

Sample Request for Proposals Language for Procuring Resource Allocation Studies

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Introduction & Purpose

In 2015, Congress authorized the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). As part of this law, states are required to “...periodically review resource allocation to support school improvement in each local education agency in the State serving— (I) a significant number of schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement... and (II) a significant number of schools implementing targeted support and improvement plans.”

To assist states in preparing Request for Proposals (RFP) to secure contractors for ESSA-mandated resource allocation (RA) studies, Education Resource Strategies (ERS) has developed the following language describing the objectives, approaches, and deliverables for these studies.

ESSA’s resource allocation reviews can be used to both improve access and equitable resources and also address a broader question: how well are existing resources – defined as people, time, and money - being used? Addressing this question is particularly important because school improvement dollars alone are insufficient to achieve holistic, sustainable transformation. RA studies are an opportunity to stop the cycle of poor resource management by considering how well the entirety of the school’s and the district’s resources are currently used. The following language discusses how to use RA studies to achieve these broader objectives which are ideally achieved through a multi-year commitment. With the results of these studies, districts can make more strategic decisions and ensure that schools receive both transitional support and sufficient resources to sustain reform.

Sample RFP Language

Objective:

The contractor shall propose a resource allocation review plan that describes methods and procedures for analyzing key conditions and supporting the state and districts in strategic resource use, inclusive of all current resources as well as transitional school improvement resources. This review shall support the development of sustainable school improvement strategies. Specifically, resource allocation studies and technical assistance should accomplish the following objectives:

School level:

- Identify opportunities to reallocate, and in some cases fundamentally restructure school resources.
- Help school leadership teams create integrated budget, staffing plans, and schedules that align long-term resource use over time toward a vision for success.

District level:

- Quantify needed investments to achieve the district’s stated priorities.
- Determine whether the district is allocating resources effectively and equitably.

- Identify specific opportunities to restructure and reallocate system resources.
- Help systems create the enabling conditions of long-term success.

Approach:

Respondents should indicate the ways in which they intend to work directly with district leadership teams and schools within the district, including target and comprehensive schools. This intended approach should include precise methods and analyses that will make up a multistep, potentially multiyear, process that includes at a minimum answering the following questions:

- 1) **Available resources:** How are the school's existing resources organized and what of these resources might be devoted to support new interventions?
- 2) **New resources:** What is the most strategic use of any incremental school improvement funds?
- 3) **Sustainability:** What is the strategy for sustaining the improvement after the incremental funds are depleted?

Deliverables:

The contractor shall present concrete actions and methods that will be used to identify resource patterns, system conditions, and resource alignment opportunities. Contractor should also identify the information that will be provided to the SEA.

Specifically, analysis should consider the following:

- 1) The degree to which school resources are strategically targeted to maximize effectiveness, including:
 - Comparison of resources devoted to non-proficient versus proficient students, such as increased instructional time, a more effective teacher, and smaller group sizes.
 - Evidence of professional learning systems that are connected and job-embedded, such that they ensure teacher teams have time to collaborate and teachers have access to excellent curricular materials and data to track student progress.
- 2) The degree to which students have equitable access to resources that align with the state's equity plan, including at least:
 - Access by student subgroup to experienced & effective teachers.
 - Access to kindergarten and pre-k.
 - Access to instructional support personnel like counselors & social workers.
 - Differences in spending per-pupil across schools.

Studies should also identify strategies to support districts in:

- Redressing identified resource inequities & supporting LEAs in redressing inequities.
- Developing & implementing comprehensive support plans.
- Develop or use tools to conduct school needs assessments.
- Identifying evidence-based practices.