.8) provides for a high school equivalency diploma program to be administered by the PED. The secretary of education issues a high school equivalency diploma, known as the New Mexico High School Equivalency Credential to candidates who have successfully passed approved subject areas for English language arts, including writing, mathematics, science, and social studies.

1.3 Public Education Department Vision

Bold, visionary reform that puts students first in every decision will increase student achievement and prepare them for success in colleges and careers. We call on every educator, student, parent, community member, and public servant to share in the responsibility for the success of our children and, ultimately, the future of the great state of New Mexico. When we put our kids first, New Mexico will win.

1.4 Eligible Applicants

This RFA solicits responses from Respondents seeking to have an HSE assessment placed on the state’s list of *Approved High School Equivalency Assessments and Vendors*. New Mexico test centers may utilize only an HSE assessment provider on the approved list.

Successful Respondent(s) must demonstrate experience in developing and administering large-scale assessments by paper and/or computer; providing training for test administration staff; and printing and shipping a high volume of tests and test-related materials in a secure and timely manner.

Successful Respondent(s) must have a minimum of three (3) years' experience providing services for a large-scale (e.g., statewide or national) high-stakes testing program. A high-stakes testing program includes assessments used for federal and state educational accountability purposes, student graduation requirements, and college qualification or entrance exams.

1.5 Reservations of Rights

Department reserves the right to: (1) reject submissions not received in the format or within the specified guidelines; (2) withdraw the RFA at any time, at the Department's sole discretion; (3) require additional information as needed; (4) change any of the scheduled dates; (5) request more information on Respondent's cost estimates.

1.6 Definitions and Terminology

This section contains definitions that are used throughout this application document, including appropriate abbreviations.

Adult Basic Education: (ABE) Adult education is the process whereby adults engage in systematic and sustained learning activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values. Adult education can take place in the workplace, through extension school, or through a school of continuing education.

Adult Literacy: The ability to read, write coherently, and think critically about the written word. Additionally, the ability to compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential. It is important to remember, however, that the level of essential skills needed to meet any definition of literacy will necessarily change as the demands of the workplace, the family, and the society change

Adult Secondary Education Programs: Comprehensive secondary education programs involve instruction below the college credit level in reading, writing and literature, mathematics, science, and social studies, including functional context and instruction for adults who do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Alternative High School Education Programs: Alternative education provides methods of adapting educational programs to meet the individual needs of students and, at the same time, provide a vehicle for examining new ways of learning in a changing society. For the purpose of this RFA, alternative high school education programs are high school education courses or classes that fall outside of the comprehensive high school.

Applicant: This is any person or entity authorized to submit a proposal.

Application Manager: This is the individual selected by the Department to monitor and manage all aspects of the award resulting from this RFA.

College and Career Readiness: College and career readiness refers to the content knowledge, skills, and habits that students must possess to be successful in postsecondary education or training that leads to a sustaining career. A student who is ready for college and career can qualify for, and succeed in, entry-level, credit-bearing college courses without the need for remedial or developmental coursework.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS): The CCSS are a set of high-quality academic expectations in English-language arts (ELA) and mathematics that define the knowledge and skills all students should master by the end of each grade level in order to be on track for success in college and career.

Computer-Based Testing: Computer-based tests are defined as tests or assessments that are administered by computer in either stand-alone or networked configuration or by other technology devices linked to the Internet or the World Wide Web. For purposes of this RFA, computer based testing (CBT) allows prospective test takers to take high school equivalency tests using a computer.

Deliverable: Any measurable, tangible, verifiable outcome, result, or item that must be produced to complete a project or part of a project can be considered a deliverable.

Department: Herein, the Public Education Department (PED) may be referred to as such.

Determination: The written documentation of the applications manager, including findings of fact supporting a decision is referred to as the Determination. A Determination becomes part of the application file to which it pertains.

Developmental Education: This is a field of practice and research within higher education with a theoretical foundation in developmental psychology and learning theory. It promotes the cognitive and affective growth of all postsecondary learners, at all levels of the learning continuum.

Evaluation Committee: This body is appointed by management of the Department to evaluate the applications received in response to this RFA.

Finalist: This refers to an applicant who meets all the mandatory specifications of the RFA and scores high enough on the evaluation criteria to qualify for further consideration by the evaluation committee.

High School Equivalency Credential: This credential is a high school degree awarded through the successful completion of a series of examinations that are approved by the PED.

High School Equivalency Testing Center: An approved facility, authorized by the PED to administer high school equivalency tests, has this designation.

High School Equivalency Test Instruction: These are programs that provide instruction for adults and eligible minors who have elected to take a series of tests that measure the extent to which they have gained the knowledge, skills, and understanding ordinarily acquired through a high school education; instruction and testing focus on writing, social studies, science, reading, and mathematics.

Reply/Replies: This designation refers to the response/responses provided by the Respondent.

Request for Applications (RFAs): In this document, RFAs refer to documents used to solicit applications for the High School Equivalency Assessment.

Requirements: These refer to the obligatory functions of the organization's goals and business opportunities. Defined by the project team, requirements are usually priorities.

Respondent: The Respondent is any person or entity authorized to submit a proposal.

Secondary Education Programs: In most jurisdictions, secondary education in the United States refers to the last four years of formal education (grade nine through grade 12), either at high school or split between a final year of junior high school and three in high school.

State: For this document, State refers to the state of New Mexico.

Webb’s Depth of Knowledge: Depth of Knowledge is also referred to as DOK. Depth of knowledge is the complexity or depth of understanding required to answer or explain an assessment-related item. The concept of depth of knowledge was developed through research by Norman L. Webb in the late 1990s. Webb identified four distinct depths of knowledge levels:

- Level 1 includes basic recall of facts, concepts, information, or procedures.
- Level 2 includes skills and concepts such as the use of information (graphs) or requires two or more steps with decision points along the way.
- Level 3 includes strategic thinking that requires reasoning and is abstract and complex.
- Level 4 includes extended thinking such as an investigation or application to real work.

Section 2

SCOPE OF APPLICATION

2.0 Scope of Work

The Department is seeking one or more assessments for high school equivalency based on core content areas. The primary purpose of the assessment is to award a high school equivalency credential (the New Mexico High School Equivalency Credential). The high school equivalency credential program is authorized in section (NMSA 1978 Section 22-2-8.8).

The Respondent shall provide the Department with an existing assessment for high school equivalency in the content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. For the English language arts and mathematics content areas, the assessment must be aligned to—and measure—mastery of the New Mexico Common Core State Standards in English language arts/literacy, and mathematics. For purposes of responses to this RFA, the New Mexico Standards should be considered the same as the Common Core State Standards, as they were officially adopted by the state of New Mexico in October 2011.

The assessment must be available commencing January 1, 2015. Therefore, the level of development is left to the Respondent. Future development after January 1, 2015 is permitted, but the test must meet the New Mexico Common Core State Standards by January 1, 2015.

The High School Equivalency Credential Program is supported by fees assessed to test takers for the assessment. This testing fee must include all costs associated with the delivery of the high school equivalency assessment, including all accommodations.

Once the Department has entered into a contract for the administration of one (1) or more high school equivalency assessments pursuant to this solicitation, the Department will amend 6.30.3 NMAC, to establish the passing score and fees for the assessment/assessments chosen for the contract award. Because the assessment offered is not presently identified in 6.30.3 NMAC, no offer or response to the solicitation will be deemed non-responsive, not responsible, or otherwise negatively evaluated.

2.1 Testing Volume

The number of test takers and modules delivered for the current high school equivalency exam for the previous five calendar years are specified in the following table:

TABLE 1

Calendar Year	Number of Unique Test Takers
2013	10,453
2012	8,495
2011	8,371
2010	8,829
2009	8,941

2.2 Test Content and Alignment with College and Career Readiness Standards

The Respondent is responsible for the test design and delivery of a high school equivalency assessment. The Respondent is responsible for providing an assessment with multiple test modules that assesses college and career readiness standards in the following areas:

- English language arts (ELA)
- mathematics
- science
- social studies

The Respondent must provide a valid and reliable assessment for all content areas in either a computer-based format, paper-based format, or both.

The Department is interested in leveraging empirically validated item formats that take advantage of the capabilities of 21st century skills, if the assessment is available in a computer-based format. Examples of these item types include:

- drag-and-drop—in which test takers select from multiple possible responses to select one, via mouse-click or key-stroke combination, and then “drag” it to insert (drop) it in an indicated blank to correctly complete a mathematics formula, text-editing task, etc. This process may be repeated for the same test item so that multiple answers are placed into multiple blanks.
- hot spot—in which test takers indicate the answer by clicking a specific area of an image
- short answer—in which test takers provide a short narrative answer in response to a question or prompt

2.3 Alignment with New Mexico Standards and Science and Social Studies Content

2.3.1 ELA (Reading, Writing, and Language) Alignment with New Mexico Standards

The test modules which assess English language arts competency must include task items that align with the New Mexico Standards at the high-school level for the purpose of determining college and career readiness in reading, writing, and language skills. The K–12 standards for New Mexico are available at:

<http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/NMAC/parts/title06/06.029.0013.htm>

The assessment must include at least one extended writing response that assesses content for college and career readiness and is aligned with New Mexico Standards for writing.

The Department is interested in test questions that assess writing skills in which the candidate must

- develop an extended response citing evidence from passages
- document the ability to edit passages

2.3.2 ELA Test Specifications

The test modules that assess English language arts must use passages with levels of complexity that reflect high school knowledge demands and college and career readiness.

2.3.3 Mathematics Alignment with New Mexico Standards

The test modules that assess mathematics competency must align with the New Mexico Standards. The K–12 standards for New Mexico are available here:

<http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/NMAC/parts/title06/06.029.0014.htm>

2.3.4 Science Content

The test modules that assess science competency shall be aligned with New Mexico Standards for Excellence (6.29.10 NMAC). <http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/NMAC/parts/title06/06.029.0010.htm>

2.3.5 Social Studies Content

The test modules that assess social studies competency shall be aligned with New Mexico Standards for Excellence (6.29.11 NMAC). <http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/NMAC/parts/title06/06.029.0011.htm>

2.4 Test Development

2.4.1 Test Development Content Experts

The Respondent should have developed the assessment product with appropriate content experts and psychometricians.

