

**RFP 164– Civics Education, Religious Tolerance,
and New York State History of Diversity Curricular Resources
Questions & Answers Summary**

Program Matters

Q1: For Deliverable A (Curricular Resources): Will the vendor be developing a comprehensive curriculum for each grade/grade band: i.e., a logical progression of learning objectives, from the first class of the semester/year to the final class, that aligns with all relevant standards? Or will the vendor be developing stand-alone activities and resources that an instructor may use as they see fit? Whichever the case, can you estimate the number of lessons/activities to be developed for each grade/grade band?

A: The New York State Education Department does not determine curriculum, as these are local district decisions. The vendor will be developing stand-alone activities and resources for K-12 organized by grade bands. The number of lessons and activities will be determined by the vendor and the New York State Education Department, ensuring that all topics are covered comprehensively.

Q2: Should content be developed for all grade levels K-12, or are there priority grades/grade bands?

A: This resource is intended for K-12, with the understanding that the materials will be organized by general grade bands. Some resources may also be created for one grade band with suggested modifications for adapting to additional grade bands.

Q3: What is the expected scope of multimedia content (images, videos, interactive elements, etc.)? Is there a set budget for creating this content, or should the vendor plan to use mainly free and open educational resources?

A: The vendor is expected to obtain all copyrights for materials being included in this resource. Copyrights and creation of additional content should be factored in the bidder's budget proposal. The use of free educational resources will be determined per discussion between the vendor and the New York State Education Department.

Q4: Are there specific assessment formats or types that are preferred or required?

A: There are no specific assessment formats or types that are required for this project. General ways to assess student learning following use of these resources may be suggested by vendors as part of their proposal.

Q5: For the turnkey presentations and self-guided teacher modules: What is the anticipated duration/length for each component?

A: The specific duration/length for these presentations and modules will be determined through collaboration between the vendor and the New York State Education Department. Consideration should be given to ensuring that turnkey presentations and teacher modules can be completed in a reasonable allotted time for students and staff.

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Q6: Between the January 1, 2026, start date and December 31, 2027, end date: Are there specific milestone dates or interim deliverable deadlines beyond the monthly reporting requirements?

A: Bidders should provide suggested timelines for deliverables within their proposals, which will be reviewed by NYSED. Final timelines will be determined at the beginning of the project.

Q7: When would you anticipate the virtual training sessions (Deliverable E) to occur?

A: The virtual training sessions are anticipated to be conducted in the final stages of dissemination of the materials to the field. This would be anticipated to take place sometime around fall 2027 through winter 2027.

Q8: What is the anticipated timeline for NYSED review and feedback on draft materials? How many rounds of revision should be anticipated in the development process?

A: Bidders should provide suggested timelines for review and feedback on draft materials in their proposals, which will be reviewed by NYSED. Early stages of the collaborative process will include clear expectations for materials with the goal of limiting frequent revisions.

Q9: Can NYSED confirm whether the contractor will be expected to develop all three content strands—civics education and values, New York’s shared history of diversity, and religious tolerance—or whether proposals may focus on a subset if justified by expertise?

A: The contractor is expected to develop all three content strands but may hire subcontractors based on specific requirements outlined in the RFP.

Q10: Will NYSED provide or convene the Advisory Board referenced in Deliverable D, or should bidders include time and cost for recruiting and managing advisory members?

A: NYSED will convene the Advisory Board. Although vendors are not responsible for recruitment of Advisory Board members, they will be participating and actively engaging in meetings with the Advisory Board at times.

Q11: For Deliverable A (Curricular Resources), is there a preferred grade-band structure (e.g., K–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–12) or should bidders propose one aligned to the Social Studies Framework?

A: It is up to the discretion of the bidders to propose the grade band structure they feel is appropriate for this project.

Q12: Regarding alignment documentation, will NYSED provide a template or model “crosswalk” demonstrating alignment to the NYS Learning Standards and CR-S Education Framework, or is the format to be proposed by the contractor?

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A: As with other parts of the project, NYSED will work closely with the vendors to provide input and feedback on creating alignment documentation.

Q13: Should student-facing materials include assessment rubrics or performance-based tasks, or only suggested assessment ideas?

A: General ways to assess student learning following use of these resources may be suggested by vendors as part of their proposal.

Q14: For Deliverable B (Professional Development Materials), does NYSED prefer asynchronous modules only, or will there be expectations for live/virtual facilitation and follow-up coaching?

A: All Deliverable B materials are expected to be asynchronous. For Deliverable E, the vendors will co-facilitate one to two virtual training sessions for representatives from BOCES and designated Big 5 districts upon digital publication of the platform.

