



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA


DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., State Superintendent

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December 1, 2016

Memorandum

To: Rebecca Garland

From: John R. Pruette 

Subject: Intent to Contract with
Requisition No. RO 20114945
(Required for Service Contracts Greater Than \$5,000)



Important Information: Approval of this Memorandum of Intent to Contract is required prior to initiating the contract process. It does not constitute a contract, nor does it imply that a contract will be approved. In that regard, please note that no contractor work can begin until a contract has been approved and signed by both parties. Signed contracts will be returned to the listed DPI Contract Contact Person by the DPI Purchasing and Contracts Section.

Instructions: The questions/information in this memorandum must be completed, and the appropriate approvals obtained prior to initiating a Request for Proposal (RFP) or any contract paperwork, including amendments. All appropriate requested questions and information must be answered and completed, or the form will be returned. If approved, the original memorandum will be forwarded to the Purchase and Contracts Section, and a copy will be returned to the division. If not approved, the original memorandum will be returned to the division.

- Please complete the following information (If you will use competitive bidding, please insert a short name for the RFP or other bid instrument in the place for Contractor Name; for example: RFP for Parking Services, and do not complete the contract amount or contract dates.)**

Contractor Name: SRI International
Contract Amount: \$3,537,318 + \$166,600 for a total contract of \$3,703,918
Contract Dates: March 28, 2014 through September 30, 2017
DPI Contract Contact Person & Telephone Number: Cindy Bagwell, 919-807-3710

- Is this a contract amendment? If so, please explain fully why you are amending it. (Note: If the amendment is for a date extension only, do not answer questions #3 through #12)**

Yes. In September, 2013, NCDPI's Office of Early Learning was awarded an Enhanced Assessment Grant (EAG Award #S368A130002) to serve as the fiscal agent for a consortium of ten states and three research partners. The purpose of the EAG award is to enhance the kindergarten entry assessment NC has developed and is

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

currently implementing as part of a kindergarten through third grade formative assessment. The award stipulates that NCDPI's Office of Early Learning must work collaboratively with stakeholders representing each of the consortium states, as well as research partners, to ensure the enhanced assessment addresses various state contexts and can be adopted for use in each of the participating consortium states at the end of the grant. In addition, the assessment must be enhanced consistent with research related to the assessment of young children and in accordance with timelines stipulated in the grant. SRI International has been responsible for overseeing the enhancement of NC's assessment since its sole source was approved at the start of the grant in 2013. In this role, SRI International has conducted the evidence centered design process to enhance the assessment, assessed the usability of the assessment through cognitive labs, pilot testing, and field testing, and developed and delivered professional development for teachers in select consortium states participating in the usability studies. This support has been critical to meeting the requirements of the Enhanced Assessment Grant. This amendment would allow SRI International to complete three additional tasks to improve the quality of the enhanced assessment and supporting materials; expert review for accessibility of the assessment materials, setting performance levels, and enhancing the professional development materials.

3. Why are you initiating a contract? What services will you require?

NCDPI's Office of Early Learning was awarded an Enhanced Assessment Grant (EAG Award #S368A130002) to serve as the fiscal agent for a consortium of ten states and three research partners. The purpose of the award is to enhance the kindergarten entry assessment NC is currently developing as part of a kindergarten through third grade formative assessment. As stipulated in the award, NCDPI's Office of Early Learning must work collaboratively with all consortium states and research partners to ensure the enhanced assessment addresses various state contexts and can be adopted for use in each of the participating consortium states at the end of the grant. In order to ensure that the assessment was enhanced in accordance with timelines stipulated in the grant, consistent with research related to the assessment of young children, and in a manner that adequately addressed a wide variety of state conditions, the Office of Early Learning sought the expertise needed to ensure the creation of an assessment and associated tools and processes that would benefit all states. Since its sole source was approved at the start of this 4-year grant, SRI International has been responsible for conducting all activities related to the enhancement process. This amendment allows SRI International to complete three additional tasks that have been identified by the consortium states as needs based on the experiences of teachers participating in the usability testing. These tasks include 1) expert review of the assessment materials to ensure the assessment is accessible for children with disabilities and English Learners; 2) setting performance levels on the constructs assessed at kindergarten entry to provide guidance on interpreting assessment data; and 3) developing additional professional development materials designed to help teachers better understand the formative assessment process. Completion of these tasks will improve the quality of the enhanced assessment and supporting materials, and will also provide the necessary resources for consortium states to adopt and implement this assessment at the end of grant.