2.4.2 Test Item Development and Establishment of Cut Scores for High School Equivalency and College and Career Readiness

The Respondent should have conducted field testing and piloted the test questions for the assessment. The Respondent must provide recommended cut scores for high school equivalency based on norm-referencing of a population of recent high school graduates.

The Department is interested in the establishment of a cut score for college and career readiness. This score should reflect readiness for college without the need for remediation or readiness placement in the workforce in occupations that are in high demand.

2.5 Computer-Based and/or Paper-Based Delivery System for the Assessment

2.5.1 Computer Delivery of the Assessment

The Respondent is responsible for producing all versions of computer-delivered products developed for this project, including test forms. These products include all information, text, and graphics that will be presented to computer-based test users.

The functionality of computer-based testing (CBT) forms (e.g., tools, reference sheets, navigation) must be checked carefully to ensure that errors have not been introduced and that the functionality remains consistent across forms and administrations.

The Respondent will be responsible for all aspects of production of the CBT system, including a secure web-based reporting site for scores.

The Respondent must submit documentation that identifies screen layouts and navigation elements, font style and size requirements, background and foreground color palettes, and requirements for graphics.

2.5.2 Alignment to the Common Core State Standards

The Respondent shall provide detailed information on how the High School Equivalency Assessment will be aligned to the New Mexico Common Core State Standards. This information should include an explanation of content areas that will be covered in the test.

2.5.3 Usability Analysis of the Computer-Based Assessment

In reference to the computer-based assessment, the Department is interested in a product that has been tested on an adult population to ensure the ease of use of the product for the adult test taker.

2.5.4 Accommodations Review System for Students with Documented Disabilities

The Respondent is responsible for the review and approval of accommodations for students with documented disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended and under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, the Respondent must provide all necessary accommodations to comply with state and federal law.

2.5.5 Cut Scores

The Respondent shall describe the process for establishing test cut scores—provide a recommendation for a minimum passing score and an explanation of how dual cut scores would be developed to indicate high school equivalency and college/career readiness.

2.5.6 Test Administration

The Respondent will be responsible for ensuring the secure delivery of a computer-based exam to approved testing centers in New Mexico. Security of tests and individual test results shall be maintained. Access to student test results must be restricted to authorized Department and testing center staff based on a secure, encrypted, password-protected system. The Respondent shall provide test security compliant with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 USC 1232 (g) and 34 CFR 99.

2.5.7 Verification of Test Taker Identity

The Respondent is responsible for the development of procedures for the verification of candidate identity. The Department is interested in any biometric verification of identity that will be used to prevent fraudulent activity.

2.5.8 Test Session Requirements

The system must be available during all steps of initiating and delivering tests to include:

- a searchable, sortable, student look-up subsystem
- rosters of students in each test session
- the ability to generate an unofficial score report (if immediate scoring of test module is part of the assessment product)

During the test session, automated backup, recovery, and restart procedures for the system must be in place. The system must recover data from an unforeseen test interruption and return the test-taker to the point of interruption. The system must also show student status and progress through the items in the test.

The system must assure proper identification of each student and the accurate matching of the student to his/her test results.

The ability to make changes to data or processes in any part of the system must be based on a password-protected, hierarchical, permissions structure.

2.5.9 Computer-based Delivery Platform

The Department requires the delivery of a computer-based test to all eligible testing centers. For test administration in secure correctional facilities, the delivery platform must meet the New Mexico Department of Corrections' requirement that no inmate or other offender, under the supervision of the Department, will access (or gain access to) the Department of Corrections' internet services or computer networks.

2.5.10 Test Site Set-Up/Certification Requirements

The Respondent will develop specifications for, and deliver a system to provide access to, computer-based tests in testing sites approved by the Department. The entities eligible to deliver the High School Equivalency Assessment are the following:

- public schools or other appropriate facilities of a local education agency (LEA)
- charter schools
- public postsecondary educational institutions
- correctional facilities for state and/or local inmates
- correctional facilities for individuals in the custody, or under the supervision, of the New Mexico Department of Juvenile Justice
- other non-profit or governmental entities, if adequate access to public testing is not available at public schools and public postsecondary educational institutions in the county

The Respondent will be responsible for certifying that eligible testing centers meet the technical requirements, are properly prepared, and can successfully deliver tests.

2.5.11 Test Center Administrators and Proctors

Each testing center, authorized by the Department to offer the High School Equivalency Assessment, must have staff members who are certified and approved to deliver this assessment. The following individuals must be excluded from serving as test administrators and proctors. Excluded are individuals instructing potential candidates for the tests, particularly teachers involved in

- Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- adult literacy
- high school equivalency test instruction
- secondary education programs
- adult secondary education programs
- alternative high school education programs
- developmental education

The Respondent will be responsible for the certification of approved testing staff on the computer-based delivery of the exam.

2.5.12 Registration System for Candidates

The delivery of the assessment must have a registration and scheduling system through which candidates provide identity and demographic information and schedule the test appointments. Candidates must be permitted to schedule one test module at a time. The law at NMSA 1978 Section 22-2.8.8 allows 16-17 year-old students to test with approval of their parents and school district. Therefore, the registration system must account for these additional registrations and allow for state- and/or local-level approval.

The Department is interested in an online and/or call-center-supported central registration system through which the candidate can register, schedule, and submit credit card payment of the required testing fee through a system developed by the Respondent. The Respondent will be responsible for the distribution of a portion of this fee to the testing center as a test administration fee.

2.5.13 Policies and Procedures/Test Administration Manuals

The Respondent shall describe the requirements for assessment administration; describe the qualifications, responsibilities, and training required for testing staff; describe the procedures for opening and operating a testing center; and describe the test-taker registration process. The Respondent shall produce test administration manuals for approved testing centers. The test administration manuals should include, at a minimum, the following information on:

- verification of identity, including documentation requirements
- procedures for registration and scheduling
- procedures for test accommodations of candidates with disabilities
- incident reports for testing irregularities or incidents

2.5.14 Data Exchange and Ownership

The PED shall maintain ownership of its test-taker data and related archives. The Respondent shall describe any demographic information that is collected through assessment. The Respondent must describe the ability of the PED to own and control the data collected and describe any file types and other data exchange requirements.

2.5.15 Available Resources

The Respondent shall describe how various supplemental resources such as practice tests, connection to the current National Reporting System, and instructional materials will be made available.

2.5.16 Required Technology

The Respondent shall describe the technology that will be required to provide paper-based and/or computer-based testing at local testing centers. The Respondent must specify technical requirements for testing in correctional settings.

2.5.17 Supplemental Supports

The Respondent shall describe any supplemental supports that will be available to the state of New Mexico, adult education programs, and test centers. These supports could include marketing materials and marketing campaigns aimed at the general public, business community, other educational institutions, employment agencies, other governmental entities including military services, and potential test-takers within the adult education system.

2.5.18 Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The Respondent shall describe any available professional development assistance to the state adult education system.

2.5.19 Organization Legal Status

The Respondent shall describe legal status (public/private/non-profit/other).

2.6 Paper Delivery of the Assessment

2.6.1 Assessment Description and Development

The Respondent must demonstrate how it will provide a paper-based and/or computer-based assessment. The Respondent shall describe the manner in which test items will be developed and selected for the assessment, describe the norming process, and give information on the number of test forms available for test candidates to take in a calendar year. Any available foreign language options should be detailed in this section. The Respondent shall provide documentation on how the assessment is research-based or evidence-supported to measure high school equivalency.

2.6.2 Alignment to the Common Core State Standards

The Respondent shall provide detailed information on how the High School Equivalency Assessment will be aligned to the New Mexico Common Core State Standards. This information should include an explanation of content areas that will be covered in the test.

2.6.3 Accommodations

The assessment must comply with the ADA and IDEA requirement that any private or public entity that offers examinations relating to certification or credentialing for secondary or postsecondary education shall offer such examinations in a place and manner accessible to persons with disabilities or offer alternative arrangements for such individuals, such as special accommodations. The Respondent shall describe how test accommodations for individuals with disabilities will be provided for both the paper-based and computer-based versions of the assessment, including a description of the process for approving accommodation requests. The Respondent must provide all necessary accommodations to comply with state and federal law.

2.6.4 Cut Scores

The Respondent shall describe the process for establishing test cut scores. The Respondent shall provide a recommendation for a minimum passing score and an explanation of how dual cut scores would be developed to indicate high school equivalency and college/career readiness.

2.6.5 Test Administration Computer Based Test/Paper Based Test (CBT/PBT) Combination

The Respondent will be responsible for ensuring the secure delivery of a computer-based exam (with regard to combination CBT/PBT) to approved testing centers in New Mexico. Security of tests and individual test results must be maintained. Access to student test results must be restricted to authorized Department and testing center staff based on a secure, encrypted, password-protected system. The Respondent shall provide test security compliant with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 USC 1232 (g) and 34 CFR 99.

2.6.6 Test Center Administrators and Proctors

Each testing center authorized by the Department to offer the High School Equivalency Assessment must have staff members who are certified and approved to deliver this assessment. The following individuals must be excluded from serving as test administrators and proctors. Excluded are individuals instructing potential candidates for the tests, particularly teachers involved in:

- adult basic education (ABE)
- adult literacy
- high school equivalency test instruction
- secondary education programs

- adult secondary education programs
- alternative high school education programs
- developmental education

The Respondent will be responsible for the certification of approved, testing staff on the computer-based delivery of the exam.