Q15: The RFP mentions potential student-leadership components—can NYSED clarify whether this entails direct student participation in PD development or classroom pilot opportunities?

A: Suggestions for student leadership opportunities related to this curricular resource platform should be indicated by the vendor and will be determined collaboratively with the New York State Education Department.

Q16: Beyond the initial kickoff, does NYSED anticipate holding in-person meetings (e.g., up to three per year) in Albany, New York City, or might these meetings be virtual?

A: An introductory meeting of one full day, or as otherwise mutually agreed upon, shall be held in New York City or Albany within thirty days of contract approval. NYSED may request additional in-person meetings up to three times per year, if deemed necessary. Other meetings will be held virtually.

Q17: Should all curricular materials and PD resources be formatted for universal accessibility (screen-reader-ready, ADA/WCAG 2.1 compliant), or will the hosting vendor handle final accessibility conversion?

A: Both vendors are responsible for fulfilling accessibility requirements. NYSED will provide further clarification as needed.

Q18: May proposals include optional add-on services (e.g., pilot testing or supplemental educator feedback sessions) for NYSED's consideration, or should all work fall strictly within the defined deliverables?

Pilot testing and supplemental educator feedback sessions are not required for this project. If bidders feel strongly that these should be included, they are encouraged to provide further

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information in their proposals. All costs should be reasonable and necessary to the program. RFP 164 is a best-value procurement, with a maximum 70 points being awarded for a bidder's Technical Proposal and up to 30 points based on the two-year total of the Cost Proposal.

Q19: What are NYSED's expectations regarding the scale of curricular materials and professional development resources covered under Contract 1 of RFP 164 as measured in instructional hours, total number of resources to be delivered, and/or page length equivalency?

A: The scale of materials, including instructional hours, number of resources, and page length equivalency will be determined by the vendors and the New York State Education Department, ensuring that all topics are covered comprehensively. The expectation is that resources will be comprehensive yet concise enough to ensure they are able to be completed in a reasonable amount of time.

Q20: What are NYSED's expectations regarding personnel and organizational capacity for Contract 1 of RFP 164?

A: NYSED's expectation is that there are sufficient personnel and organizational capacity to complete the deliverables in Contract 1 in the allotted contract period.

Q21: What is the balance NYS is looking for in terms of unit content focused on the three topics (civics education, religious tolerance, and New York State history of diversity)? Should each topic have a series of lessons/units specific to that topic, or should topics be integrated/overlapping across the overall series of lessons/units?

A: As all three topics are critical to this project, NYSED expects all topics to be covered comprehensively and will work with the vendor to determine the scope of materials dedicated to each topic. Any materials that appear to align with more than one topic will be further discussed with NYSED.

Q22: How does NYSED envision the curriculum fitting into existing courses and class structures? For example, should the curriculum be designed as stand-alone and separate from Social Studies, or as mini-lessons that teachers can flexibly implement as part of Social Studies and/or ELA courses?

A: The New York State Education Department does not determine curriculum, as these are local district decisions. The vendor will be developing stand-alone activities and resources for K-12 that teachers can flexibly implement as part of their courses.

Q23: How is NYS envisioning the overall structure of the curriculum?

- a. Is NYS looking for full units of instruction, inclusive of teacher and student resources? How many units of instruction per grade level?
- b. For how many instructional minutes should each lesson be designed for each grade band?

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- c. **For how many instructional days should the curriculum be designed for each grade band?**
- d. **Does NYSED expect a distinct curriculum for each grade level K-12 (13 total grade levels), or group curricular resources by grade bands (for example: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 as four total grade bands), or some other structure?**

A: The New York State Education Department does not determine curriculum as these are local district decisions. The vendor will be developing stand-alone activities and resources for K-12 that teachers can flexibly implement as part of their courses. The vendor will be providing resources for students and teachers.

The scale of materials, including instructional minutes and instructional days, will be determined by the vendor and the New York State Education Department, ensuring that all topics are covered comprehensively. The expectation is that resources will be comprehensive yet concise enough to ensure they are able to be completed in a reasonable amount of time.

Materials will be organized by general grade bands. Some resources may also be created for one grade band with suggested modifications for adapting to other grade bands.

Q24: The RFP states: “Currently, the responsibility for developing and/or finding and reviewing effective instruction on these topics lies with individual districts, schools, and educators”. Are there any instructional materials that individual district, schools, or educators are using that should serve as models or templates?

A: There is no currently identified template for the vendor to use. Bidders may suggest their specific features of the instructional materials in their proposal. Once the contract is issued, NYSED will work closely with the vendor to create a consistent structure for instructional materials.

Q25: What are the desired components to be included in a lesson for this project? For example, are there specifications around scaffolds, parent connections, or other resources that must/should be included?