4. **How does the contract add value to the teaching/learning process?**
Ongoing formative assessment is necessary to understand children's strengths and needs and inform teaching and learning throughout the school year. Teachers' use of formative assessment has been shown to increase student engagement and produce significant gains in learning, particularly among low achieving students. Developing a formative assessment process that builds on information gathered at kindergarten entry and spans kindergarten through third grade can improve continuity across this early grade span and significantly impact student achievement. NCDPI's Office of Early Learning has developed and is implementing a formative assessment that begins with a kindergarten entry assessment and continues through third grade in an effort to improve instructional practices of teachers and outcomes for students.

The purpose of this EAG award is to enhance the kindergarten entry assessment NC has developed as part of its kindergarten through third grade formative assessment. Therefore, this enhanced assessment will support the improvement of instructional practices and student outcomes in the early grades not only in North Carolina, but also in all consortium states participating in the grant.

5. **Is the service unique and not repetitive with agency activity or other contracts? Please state why this service cannot be performed within the resources of the agency.**
Because the focus of these services is on revision of NC's kindergarten entry assessment for use in all consortium states, the services provided by SRI International will be conducted at a national level and are not repetitive with agency activity or other contracts. NCDPI does not have the expertise, experience, or time to coordinate this type of national effort without external expertise.
6. **What is the impact, if you do not contract for these services?**
If NCDPI's Office of Early Learning does not contract for these services, its ability to meet the requirements and timelines of the grant will be significantly impaired. Without staff who have the expertise, experience, and time needed to design an enhanced assessment that will adequately address various state contexts and be adopted for use in each of the participating consortium states at the end of the grant is greatly diminished. The services that can be provided by SRI International are critical to the success of this project.
7. **If this contract is being paid with grant money, does the grant require the contracted services? Please describe the grant references to these contracted services, and give a synopsis of the grant.**
Expenses associated with this contract amendment will be paid from the Enhanced Assessment Grant award. The purpose of this EAG award is to enhance the kindergarten entry assessment NC is currently developing as part of its kindergarten through third grade formative assessment. The enhancement of NC's assessment for use in consortium states has included the following steps: (a) aligning the content of the NC assessment to standards across the Consortium; (b) enhancing the validity of the assessment through evidence-centered design (ECD) and universal design for learning (UDL); and (d) expanding the utility of the assessment to a broader range of users by soliciting and incorporating input from stakeholders in the other Consortium states into the enhancement of the assessment. Project work has been organized

around several major activity areas: (1) overall project management; (2) across- and within-state stakeholder engagement; (3) application of ECD/UDL to the assessment content; (4) enhancement of professional development materials, including implementation plans; (5) pilot and field testing; (6) psychometric analyses and performance levels; and (7) planning for linkages within state data systems. Each activity team has been led by either NCDPI's OEL or one of the research, with the consortium states playing a significant role in the enhancement of the enhanced assessment. Contracts are not mandated by the grant, but are necessary to meet the ambitious timelines.

8. **Will you use competitive bidding (e.g., RFP?) If yes, skip the remaining questions # 9 through # 12. No**
9. **Are you using an IT Supplemental Staffing Convenience Contract or other type of convenience contract? If yes, please skip question # 10 and complete questions # 11 and # 12. No**
10. **Do you plan to request sole sourcing for this contract? If yes, please complete and attach the required sole source justification memorandum. Sole sourcing is warranted whenever only one acceptable source can be found; sole sourcing should never be the first consideration. (Important: The approval of the DPI Section Chief for Purchasing and Contracts, and approval by the Division of Purchasing and Contracts or ITS Procurement Services is required for sole sourced contracts.) This is an amendment to a contract with a previously approved sole source for SRI International.**
11. **Have you contracted with this vendor previously for related services? If yes, please provide the contract number of all contracts with this vendor during the last twelve months. This is an amendment to an existing contract (NC10130204).**
12. **How did you calculate the cost (e.g., what is the cost per hour and number of hours?) If the cost per hour is above the DPI maximum for that type of service per the New Service Contract Policies, please attach the required written permission granted by the Deputy Superintendent. See the attached budget (Attachment B)**
13. **Is this contract for information technology services? No**
14. **If this is a personal service contract request, is the vendor/contractor a retiree? NA**

_____ Yes _____ No

If answer is yes, is individual a member of:

_____ TSERS (Teachers & State Employees Retirement System)

_____ Other (Please Explain) _____

Requisition No. RQ 20114945

Budget Code: 532199 140030AS0400

Signed: Janya Hall Date: 1/6/17
Budget Representative

Requisition No. RQ 20114945

Approved: Yes No

Signed: Rebecca Garland Date: _____
Deputy Superintendent of NC DPI

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Executive Director, Office of Early Learning

For Technology Contracts Only:

Approved: Yes _____ No _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chief Information Officer