2.6.7 Policies and Procedures/Test Administration Manuals

The Respondent shall describe the requirements for assessment administration; describe the qualifications, responsibilities and training required for testing staff; describe the procedures for opening and operating a testing center; and describe the test-taker registration process. The Respondent shall produce test administration manuals for approved testing centers. The test administration manuals should include, at a minimum, the following information on:

- verification of identity, including documentation requirements
- procedures for registration and scheduling
- procedures for test accommodations of candidates with disabilities
- incident reports for testing irregularities or incidents

2.6.8 Data Exchange and Ownership

The PED shall maintain ownership of its test-taker data and related archives. The Respondent shall describe any demographic information that is collected through the assessment. The Respondent must describe the ability of PED to own and control the data collected and describe any file types and other data exchange requirements. The Respondent shall be compliant with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 USC 1232 (g) and 34 CFR 99.

2.6.9 Available Resources

The Respondent shall describe how various supplemental resources such as practice tests, connection to the current National Reporting System, and instructional materials will be made available.

2.6.10 Required Technology

The Respondent shall describe the technology that will be required to provide paper-based and/or computer-based testing at local testing centers. Respondents must specify technical requirements for testing in correctional settings.

2.6.11 Supplemental Supports

The Respondent shall describe any supplemental supports that will be available to the state of New Mexico, adult education programs, and test centers. These could include marketing materials and marketing campaigns aimed at the general public, business community, other educational institutions, employment agencies, other governmental entities including military services, and potential test-takers within the adult education system.

2.6.12 Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The Respondent shall describe any available professional development assistance to the state adult education system.

2.6.13 Organization Legal Status

The Respondent shall describe legal status (public/private/non-profit/other).

3.0 Training Delivery Requirements

The Respondent will develop specifications to deliver a training plan that will provide initial training and supply materials to support on-going training for audiences including, but not limited to:

- the Department High School Equivalency Program staff
- other Department staff
- testing coordinators at approved testing centers

Training shall be provided via WebEx or similar web-delivered, interactive sessions scheduled at least eight (8) weeks in advance of the start of the assessment delivery.

3.1 Management System for Test Scores and Testing Centers

It is necessary for the Respondent to maintain accurate lists of testing center staff approved to administer the High School Equivalency Program. This information must be easy to update as information changes.

3.2 Online Management System for Testing Centers

The Respondent's online management system described in this section will be the primary resource for all test data management, as well as test administration and reporting tasks. It must be a secure site compliant with FERPA that requires usernames and passwords, and accounts must be customizable based on the access a user will have (state-level, testing center level, etc.). Depending on the access level, a user must be able to view testing results from all centers.

Components of the Respondent's online systems (e.g., websites, databases) must be submitted to the Department for review of content, layout, aesthetic quality, and functionality. The system must be designed to provide user access to various non-secure and secure links including:

- detailed information about the assessment itself
- detailed information about practice tests
- access to the online registration system
- access to the reporting system
- access to credentialing

The system must collect and maintain testing records for test takers. An individual student's test results must be maintained in secure electronic archive for the life of the contract and provided to the Department based on an agreed-upon schedule and electronic format.

3.3 Customer Service and Technical Support

The Respondent will provide customer service to testing centers via toll-free phone and email. The service will be staffed appropriately with personnel designated to respond to high school equivalency assessment program calls and provide information on the New Mexico assessment program, specific to the assessments detailed in this RFP. The customer service should be staffed sufficiently so that customers do not experience long wait times to access customer support.

4.0 Scoring

The Respondent is responsible for the scoring of the computer-based assessment, including extended response. The Department is interested in the delivery of an immediate score report (for CBT) to candidates for any test modules, without an extended response, within 24 hours of the completion of the test. This score report should be accessible to the candidate directly via a secure web portal. Scoring for PBT must be available within two weeks of submission of scores. The Respondent is responsible for scoring both CBT and PBT.

4.1 Reporting

The Respondent is responsible for the transmittal of test results to Department staff in a secure format. The Respondent will provide the Department with the format for the transmittal of results by the contract start date. Any changes to the transmittal file must be provided to the Department within 30 days of the implementation of any changes.

4.2 Additional Services that Support the Assessment Program

The Department is interested in the availability of exam preparation and other supplemental materials to prepare adults for the assessment including:

- official practice tests
- diagnostic guidance to test takers, including test summaries and test item analysis, and skill builder guidance
- availability of professional development materials for adult education instructor training

5.0 Program Management

The Respondent shall designate a senior program manager who will have overall, daily responsibility for all processes and deliverables under the full scope of this program.

The director of the High School Equivalency Program, within the Bureau of College and Career Readiness at the PED, will be assigned as the program manager of the contract resulting from this RFA under the overall supervision of the secretary of education.

5.1 Respondent Staff and Responsibilities

The Respondent shall provide highly qualified personnel to work closely with the Department to manage the contract(s). The Respondent must assign professional staff members who are qualified, experienced, and capable of providing technical assistance to the Department.

5.2 Program Management Communication

Program management conference calls will be conducted at an agreed-upon day and time in order to ensure that all requirements and timelines are maintained and to address needs for problem solving and time-sensitive adjustments. The Department may determine periodically that weekly focused conference calls are required as activities dictate. The Respondent shall provide a toll-free conference line for all calls between the Respondent and Department staff required for the effective coordination of the assessment program.

To meet timelines for completing tasks, both the Department and the Respondent must use secure electronic communications provided by the Respondent, including—but not limited to—a secure FTP site, a website, a teleconferencing site, etc., in addition to overnight express delivery of materials as necessary. In addition, the Department and the Respondent will need access to a secure site, FERPA-compliant, that can be used with testing centers and with sub-contractors to transfer secure materials.

The Respondent and the Department may determine that, for selected meetings, video teleconference meetings will be more time and cost efficient than travel to a common meeting site. In this case, the Respondent will coordinate all logistics and provisions for the teleconference(s).

5.3 Deliverables

<p style="text-align: center;">TABLE 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Project Deliverables</p>		
Deliverable	Evidence of Completion	Due Date (proposed)
Provide a computer-based and/or paper-based, Department-approved, high school equivalency assessment that is aligned to, and measures mastery of, the New Mexico Common Core Standards in English language arts/literacy and mathematics and includes science and social studies.	Provide a computer-based and/or paper-based assessment based on core content areas to all eligible, Department-approved testing centers.	January 1, 2015
Provide a paper-based, Department-approved, high school equivalency assessment for students with documented disabilities that is aligned to, and measures mastery of, the New Mexico Common Core Standards in English language arts/literacy and mathematics and includes science and social studies.	Provide a paper-based assessment based on core content areas to all eligible Department-approved testing centers.	January 1, 2015
A test information guide—describing the test structure, blueprint, and scoring information along, with some sample items—shall be produced and made available to the examinees upon registration.	Provide examples of information and samples that are provided to examinees upon registration.	January 1, 2015
Provide a test administration manual related directly to administration of the high school equivalency exam.	Provide approved a test administration manual to approved testing centers.	Upon request

TABLE 2**Project Deliverables**

Deliverable	Evidence of Completion	Due Date (proposed)
Annually provide a professional administration and technical report to the Department that shall include all applicable psychometric descriptions and annual outcomes.	Provide a Department-approved, professional report containing administrative and technical information.	January 1, 2015 and upon request thereafter
Provide process specifications for certification to ensure that approved testing centers meet the technical requirements for the delivery of the assessment product and for the approval of test administrators and proctors at the certified sites.	Provide technical specifications and the process used by the Respondent for the review and certification to ensure that testing centers meet the technical specifications for the assessment, delivery, and approval of test administrators and proctors.	Two (2) months in advance of the start of the assessment distribution
Develop and provide WebEx or similar web-delivered, interactive training for initial training and supply materials to support on-going training for audiences approved by the Department.	Provide a training plan that has been approved by the Department that includes delivery methods.	Two (2) months in advance of start of assessment distribution
Provide a secure on-line management system that requires user names and passwords and is fully customizable based on access a user will have for all Department-approved testing centers.	Provide on-line management system that is accessible based on users access level.	Upon request
Provide a system for the request and approval of accommodations for candidates with documented disabilities.	Provide accommodation forms, manuals, and staff training on the process for accommodations reviews.	Two (2) months in advance of the start of assessment distribution
Provide customer service and technical support to Department-approved testing centers via toll-free phone and email.	Provide phone number and email address for appropriately staffed customer service and technical support hotline.	Upon request
Transmit test results to Department staff in a secure electronic format based on an agreed-upon schedule.	Provide Department-approved, secure, electronic format for transmission of test results. Changes to transmission file must be provided to the Department within 60 days of the implementation of any changes.	Within 6 months of contract start date
Provide information on exam preparation and other supplemental materials.	Provide practice test which is predictive of test-taker performance on the operational exam.	Upon request

The absence of any of the above documents may result in a determination that the Reply is non-responsive and the Reply may not be evaluated. The furnished Reply Forms should be used when submitting the Reply. Forms are to be filled out in ink or typewritten. Administrative review information shall be included at the beginning of the Technical Reply portion (Part I) of the Reply and consist of the following:

6.0 Acknowledgement of Interest

On the institution's letterhead, identify the inclusive partnering organizations for which the application is being submitted. The Acknowledgement of Interest must include the following statement:

I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and that I am authorized to submit this application. I further certify, to the best of my knowledge, that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance with all applicable state laws and regulations, application guidelines, and instructions. It is understood that this application constitutes a proposal and, if accepted by the New Mexico Public Education Department or renegotiated to acceptance, will form a binding agreement. It is also understood that immediate written notice will be provided to the application manager if, at any time, the applicant learns that its certification was erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.

If the applicant did not initially submit this Acknowledgement of Interest by October 1, 2014, the applicant shall include the Acknowledgement of Interest as part of the application to be submitted to the Department.

6.1 Information Sheet

Applicants are to complete and submit **Appendix C**. If a question is not relevant to the applicant, mark the item N/A. The form shall be completed in its entirety.