A: All activities and materials must indicate alignment to New York State Learning Standards and the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) Education Framework, and include accessibility modifications, including scaffolds. Vendors are encouraged to suggest additional specifications and resources that reflect vendor experience and understanding of best practices in this area.

Q26: Is there a text list that NYS would like to be included or not included?

A: No, NYSED will not be providing a text list. NYSED does not endorse or promote any specific curriculum or texts as these are local district decisions.

Q27: Is there a desired approach/scope for including summative assessments? Will assessments need to be compatible with an existing platform for data collection?

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A: There are no specific approaches/scopes for including summative assessments nor assessment formats or types that are required for this project. General ways to assess student learning following the use of these resources may be suggested by vendors as part of their proposal.

Q28: Section A.2.5 on p. 8 indicates a list of Additional Content/Functionalities that “may be requested”. Should these be included as part of our proposed scope and budget or are they listed solely for the purposes of communicating potential add-ons or additional needs? If vendors should include each of these within our proposed scope and budget, are there additional specifications we should assume for these additional functionalities?

A: Additional content/functionalities are listed for the purpose of communicating potential additional needs. Bidders are encouraged to suggest specific additional functionality they can offer and include those functionalities in their proposed budget.

Q29: For what languages should we assume translation? Is translation for student resources only?

A: Translation will be determined by the vendor and NYSED as needed.

Q30: For professional learning, does the scope of work assume development only, and no delivery of professional learning (aside from the training sessions listed as part of Deliverable E, p. 10)?

A: The vendor will be responsible for developing professional learning materials. Vendors are only responsible for live training as part of resource dissemination as outlined in Deliverable E.

Q31: Has the Advisory Board already been established? If so, who are its members? (p. 10)

A: The Advisory Board has not yet been established.

Q32: Is there likely to be a further contract solicitation beyond the two years of this contract to manage the portal or provide PD? Do you anticipate any PD happening during the 2 years of this contract and if so, what goals or metrics would NYSED set?

A: The RFP timelines are determined according to the established dates provided in the RFP. Vendors are only responsible for live training as part of resource dissemination as outlined in Deliverable E.

Q33: Is there an incumbent for this work?

A: This is a new project that is being initiated by the New York State Education Department.

Q34: To what extent does NYSED expect this work to involve the development of new resources or content as opposed to the curation existing resources in civics, religious tolerance, diversity, etc.?

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A: NYSED is looking to the expertise of the vendor to determine the balance of new and existing resources to ensure a comprehensive collection of materials across the subject areas.

Q35: Will students participate year over year? Would you like programming for every grade level, or would grade band programming suffice?

A: This resource is intended to be available online for future teacher and student use. Materials may be organized by grade band.

Q36: How many students / teachers / schools are expected to participate? If we are to price per student for parts of our submission, what number should we provide in the RFP?

A: This online resource is being created for use for all teachers and students across New York State. Once finalized and disseminated, NYSED resources are available and accessible for all educators.

Fiscal Matters

Q37: Can you provide the anticipated budget range for each contract?

A: It is up to bidders to determine how much it will cost to provide the deliverables sought in the RFP. This is a best-value procurement, with a maximum 70 points being awarded for a bidder's Technical Proposal and up to 30 points based on the two-year total of the Cost Proposal. See the RFP for Deliverables and Method of Award.

Q38: Is there an allotted budget for Contract 1 (development of curricular materials and professional development resources related to civics education and values)?

A: It is up to bidders to determine how much it will cost to provide the deliverables sought in the RFP. This is a best-value procurement, with a maximum 70 points being awarded for a bidder's Technical Proposal and up to 30 points based on the two-year total of the Cost Proposal. See the RFP for Deliverables and Method of Award.

Q39: The RFP caps subcontracting at 30% of the total budget—does this percentage include consultants providing limited-term expertise (e.g., subject-matter reviewers), or only sustained subcontracted services?

A: It would include both.

Q40: May vendors include external experts or content reviewers (e.g., scholars of religion or civics education) as consultants under the 30% subcontracting cap?

A: Yes, those type of positions may be included as part of the subcontracting total.

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Q41: The RFP states that payments are made upon 100% completion of each deliverable—can NYSED clarify whether partial or milestone payments may be approved for large, multi-month deliverables such as curriculum development?

A: This project involves curricular materials and is not the development of a specific curriculum, as these are local district decisions. As each deliverable is completed, vendors will receive payment.

Q42: What is NYSED's overall budget for Contract 1 of RFP 164?

A: It is up to bidders to determine how much it will cost to provide the deliverables sought in the RFP. This is a best-value procurement, with a maximum 70 points being awarded for a bidder's Technical Proposal and up to 30 points based on the two-year total of the Cost Proposal. See the RFP for Deliverables and Method of Award.