6.2 Reply Submission

Both Technical and Price Replies will be received as specified in Section 6.4 and Section 7. All Replies and associated forms should be signed and dated in ink by a duly authorized representative of the Respondent. The overall Reply should be written in a concise manner that is conducive to effective evaluation and selection.

All Replies and related documents submitted in response to this RFA shall become the property of the state.

6.3 Application Manager

The Department has designated an application manager who is responsible for the conduct of this application. All completed applications should be addressed as follows: **(Do Not Fax or E-mail.)**

Lisa G. Salazar, MA, LPCC, NCC
College and Career Readiness Bureau
New Mexico Public Education Department
Jerry Apodaca Public Education Building
Room 131
300 Don Gaspar Ave
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-827-6507
Email: lisa.salazar@state.nm.us

Any inquiries or requests regarding this application should be submitted to the application manager in writing via email with "HSE RFA Question" in the subject line. Applicants may contact only the application manager

regarding this application. Other state employees do not have the authority to respond on behalf of the Department. Questions must be received in accordance with the timeline provided in Section 8, Conditions Governing the Application. Written responses, sent via email, will be provided to applicants who return an Acknowledgement of Interest Form (Appendix B) that includes a correct email address.

6.4 Reply Format Instructions

All Replies submitted shall contain two parts and be marked as follows:

- Part I Technical Reply (HSE Assessment)**
(One Separately Sealed Package for Technical)
- Part II Price Reply (HSE Assessment)**
(One Separately Sealed Package for Prices)

The separately sealed packages may be mailed together in one envelope or box.

(Part I) Technical Reply (10 hard copies)

The Respondent should submit **one (1) original Reply in hard copy, nine (9) hard copy Replies, and two (2) Replies in electronic format (compact disc (CD), USB storage device, etc.)**. The Reply is to be divided into the sections described below. The Department expects all Replies to be in this format. Failure of the Respondent to follow this outline may cause the Department to determine that the Reply is not complete, which could result in the rejection of the Reply or result in a lower evaluation score. Any rejection of a Reply, or other adverse affect on a Respondent's Reply, due to a failure to properly organize a Reply shall be at the sole risk of the Respondent. The Technical Reply should be submitted in a separate sealed package marked "Technical Reply (HSE Assessment)." (Do not include price information in Part I)

6.5 Executive Summary

The Respondent should provide an executive summary to be written in non-technical language to summarize the Respondent's overall capabilities and approaches for accomplishing the services specified herein.

6.6 Respondent's Qualifications and Experience

The Respondent should provide at least three (3) references (see Appendix D), who demonstrate efforts comparable to the one described in this RFA. The Department reserves the right to contact the references regarding the services provided. Any information provided will be subject to the requirements of the New Mexico Public Records Law.

6.7 Respondent's Management Plan

The Respondent should provide a management plan that describes administration, management, and key personnel.

6.7.1 Administration and Management

The Respondent should include a description of the organizational structure and management style established and the methodology to be used to control costs, services, reliability, and to maintain schedules. Additionally, the means of coordination and communication between the organization and the Department should be delineated.

6.7.2 Identification of Key Personnel

The Respondent shall provide the names of key personnel on the Respondent's team, a resume for each individual proposed, and a description of the functions and responsibilities of each key person relative to the task(s) to be performed. The approximate percent of time to be devoted exclusively for this project and to the assigned tasks should also be indicated. Respondent may not voluntarily change key

personnel without the Department's prior approval, and the Department will have to also approve the replacement personnel.

6.7.3 Program Management

Respondents must provide their overall description of the approach to manage, implement, and support New Mexico's High School Equivalency Credential Program that specifically addresses the entire scope of work in this RFA. Respondents shall identify and describe all resources available to support all program activities.

6.7.4 Respondent Staff and Responsibilities

The work described in the RFA constitutes a large, complex, challenging program that requires year-round activity. Respondents should carefully consider whether they have sufficient and knowledgeable human resources to complete the work activities of the RFA and should demonstrate, in their Reply, that they do, in fact, have sufficient and knowledgeable human resources to complete program work. Respondents should consider bidding only if they are committed to assigning the number and quality of staff and staff time required to complete a program of this magnitude.

Respondents shall include pertinent staffing charts in their Reply that show the regular institutional organization staffing and the proposed organization of program staff for this work. In these charts, the full-time equivalency devoted to work under the Reply for each staff member with significant responsibilities should be identified. Persons proposed to fill all key positions should be identified by name.

6.7.5 Sub-Contractors

If the Respondent proposes to employ a sub-contractor(s), the qualifications and experience of the sub-contractor (s) should be documented in the Reply at the same level of detail as those staff of the Respondent. The Respondent will be required to submit a Sub-contractor Assurance Form (see attachment 2).

The Respondent should describe how the work of all sub-contractors will be monitored and guided, including resulting specifications and schedules. A separate chart should be provided that identifies all of the sub-contractors proposed to be involved in the program, the assessment components in which they will be involved, and the specific services they will provide.

A detailed description of the subcontracted services to be provided under the ensuing contract must be included in the Reply. All subcontracted services must be documented. Each service (e.g., printing, computer operations, test development, psychometric services, legal counsel, quality control, reporting) should be fully described, including resources, level of service, scheduling, and quality commitments. The Respondent will identify the proportion of materials, etc. to be generated by any and all involved sub-contractors.

The Respondent must provide a technical plan that explains the technical approach.

The Respondent must explain the approach, capabilities, and means to be used in accomplishing the tasks in the Scope of Services and where significant development difficulties may be anticipated and resolved. Any specific techniques to be used should also be addressed.

7.0 Test Availability

The assessment must be available for demonstration of the content and computer-based delivery during the evaluation period of this solicitation.

The Reply shall include the following documents or access to the documents via web links to the following information that documents the existence of a fully developed High School Equivalency Assessment Program (CBT and/or PBT):

- public web sites with detailed information about the assessment program
- assessment guides/manuals
- test administration manuals
- test policy manuals
- accommodations approval
- on-line registration system (if available)
- on-line scheduling system (if available)

If any of the above materials require restricted access, a user name and password to restricted access site may be provided. This information shall be provided to the application manager for this RFA. In the event this information is proprietary, screen shots of the operational system may be provided.

The plan must document that the assessment product is available for the potential population of test candidates (see Table 1 in Section 2.0).

7.1 Test Content and Alignment with College Readiness Standards

The Reply must describe the test modules to be included in the assessment product including:

- testing time for each module
- number of questions in each module
- an overview of the of the item types used in each module
- information on the age of the test questions in each module, including percentage of new test items developed specifically for this assessment product
- number of operation test forms available over the course of the contract period

The Reply must include an item sampler of test questions in each test module that represents the variety of items types for both CBT and PBT.

The Reply must also include the capacity to support empirically validated item formats, such as short answer and drag and drop that take advantage of the capabilities of computer technology in the assessment.

If the assessment relies primarily on multiple choice questions to assess the content, the Reply should document how the test questions used are adequate for the assessment of New Mexico Standards.

7.2 ELA (Reading, Writing, and Language) Alignment with New Mexico Standards

The Reply must document the alignment between the standards using the following table format and provide a response for all of the listed standards on how the assessment measures the standard. If the assessment does not assess the New Mexico standard, this information should be noted in the table as “N/A”.

This alignment documentation needs to provide a response for all of the listed standards on how the ELA assessment measures ELA standards across the following strands that are assessable: Reading Literature, Reading Informational Text, Writing, and Language. Specific ELA standards that are assessable provide meaningful information that is measureable, reliable, and valid when tested. For each assessable anchor standard listed in the chart below, the Reply must list the tested grade-band-specific standard under the column entitled “Assessable Grade-band-specific Standards.” For those anchor standards that are viewed as not assessable, a brief explanation is required under the same column in lieu of the grade-band-specific standard. This explanation must address the reasons as to why the specific standard is not assessable.

7.3 ELA Matrix—Summary of Alignment to New Mexico Standards (Reading)

Anchor Standards per ELA Strand	Assessable Grade-Band-Specific Standards	Assessment Target	Cognitive Level (identify conceptual framework used)	Type and Complexity of Passages Used	Type(s) of Task Items Used
Reading Literature					
<p>Standard 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</p>					
<p>Standard 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.</p>					

Anchor Standards	Assessable Standards	Target	Cognitive Level	Passages Used	Task Items Used
Reading Literature (cont.)					
Standard 3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.					
Standard 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.					
Standard 5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text relate to each other and the whole.					
Standard 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.					
Standard 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.					
Standard 8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.					

Anchor Standards	Assessable Standards	Target	Cognitive Level	Passages Used	Task Items Used
Reading Literature (cont.)					
<p>Standard 9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.</p>					
<p>Standard 10: Read and comprehend complex texts independently and proficiently.</p>					
Reading Informational Text					
<p>Standard 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</p>					
<p>Standard 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.</p>					
<p>Standard 3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.</p>					

Anchor Standards	Assessable Standards	Target	Cognitive Level	Passages Used	Task Items Used
Reading Informational Text (cont.)					
<p>Standard 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.</p>					
<p>Standard 5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text relate to each other and the whole.</p>					
<p>Standard 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.</p>					
<p>Standard 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.</p>					
<p>Standard 8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning, as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.</p>					

Anchor Standards	Assessable Standards	Target	Cognitive Level	Passages Used	Task Items Used
Reading Informational Text (cont.)					
Standard 9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.					
Standard 10: Read and comprehend complex texts independently and proficiently.					
Writing					
Standard 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.					
Standard 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.					
Standard 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.					

Anchor Standards	Assessable Standards	Target	Cognitive Level	Passages Used	Task Items Used
Writing (cont.)					
Standard 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.					
Standard 5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.					
Standard 6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.					
Standard 7: Conduct short, as well as more sustained, research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.					
Standard 8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.					
Standard 9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.					

Anchor Standards	Assessable Standards	Target	Cognitive Level	Passages Used	Task Items Used
Writing (cont.)					
<p>Standard 10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.</p>					
Language					
<p>Standard 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p>					
<p>Standard 2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p>					
<p>Standard 3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.</p>					

Anchor Standards	Assessable Standards	Target	Cognitive Level	Passages Used	Task Items Used
Language (cont.)					
Standard 4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.					
Standard 5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.					
Standard 6: Acquire, and use accurately, a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.					

The Reply must include information on the cognitive complexity of the test questions to assess the ELA assessment targets and the complexity model used (Webb’s Depth of Knowledge, etc.).

The Reply must provide the percentage of questions on the ELA test module(s) with a depth of knowledge of three (3) or higher.

The Reply must document how the extended writing response and/or other English language arts test questions deal with the writing skills specified in the ELA section below.

7.4 ELA Test Specifications

The Reply must describe the overall design of the ELA assessment as well as clarify specific characteristics of each ELA test module—reading, writing, and language.

7.4.1 Reading

The reading specifications should include information about the

- number of reading passages;
- number and/or percentage of informational text versus literary text;
- range of different types of informational texts and literary texts;
- range of text complexity;
- range of passage word length;
- the pairing of texts, and how they are used in task items;
- range of assessment items per passage;
- alignment of test items to the standards; and,
- item format types.

7.4.2 Writing

The writing specifications should include information on the

- modes or dimensions of writing, such as short or extended responses to reading, composition, or writing to sources. (For writing items such as short or extended responses to reading that require the use of associated passages, the specifications also need to reference information about the associated passages—text complexity, word length, number of passages, type of passages, etc.);
- writing items format; and,
- number of items per format.

7.4.3 Language

The language specifications should include information such as the following:

- type of vocabulary words
- language usage
- range of sentence structures
- item format

7.5 ELA Technical Information:

The Reply should include descriptions of the various aspects of ELA assessment development. These descriptions should provide details that focus on the following:

- the process used for selecting reading passages
- the means of determining text complexity levels (this should include quantitative and qualitative information)
- the process used for developing task items
- assessment reliability and validity values and evidence
- the means of determining the assessment’s reliability and validity

7.5.1 Mathematics Alignment with New Mexico Standards

The Reply must document the alignment between the standards using the following table format and providing a response for all of the listed standards on how the assessment measures the standard. Use the Math Table Mathematical Practices for the completion of the alignment table below.

7.5.2 Math Table Mathematical Practices (for use in completion of alignment table)

Number	Practice
MP1	Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
MP2	Reason abstractly and quantitatively
MP3	Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
MP4	Model with mathematics
MP5	Use appropriate tools strategically
MP6	Attend to precision
MP7	Look for, and make use of, structure
MP8	Look for, and express regularity in, repeated reasoning

7.5.3 Mathematics Matrix—Summary of Alignment to New Mexico Standards

Standard	Assessment Target (s)	Mathematics Practices (use #s from table above)	Depth of Knowledge	Type (s) of Test Items Used
6th Grade Mathematics—Ratios and Proportional Relationships				
Understand ratio concepts and use ratio reasoning to solve problems.				
6th Grade Mathematics—The Number System				
Apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication and division to divide fractions by fractions.				
Multiply and divide multi-digit numbers and find common factors and multiples.				
Apply and extend previous understandings of numbers to the system of rational numbers.				

Standard	Assessment Target (s)	Mathematics Practices (use #s from table above)	Depth of Knowledge	Type (s) of Test Items Used
6th Grade Mathematics—Expressions and Equations				
Apply and extend previous understandings of arithmetic to algebraic expressions.				
Reason about and solve one-variable equations and inequalities.				
Represent and analyze quantitative relationships between dependent and independent variables.				
6th Grade Mathematics—Geometry				
Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving area, surface area, and volume.				
6th Grade Mathematics—Statistics and Probability				
Develop understanding of statistical variability.				
Summarize and describe distributions.				
7th Grade Mathematics—Ratios and Proportional Relationships				
Analyze proportional relationships and use them to solve real-world and mathematical problems.				
7th Grade Mathematics—The Number System				
Apply and extend previous understandings of operations with fractions to add, subtract, multiply, and divide rational numbers.				

Standard	Assessment Target (s)	Mathematics Practices (use #s from table above)	Depth of Knowledge	Type (s) of Test Items Used
7th Grade Mathematics—Expressions and Equations				
Use properties of operations to generate equivalent expressions.				
Solve real-life and mathematical problems using numerical and algebraic expressions and equations.				
7th Grade Mathematics—Geometry				
Draw, construct, and describe geometrical figures and describe the relationships between them.				
Solve real-life and mathematical problems involving angle measure, area, surface area, and volume.				
7th Grade Mathematics—Statistics and Probability				
Use random sampling to draw inferences about a population.				
Draw informal comparative inferences about two populations.				
Investigate chance processes and develop, use, and evaluate probability models.				
8th Grade Mathematics—The Number System				
Know that there are numbers that are not rational, and approximate them by rational numbers.				
8th Grade Mathematics—Expressions and Equations				
Work with radicals and integer exponents.				

Standard	Assessment Target (s)	Mathematics Practices (use #s from table above)	Depth of Knowledge	Type (s) of Test Items Used
8th Grade Mathematics—Expressions and Equations (cont.)				
Understand the connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations.				
Analyze and solve linear equations and pairs of simultaneous linear equations.				
8th Grade Mathematics—Functions				
Define, evaluate, and compare functions.				
Use functions to model relationships between quantities.				
8th Grade Mathematics—Geometry				
Understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or geometry software.				
Understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem.				
Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres.				
8th Grade Mathematics—Statistics and Probability				
Investigate patterns of association in bivariate data.				
High School Mathematics—Number and Quantity				
Extend the properties of exponents to rational exponents.				
Use properties of rational and irrational numbers.				

Standard	Assessment Target (s)	Mathematics Practices (use #s from table above)	Depth of Knowledge	Type (s) of Test Items Used
High School Mathematics—Number and Quantity (cont.)				
Reason quantitatively and use units to solve problems.				
Perform arithmetic operations with complex numbers.				
Use complex numbers in polynomial identities and equations.				
High School Mathematics—Algebra				
Interpret the structure of expressions.				
Write expressions in equivalent forms to solve problems.				
Perform arithmetic operations on polynomials.				
Understand the relationship between zeros and factors of polynomials.				
Use polynomial identities to solve problems.				
Rewrite rational functions.				
Create equations that describe numbers or relationships.				
Understand solving equations as a process of reasoning and explain the reasoning.				
Solve equations and inequalities in one variable.				

Standard	Assessment Target (s)	Mathematics Practices (use #s from table above)	Depth of Knowledge	Type (s) of Test Items Used
Solve systems of equations.				
High School Mathematics—Algebra (cont.)				
Represent and solve equations and inequalities graphically.				
High School Mathematics—Functions				
Understand the concept of a function and use function notation.				
Interpret functions that arise in applications in terms of the context.				
Analyze functions using different representations.				
Build a function that models a relationship between two quantities.				
Build new functions from existing functions.				
Construct and compare linear and exponential models and solve problems.				
Interpret expressions for functions in terms of the situation they model.				
High School Mathematics—Geometry				
Experiment with transformations in the plane.				
Understand congruence in terms of rigid motions.				
Prove geometric theorems.				
Make geometric constructions.				

Standard	Assessment Target (s)	Mathematics Practices (use #s from table above)	Depth of Knowledge	Type (s) of Test Items Used
Understand similarity in terms of similarity transformations.				
High School Mathematics—Geometry (cont.)				
Prove theorems involving similarity.				
Define trigonometric ratios and solve problems involving right triangles.				
Understand and apply theorems about circles.				
Find arc lengths and areas of sectors of circles.				
Translate between the geometric description and the equation for a conic section.				
Use coordinates to prove simple geometric theorems algebraically.				
Explain volume formulas and use them to solve problems.				
Visualize relationships between two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects.				
Apply geometric concepts in modeling situations.				
Summarize, represent, and interpret data on a single count or measurement variable.				
Summarize, represent, and interpret data on two categorical and quantitative variables.				
Interpret linear models.				

Standard	Assessment Target (s)	Mathematics Practices (use #s from table above)	Depth of Knowledge	Type (s) of Test Items Used
Understand and evaluate random processes underlying statistical experiments.				
High School Mathematics—Geometry (cont.)				
Make inferences and justify conclusions from sample surveys, experiments, and observational studies.				
Understand independent and conditional probability, and use them to interpret data.				
Use the rules of probability to compute probabilities of compound events in a uniform probability model.				

If additional New Mexico standards assessed by the Respondent’s product are not listed in the table above, the Reply should include similar information on those additional standards.

The Reply should include information on the text complexity of the test questions to assess the mathematics assessment targets and the complexity model used.

The Reply should provide the percentage of questions on the mathematics test module(s) with a depth of knowledge of three (3) or higher.

7.6 Science Content

The Reply must include information on the science standards used for development of the assessment targets, must describe the assessment targets included for this content area in the assessment, and must identify the domains of science (life science, physical science, etc.) included in the assessment.

The Reply must include information on the text complexity, types of questions, and depth of knowledge. For text complexity, the standard for determining text complexity must be specified.

Matrix—Summary of Alignment to New Mexico Standards of Excellence (Science)

Content Standards per Strand	Assessable Grade-Band-Specific Standards	Assessment Target	Depth of Knowledge	Type and Complexity of Passages Used	Type(s) of Task Items Used
Strand 1 Scientific Thinking and Practice					
<p>Standard 1: Students will understand the processes of scientific investigations and use inquiry and scientific ways of observing, experimenting, predicting, and validating in order to think critically.</p>					
Strand 2 Content of Science					
<p>Standard 1: Physical science: Understand the structure and properties of matter, the characteristics of energy, and the interactions between matter and energy.</p>					
<p>Standard 2: Life science: Students will understand the properties, structures, and processes of living things and the interdependence of living things and their environments.</p>					

Content Standards	Assessable Standards	Assessment Target	Depth of Knowledge	Passages Complexity	Items Type(s)
Strand 2 Content of Science (cont.)					
Standard 3: Earth and space science: Students will understand the structure of Earth, the solar system, and the universe; the interconnections among them; and the processes and interactions of Earth’s systems.					
Strand 3 Science and Society					
Standard 1: Students will understand how scientific discoveries, inventions, practices, and knowledge influence—and are influenced by—individuals and societies.					