Q43: What is the budget available for Contract 1? For Contract 2?

A: It is up to bidders to determine how much it will cost to provide the deliverables sought in the RFP. This is a best-value procurement, with a maximum 70 points being awarded for a bidder's Technical Proposal and up to 30 points based on the two-year total of the Cost Proposal.

Q44: What is the funding source for this work? Has the state set a funding cap for each contract under this RFP that could inform our budgeting process?

A: The funding is provided by the New York State Legislature. It is up to bidders to determine how much it will cost to provide the deliverables sought in the RFP. This is a best-value procurement, with a maximum 70 points being awarded for a bidder's Technical Proposal and up to 30 points based on the two-year total of the Cost Proposal. See the RFP for Deliverables and Method of Award.

Q45: Is there a budget range that you would like to stay within for this scope of work?

A: It is up to bidders to determine how much it will cost to provide the deliverables sought in the RFP. This is a best-value procurement, with a maximum 70 points being awarded for a bidder's Technical Proposal and up to 30 points based on the two-year total of the Cost Proposal. See the RFP for Deliverables and Method of Award.

M/WBE Matters

Q46: We are an M/WBE-certified firm applying for Contract 2, and can deliver all requested services as described in the RFP. May we self-fulfill the M/WBE requirement? If so, do we list our company on the required forms? Thank you.

A: Yes, if your firm is certified as a Minority- or Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) by Empire State Development, you may meet the M/WBE utilization obligation through self-

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performance. Be sure to list your company on the MWBE Purchases form, indicating that your firm will be performing the work.

Q47: For M/WBE participation, may firms located outside New York State—such as ours, which is nationally certified as an M/WBE—qualify if they are certified by another state and are in the process of applying for New York State certification, or must NYS certification be fully active at the time of proposal submission?

A: A bidder should complete the M/WBE forms to support their level of M/WBE participation in achieving the M/WBE Goal at the time of submission. Only M/WBE vendors who are New York State certified by Empire State Development can count toward the utilization of the M/WBE goal on a NYS contract. If the M/WBE certification status of a vendor changes after initial submission, the bidder should alert the NYSED M/WBE contact listed in the RFP.

Q48: Can not-for-profit subcontractors be used to meet the M/WBE goals for this RFP if they are minority or women-owned, or do M/WBE subcontractors need to be for-profits that are NY-certified as M/WBE? (Our understanding is that not-for-profits cannot be NY-certified as M/WBE.)

A: Not-for-profits are not eligible for M/WBE certification from Empire State Development.

Q49: The RFP lists the MBE goal as 17% and the WBE as 13%, for a total of 30%. Is it acceptable to utilize only an MBE or only a WBE (but not both) to fulfill the full 30% M/WBE goal?

A: If a bidder does not meet at least 17 percent MBE utilization and at least 13 percent WBE utilization, it must apply for a waiver request for the portion for which it does not meet the goal. It must also complete documentation demonstrating good-faith efforts.

Q50: The RFP lists an overall goal of 30% of the total contract amount for M/WBE participation, which we understand to be 17% for Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (“MBE”) participation and 13% for Women-Owned Business Enterprises (“WBE”) participation based on the current availability of qualified MBEs and WBEs. There is also a 6% recommended requirement for a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business (SDVOB). These together would seem to be 36%, in excess of the 30% cap on subcontracts. Can NY clarify the required amounts and how to not go over the subcontract cap?

A: Subcontracting is defined as non-employee direct personal services and related incidental expenses, including travel. Supplies and materials can be purchased from M/WBEs. Those purchases are not considered subcontracting.

Q51: On page 1 of the RFP pdf, there is subcontracting limit of 30% of the total contract budget. On page 3, there is a M/WBE goal of 30% of the total contract amount. Does this mean that the 30% subcontracting cap must be met by M/WBE businesses and no other subcontracting would be feasible? We are concerned that this limits the ability of an

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applicant to partner with qualified organizations that can help do the work and who may not fit the M/WBE categorization.

A: The 30% subcontracting limit applies to the total amount of subcontracted work, regardless of whether the subcontractors are M/WBE-certified or not. Within that cap, vendors are expected to meet the M/WBE participation goals—17% for MBE and 13% for WBE—using New York State-certified M/WBE firms. If a vendor wishes to subcontract with non-M/WBE firms, they may do so as long as the total subcontracting does not exceed 30% of the contract budget and the M/WBE goals are still met. Supplies and materials can be purchased from M/WBEs. Those purchases are not considered subcontracting. If meeting the goals is not feasible, vendors must submit a waiver request with documentation with their good-faith efforts to comply.