7.7 Social Studies Content

The Reply must include information on the social studies standards used for development of the assessment targets, must describe the assessment targets included for this content area in the assessment, and must identify the domains of social studies (U.S. history, U.S. government, economics, geography, etc.) included in the assessment.

The Reply must include information on the text complexity, types of questions, and depth of knowledge. For text complexity, the standard for determining text complexity must be specified.

Matrix—Summary of Alignment to New Mexico Standards of Excellence (Social Studies)

Content Standards per Strand	Assessable Grade-Band-Specific Standards	Assessment Target	Depth of Knowledge	Type and Complexity of Passages Used	Type(s) of Task Items Used
Strand 1 History					
<p>Standard 1: Students are able to identify important people and events in order to analyze significant patterns, relationships, themes, ideas, beliefs, and turning points in New Mexico, United States, and world history, in order to understand the complexity of the human experience.</p>					
Strand 2 Geography					
<p>Standard 2: Students understand how physical, natural, and cultural processes influence where people live, the ways in which people live, and how societies interact with one another and their environments.</p>					

Content Standards	Assessable Standards	Assessment Target	Depth of Knowledge	Passages Complexity	Items Type(s)
Strand 3 Civics and Government					
Standard 3: Students demonstrate understanding of the ideals, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship; demonstrate understanding of the content and history of the founding documents of the United States, with particular emphasis on the United States and New Mexico constitutions and how governments function at local, state, tribal, and national levels.					
Strand 4 Economics					
Standard 4: Students understand basic economic principles and use economic reasoning skills to analyze the impact of economic systems (including the market economy) on individuals, families, businesses, communities, and governments.					

7.8 Test Development Content Experts

The Reply should list the content experts and psychometricians who were involved in the development of the assessment targets and the test question development and provide information on the credentials and experience of the staff involved in the test development.

7.9 Test Item Development and Establishment of Cut Scores for High School Equivalency and College and Career Readiness

The Reply must include the following information about field testing and piloting:

- number of individuals participating in the fields tests
- the population from which the individuals were drawn
- period of time during which the field testing occurred

- description for how the field testing and piloting were used to adjust the assessment
- process for the development of additional test forms
- process used to continue to guarantee the reliability of the assessment for high school equivalency

The Reply must include a description of

- the process used to determine recommended cut scores for each test module to determine high school equivalency and/or college and career readiness;
- an overview of the norming studies conducted; and,
- information on the standard setting which would allow the Department to consider setting a New Mexico specific cut score of high school equivalency.

The Reply should address whether a college and career readiness score is or will be available, including the process for how the score was established. The Reply should document how the score-setting process results in a cut score that demonstrates college and career readiness.

7.10 Continuity of the Assessment

If a Respondent will be altering the exam or continuing content and platform development during the expected duration of the contract, the Reply should

- address the specific changes that will be made to the assessment each year;
- describe what percentage of each test module would be changing over the course of assessment product development, with each alteration included;
- describe how the reliability and validity of the assessment will be guaranteed over time; and,
- describe additional field testing and norming that may be required by the alterations to the assessment.

7.11 Acceptance of the High School Equivalency Assessment by Postsecondary Institutions and Employers, including the Military

The Department is interested in a high school equivalency assessment which has general acceptance by the following:

- public and private universities and colleges, including highly selective institutions
- employers
- United States military
- any other important constituent groups

The Reply should provide information regarding the acceptance of the assessment by the entities listed above and the use of the high school equivalency assessment by other states.

7.12 Computer Delivery of the Assessment

The Reply should specify the Respondent's plan for computer-based-testing (CBT) production with the objective of ensuring that industry-leading quality is attained.

7.13 Usability Analysis of the Computer-Based Assessment

The Reply should include information on any usability studies that were done or will be done to develop the computer-based test and to enhance its functionality over time.

7.14 Computer-Based Delivery of Accommodations for Students with Documented Disabilities

The Reply must address the capability of the computer-based system to provide the special accommodations for students and to handle any additional requirements related to the use of these accommodations. A paper-based format for the assessment must be available for students with documented disabilities for which a computer-based administration is not appropriate.

The Reply should list and describe the accommodations available in the computer-based testing environment.

7.15 Accommodations Review System for Students with Documented Disabilities

The Reply must provide a comprehensive process for the review and approval of accommodations including:

- request forms
- documentation guidelines for test takers
- review process for requests
- process for communication with Department staff and testing centers regarding decisions
- documentation of the qualification of Respondent staff for the review
- an appeals process for test takers
- qualified professionals who will conduct the reviews and be available for assisting candidates when necessary
- toll free number for candidates to contact review staff with questions

The Reply must document the process through which candidates, who require a paper-based version of the test, will be tested.

7.16 Test Administration

The Reply must describe the overall system for computer-based and paper-based delivery of the exam, including flow charting of the process.

7.17 Verification of Test Taker Identity

The Reply must address and describe the policies and procedures which testing centers will follow to verify candidate identity.

7.18 Test Session Requirements

Respondents must

- describe the security controls over all system aspects;
- describe the levels of security provided in the system;
- describe how the ability to limit access to specific system functions or modules is provided;
- describe the log-in security method and assurances to maintain individual confidentiality of test results;
- describe the authentication process to ensure that an individual is the person logging into the system (e.g., the student taking the test is who s/he says s/he is); and,
- describe security protocols for paper-based testing.

The Reply should include information on incident reporting systems to be used by the test administrators on issues such as identity verification, test session irregularities, and test session emergencies.

7.19 Computer-Based Delivery Platform

The Reply must specify the delivery platform for the exam and how it meets the expectations of this RFA.

7.20 Hardware and Software Requirements

The Respondent must specify the minimum system requirements for installing and running the computer-based delivery of the assessment.

The Reply should include information on the following system requirements:

- software licenses
- network configuration
- internet bandwidth
- specific hardware
- administration and proctor workstation equipment—operating system, processor, ram, hard drive, graphics adapter, display, mouse and keyboard, USB ports, network connection, internet connection, internet browser, printer, additional software, additional requirements, if any
- exam delivery workstation—operating system, processor, RAM, hard drive, graphics adapter, display, mouse and keyboard, USB ports, network connection, internet connection, internet browser, printer, additional software, additional requirements, if any
- server: file storage—operating system, processor, RAM, hard drive, graphics adapter and display, mouse and keyboard, network, power, internet connection, additional software, other additional notes
- any specific prohibitions for work stations must be provided

The current system requirements for current computer-based delivery of the high school equivalency exam are specified in this document: http://www.pearsonvue.com/pvtc/technical_reqs.pdf

The Reply must provide information on whether the system requirements for the Respondent's assessment are consistent with the current computer-based delivery requirements.

7.21 Test Site Set-up/Certification Requirements

The Respondent must describe the proposed test site set-up, certification, and system check measures.

7.22 Test Center Administrators and Proctors

The Reply must document the system used for test administrator/proctor certification and approval, including any re-certification or training requirements after initial certification.

7.23 Registration System for Candidates

The Reply must document the proposed registration and scheduling system, including the process by which payment for the test and test administration is received and processed.

The Reply must provide screen shots of any online registration and scheduling system.

The Reply must document how the registration system allows for conditional approval of candidates who may only test with the approval of their school district.

If the Respondent is not able to provide a centralized, online registration and scheduling system for test takers, the Respondent must describe the proposed method for registration, scheduling, and payment with a maximum of two contacts with the testing center, including handling appointments on the test day.

7.24 Test Administration Manuals

The Reply should include copies of any existing test administration materials related directly to administration of the high school equivalency exam and links to the location of these documents, if publicly posted.

7.25 Training Delivery Requirements

The Reply must document the training delivery methods and proposed plan for training by the Respondent.

7.26 Scoring

The Reply must provide a detailed quality control plan to assure accurate scoring and reporting.

The Reply must document how scoring results are to be transmitted to the test takers and the turnaround time for the delivery of those results, including scores on test modules with extended responses.

The Reply must document how writing and short answer responses will be scored in any of the test modules. If readers are not used for the scoring of writing and short answer, the Reply must document the validity of any electronic scoring methods being used for these test questions.

7.27 Reporting

The Reply must include a description of how exam results will be transmitted to the state, including information on:

- scoring vendor(s)
- turnaround time for results to be transmitted, including any extended response components
- fields included in the data transmission, including demographic and other preparation materials
- file types and other data exchange requirements

7.28 Supplementary Materials and Services

The Reply must address whether an official practice test, which is predictive of test-taker performance on the operational exam, is available. The practice test must be aligned with, and address the content assessed in, the test modules. The Reply must document how individuals may receive access to the official practice test and the delivery method.

The Reply must include information on any other diagnostic information provided to test takers through the score report.

The Reply must include a list of any currently available instructional materials for adult education programs and self-study materials for test takers.

The Reply must include specific information on preparation materials available to assist students in upgrading their technology skills for a computer-based assessment, including tutorials associated with the Respondent's computer-based assessment.

7.29 Work Plan

The Respondent should provide a work plan that sets forth, on an average, the estimated staff hours for each skill classification that will be utilized to perform the work required.

7.29.1 Price Reply (Part II) (nine hard copies)

The Respondent should submit **one (1) original hard copy, eight (8) hard copy copies, and two (2) digital copies in an electronic format (compact disc (CD), USB storage device, etc.)** The Respondent's price information should be submitted on the form provided in this RFA. Payment for services will be made based on the deliverables and dates specified on the Price Reply Form. The **Price Reply should be submitted in a separate sealed package marked "Price Reply for HSE Assessment."**

7.29.2 Presenting the Reply

The Reply should be limited to a page size of eight and one-half by eleven inches (8½" x 11"). Type size should not be less than a 12 point font. The Reply should contain a table of contents, be typed **double-spaced**, and have separate parts, each clearly labeled—including page numbers. The information to be contained in each part is described in the above sections. The absence of information, or the organization of information in a manner inconsistent with the requirements of this RFA, may result in the rejection of the Reply.

All Respondent materials should be packaged so that each box of materials shipped to the Department does not exceed 25 pounds.

SECTION 8 CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE APPLICATION

This section of the application contains the schedule of activities and describes the major events as well as the conditions governing the process.

8.0 Sequence of Events

The application manager will make every effort to adhere to the following schedule:

	Action	Responsibility	Date
1.	Issue of Application	Department	September 24, 2014
2.	Acknowledgement of Interest Form	Applicant	October 1, 2014
3.	Deadline to Submit Additional Written Questions	Applicant	October 8, 2014
4.	Response to Written Questions	Department	October 16, 2014
5.	Application Due	Applicant	November 10, 2014
6.	Proposal Evaluation	Evaluation Committee	November 12–18, 2014
7.	Selection of Finalists	Evaluation Committee	November 18, 2014
8.	Negotiate to Finalize Application	Department	November 25, 2014
9.	Issuance of Award	Department	December 3, 2014

8.1 Explanation of Events

The following paragraphs describe the activities listed in the sequence of events.

8.1.1 Issue of Application

This application is being issued by the New Mexico Public Education Department, College and Career Readiness Bureau. The application may be viewed at PED.state.nm.us/Department/rfps.html and downloaded. The application will be posted at this address from September 24, 2014 to November 10, 2014.

8.1.2 Distribution List Response

Potential applicants must contact the application manager via email with a scanned Acknowledgement of Interest Form that accompanies this document (See Appendix B) to have their organization placed on the information distribution list. When emailing the document, include “**HSE Assessment Acknowledgment Form**” in the subject line. This form must be signed by an authorized representative of the organization and returned by close of business to the application manager. The original signed document must be submitted with the application.

The information distribution list will be used for the distribution of written responses to questions and any application amendments. Failure to return this form shall constitute a presumption of non-interest and thereby disqualifying you from the application process.

8.1.3 Deadline to Submit Additional Questions

Additional questions by applicants must be submitted in writing to the College and Career Readiness Bureau in accordance with Section 8, (3).

8.1.4 Response to Written Questions

Responses to written questions will be distributed in writing in accordance with Section 8, (4) to all potential applicants whose organization name appears on the applicant distribution list.

8.1.5 Submission of Applications

All applications must be received for review and evaluation by the College and Career Readiness Bureau no later than 5:00 p.m. MDT on Monday, November 10, 2014. Applications received after this deadline will not be accepted. The date and time of reception will be recorded on each application. Applications must be addressed and delivered as per Section 6.3 and 6.4. Applications must be sealed and labeled on the outside of the package to clearly indicate a response to the HSE Assessment Request for Applications. **Applications submitted by facsimile or email will not be accepted.** A public log will be kept of the names of all entities that submit applications. The contents of applications will not be disclosed to competing applicants prior to the award.

8.1.6 Proposal Evaluation

The evaluation of applications will be performed by an evaluation committee appointed by the application manager. The evaluation process will take place in accordance with Section 8, (6). During this time, the application manager may initiate discussion with applicants who submit responsive or potentially responsive applications for the purpose of clarifying aspects of the applications, but applications may be accepted and evaluated without such discussion. **Discussions shall not be initiated by the applicants.**

8.1.7 Selection of Finalists

The evaluation committee will select the finalist or finalists, and the application manager will notify the finalist applicants in accordance with Section 8, (7). Only finalists will be invited to participate in the subsequent steps of the selection process.

8.1.8 Negotiate and Finalize Application

Finalist applicants may be asked to submit revisions to their proposals for the purpose of obtaining best and final applications in accordance with Section 8, (8) **no later than 5:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time on November 10, 2014.** Best and final applications may be clarified and amended upon Department consultation.

8.1.9 Issuance of Award Letter

Selected applicants will receive an award letter in accordance with Section 8, (9), and the contract will ensue thereafter.

Section 9

RESPONSE AND ORGANIZATION

9.0 Number of Responses

Eligible applicants may submit a single application and are not precluded from applying for other RFAs issued by the Department.

9.1 Number of Copies

Applicants shall provide **one (1) original** and **nine (9) identical** copies of the application specified in Section 6.4 to the application manager on or before the receipt of applications' closing date.

9.2 Application Format

The application shall adhere to the following:

9.2.1 Format Specifications

All applications must:

- a) be typewritten
- b) use 12-point font, no font style specification
- c) be on standard 8 ½ x 11 paper
- d) **be double-spaced with one-inch margins**
- e) be single-sided in a portrait setting

Additionally, applications may:

- f) use single-spaced charts and graphs

The narrative response:

- g) includes the Executive Summary
- h) is exclusive of the
 - i. Acknowledgement of Interest
 - ii. Information Sheet
 - iii. Appendices
- i) is paginated for the narrative section only

9.2.2 Application Organization

The original must be placed within a binder with tabs delineating the following response categories: 1) Letter of Interest, 2) Information Sheet, 3) Narrative, 4) All Mandatory Specifications, 5) Appendices, 6) **Pricing should not be included in the binder.**

The original must include original signatures where required. The **ten (10)** identical copies should **be in binders and must be:** 1) in order, 2) pages secured together, and 3) have labeled sheets of paper delineating each section.

Section 10 REPLY EVALUATION AND NEGOTIATION PROCESS

Using the evaluation criteria specified below, the Department shall evaluate and rank responsive Replies and, at the Department's sole discretion, proceed to negotiate with one or more Respondent(s) selected, as follows:

- Selected Respondent(s) will be invited to commence contract negotiations. If necessary, the Department will request revisions to the approach submitted by the selected Respondent(s) until it is satisfied that the contract will serve the Department's needs. The process will continue until a contract is negotiated and executed. The Department may, in its sole discretion, award and enter into contracts with more than one contractor, if in the best interest of the state.
- The Department reserves the right to negotiate with all responsive and responsible Respondents, serially or concurrently, to determine the best-suited solution. The ranking of Replies indicates the perceived overall benefits of the proposed solution, but the Department retains the discretion to negotiate with other qualified Respondents as deemed appropriate.
- Before award, the Department reserves the right to seek clarifications, to request Reply revisions, and to request any information deemed necessary for proper evaluation of Replies. Respondents may be requested to make a presentation, provide additional references, provide the opportunity for site visits, etc. The Department reserves the right to require attendance by particular representatives of the Respondent. Any written summary of presentations or demonstrations shall include a list of attendees, a copy of the agenda, and copies of any visuals or handouts, and shall become part of the Respondent's Reply. Failure to provide requested information may result in rejection of the Reply.
- The focus of the negotiations will be on achieving the solution that provides the best value to the state.
- In submitting a Reply, Respondent agrees to be bound to the terms of this RFA. However, the Department reserves the right to negotiate different terms and related price adjustments, if the Department determines that it is in the state's best interest to do so.
- The Department reserves the right to reject any and all Replies, if the Department determines such action is in the best interest of the state or the Department. The Department reserves the right to negotiate concurrently or separately with competing Respondents. The Department reserves the right to accept portions of a competing Respondent's Reply and merge such portions into one project, including contracting with the entities offering such portions. The Department reserves the right to waive minor irregularities in Replies.

10.0 Criteria for Evaluation

The Department shall evaluate and rank responsive Technical Replies and score them on a scale of 1 to 100 using the following criteria. The Department anticipates awarding the contract (if any award is made) following negotiations with the responsible and responsive Respondent determined to provide the best value to the state. The following criteria will be used to evaluate and rank Replies:

A) Executive Summary	N/A
B) Qualifications and Experience	10 points
C) Management Plan	10 points
D) Technical Plan	50 points
E) Work Plan	<u>10 points</u>
Total	80 points
F) Price	<u>20 points</u>
Total	20 points

Price analysis is conducted through the comparison of Price Replies submitted. The Department shall score responsive Price Replies for a maximum of 20 points using the formula below. The criteria for price evaluation shall be based upon the following formula:

(Low Price/Respondent's Price) X Price Points = Respondent's Awarded Points

The total maximum number of points that can be earned in the evaluation process is 100 points.

10.1 Evaluation Factors

10.1.1 Mandatory Factors

These factors will be evaluated on a pass-fail basis. **Failure to include any Mandatory Factor will result in the disqualification of the application.**

- a) Acknowledgement of Interest (Appendix B)
- b) Information Sheet (Appendix C)
- c) Respondent's Price Reply (Attachment 1)

10.1.2 Factors of Evaluation

These factors are all assigned a numerical value. **Failure to address an Evaluation Factor will result in a zero score for that factor and will negatively impact the application.**

10.2 Evaluation Process

The RFA process is designed to award the most points to the Respondent presenting the best solution for the required services.

Each member of the evaluation committee will be provided a copy of each Technical Reply. Replies will be evaluated on the criteria established in the section above entitled "Criteria for Evaluation" in order to assure that Replies are uniformly rated. The evaluation committee will assign points, utilizing the technical evaluation criteria identified herein.

The Department reserves the right to request clarification on any Reply submitted. Information requested and received will be evaluated by the committee based on the criteria established in **Section 10.0** above. During this stage, Respondents will be asked to provide any clarifications needed by the evaluation committee to assist in

evaluating their Reply. Information received in this stage will be added to the Respondent's Reply and evaluated as a part of the appropriate section above.

The evaluation process will follow the steps listed below:

10.2.1 Review

All applications will be reviewed by committee members for compliance with the mandatory specifications stated within the application.

10.2.2 Clarification

The application manager may contact the applicant for clarification, as specified in Section 6.3.

10.2.3 Committee Members

The evaluation committee will be determined by the application manager. Possible committee members may include Department or other governmental personnel or representatives from the workforce, industry, post-secondary institutions, and the adult basic education community.

10.2.4 Final Selection

Responsive applicants will be evaluated on the factors in Section 10.0 that have been assigned point values. The responsive applicants with the highest scores will be selected as finalist applicants, based on the proposals submitted. Applicants who are asked to submit revised proposals for the purpose of obtaining best and final offers will have their points recalculated accordingly. Points awarded from subsequent submissions will be added to the previously assigned points to attain final scores. The responsive applicant whose proposal is most advantageous to the Department, taking into account the evaluation in Section V, will be recommended for award. Please note, however, that a serious deficiency in response to any one factor may be grounds for rejection, regardless of the overall score.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

****PLACEHOLDER FOR EXCEL PRICE SHEET****

APPENDIX B

HSE Assessment Acknowledgement of Interest Form

In acknowledgement of receipt of this Request for Application, the undersigned agrees they have received a complete copy, beginning with the title page and table of contents, and ending with Appendix D, and wish to be placed on the distribution list for subsequent information about this RFA.

The Acknowledgement of Interest Form should be signed and returned to the application manager no later than close of business on October 8, 2014. Only potential applicants who elect to return this form completed with the intention of submitting an application will receive copies of all applicant written questions and the Department 's written responses to those questions, as well as application amendments if any are issued.

Organization:			
Represented By:			
Title:		Phone Number:	
Email:		FAX Number:	
Address:		City:	
State:		Zip Code:	
Signature:		Date:	

This name and address will be used for all correspondence related to the Request for Proposal.

Potential applicants must email a scanned Acknowledgement of Interest Form to the application manager by close of business, October 1, 2014. When emailing the document, include “**HSE Acknowledgment of Interest Form**” in the subject line. This form must be signed by an authorized representative of the organization in accordance with Section II, A 2. The original signed document shall be submitted with the application to Lisa Salazar, Application Manager at Lisa.Salazar@state.nm.us .

APPENDIX C

HSE Assessment Information Sheet				
Name of Applying Entity				
Address				
City		County		Telephone
Negotiator of Final Offer	Name	Office Phone	Cell Phone	Email
	Physical Address			
Proposed Program Director	Name	Office Phone	Cell Phone	Email
	Physical Address			
Fiscal Manager	Name	Office Phone	Cell Phone	Email
	Physical Address			

APPENDIX D

ORGANIZATIONAL REFERENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

The State of New Mexico, as a part of the RFA process, requires Respondent (s) to submit a minimum of three (3) business references as required within this document. The purpose of these references is to document Respondent's experience relevant to the scope of work in an effort to establish Respondent's responsibility.

Respondent (s) are required to send the following reference form to each business reference listed. The business reference, in turn, is requested to submit the Reference Form directly to: Lisa G. Salazar, Application Manager/ PED/ 300 Don Gaspar/ Santa Fe, NM 87501 by November 10, 2014 for inclusion in the evaluation process. The form and information provided will become a part of the submitted proposal. Business references provided may be contacted for validation of content provided therein.

**RFA HSE Assessment
ORGANIZATIONAL REFERENCE QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR:**

(Name of Respondent)

This form is being submitted to your company for completion as a business reference for the company listed above. This form is to be returned to the State of New Mexico, Public Education Department via e-mail at:

Name: Lisa G. Salazar, Application Manager
 Address: PED
 300 Don Gaspar
 Santa Fe, NM 87501
 Telephone: 505-827-6507
 Email: Lisa.Salazar@state.nm.us

no later than November 10, 2014 and **must not** be returned to the company requesting the reference.

For questions or concerns regarding this form, please contact the State of New Mexico Application Manager listed above. When contacting us, please be sure to include the Request for Application HSE Assessment.

Company providing reference:	
Contact name and title/position	
Contact telephone number	
Contact e-mail address	
Project description;	
Project dates (starting and ending);	
Technical environment (i.e., Software applications, Internet capabilities, Data communications, Network, Hardware);	

QUESTIONS:

1. In what capacity have you worked with this vendor in the past?
COMMENTS:

2. How would you rate this firm's knowledge and expertise?
_____ (3 = Excellent; 2 = Satisfactory; 1 = Unsatisfactory; 0 = Unacceptable)
COMMENTS:

3. How would you rate the vendor's flexibility relative to changes in the project scope and timelines?
_____ (3 = Excellent; 2 = Satisfactory; 1 = Unsatisfactory; 0 = Unacceptable)
COMMENTS:

4. What is your level of satisfaction with hard-copy materials produced by the vendor?
_____ (3 = Excellent; 2 = Satisfactory; 1 = Unsatisfactory; 0 = Unacceptable)
COMMENTS:

5. How would you rate the dynamics/interaction between the vendor and your staff?
_____ (3 = Excellent; 2 = Satisfactory; 1 = Unsatisfactory; 0 = Unacceptable)
COMMENTS:

6. Who were the vendor's principal representatives involved in your project and how would you rate them individually? Would you comment on the skills, knowledge, behaviors or other factors on which you based the rating?
(3 = Excellent; 2 = Satisfactory; 1 = Unsatisfactory; 0 = Unacceptable)

Name: _____ Rating:

Name: _____ Rating:

Name: _____ Rating:

Name: _____ Rating:

COMMENTS:

7. How satisfied are you with the products developed by the vendor?
_____ (3 = Excellent; 2 = Satisfactory; 1 = Unsatisfactory; 0 = Unacceptable)
COMMENTS:

8. With which aspect(s) of this vendor's services are you most satisfied?
COMMENTS:

9. With which aspect(s) of this vendor's services are you least satisfied?
COMMENTS:

10. Would you recommend this vendor's services to your organization again?
COMMENTS:

APPENDIX E Respondents Price Sheet

We propose to provide the product/services being solicited within the specification of RFAHSE .

The following costs are included in the testing module price specified below:

Test					
Scoring					
Test Center Administrative Fee					
Accommodations reviews and arrangements					
Test Center Proctor/Administrator Approval					
Test Center Site Set-up Validation					
Data management					
Transcript/Diploma production					

The price reflects the cost per testing module/sub-test.

Price must reflect a minimum of \$40 in test center administration costs per test candidate.

TESTING PRICE PER MODULE

	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5
Specify Module					
Contract Year 2015					
Contract Year 2016					
Contract Year 2017					
Renewal Year 2018					
Renewal Year 2019					
Renewal Year 2020					

TESTING PRICE PER MODULE

	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5
ESTIMATED TEST MODULES	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500
Contract Year 2015	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Contract Year 2016	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Contract Year 2017	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Renewal Year 2018	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Renewal Year 2019	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Renewal Year 2020	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total for Original Years	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total for Renewal Years	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
GRAND TOTAL	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Discounts For Retakes (for information only)

The following discounts for students who fail a sub-test will be provided, under the specified conditions

<i>Enter Text Here</i>

Vendor Name	
Mailing Address	
City/State/Zip	
Authorized Agent (TYPED)	
Authorized Agent (MANUAL)	
Date	
Telephone	
Fax	

Attachment 1
Respondent's Price Reply

Attachment 2

NAME OF CONTRACTOR _____
CONTRACT NUMBER: _____
TAX IDENTIFICATION OR 501(c)(3) NUMBER: _____
NAME OF SUBCONTRACTOR _____

***SUBCONTRACTOR ASSURANCE FORM. Please submit completed form to:
Lisa G. Salazar, 300 Don Gaspar, Rm. 131, Santa Fe NM 87501***

_____ (Name of organization) (“Contractor”) assures the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) that:

1. Contractor has verified that Subcontractor _____ possesses the necessary credentials to qualify for payment of state funds that flow from Contractor’s contract with PED including, as applicable, a vendor ID number, a W9 or Form 1099; ___(initials)
2. Contractor has verified that the Subcontractor _____ possesses a valid certificate or license authorizing the subcontractor to teach, administer or perform medical procedures, if the certification or licensure is required under NMSA Section 22, Article 10A; ___(initials)
3. Contractor accepts liability under NMSA 1978 Section 22-8-42 on behalf of Subcontractor _____ for (1) any falsification of record, account or report filed pursuant to the Public School Finance Act; (2) the use of funds by Subcontractor _____ budgeted or appropriated for public school use for a purpose other than that provided in the appropriation or grant; ___(initials)
4. The subcontract with Subcontractor _____ does not require direct payment from PED to the subcontractor; ___(initials)
5. Contractor requires Subcontractor _____ to affirm that all materials developed or acquired under the subcontract become the property of PED and that nothing developed or produced, in whole or in part, by the subcontractor under the agreement with the contractor shall be the subject of an application for copyright or other claim of ownership by or on behalf of the subcontractor; ___(initials)
6. Contractor has verified that Subcontractor _____ has no conflict of interest and complies with the Governmental Conduct Act; ___(initials)
7. Contractor has verified that Subcontractor _____ abides by all federal and state laws, rules and executive orders of the Governor of the State of New Mexico pertaining to nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity; ___(initials)

8. Contractor has verified that Subcontractor _____ complies with all requirements of Contractor's agreement with PED including but not limited to requirements for worker's compensation coverage, and limitations on lobbying; ___(initials) and
9. Contractor has verified that Subcontractor _____ complies with State of New Mexico's employee pay equity reporting requirements ___(initials).

In signing below, verify that I am authorized to make the above assurances on behalf of Contractor, _____ and in its subcontract with _____.

PRINTED NAME OF PERSON MAKING ASSURANCES: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

This subcontractor assurance form has been ___ approved ___ returned for revisions

PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF PED STAFF REVIEWING SUBCONTRACT ASSURANCE FORM

_____ Title: _____

Signature: _____ Final Approval date: _____