RFP #GC23-013
2023-2030 NYS Pathways in Technology Early College High School (NYS P-TECH) Program

Questions and Answers

RFP Extension

1. Is there any possibility of an extension to the P-TECH RFP VI deadline of March 31, 2023? We are very excited about this opportunity and working diligently to develop strong proposals, however we are finding the 6-week timeframe for executing new MOUs challenging.

A: Yes, NYSED has extended the deadline for grant applications to ***Friday, April 7, 2023.***

Eligible Applicants, Partners and Priorities

2. The grant cannot be used to expand an existing PTech project. If the applicant already has an existing project, should the pathways of the existing project be added to the new RFP so all new and old pathways are included moving forward? Or should only new pathways be included in the RFP? For example, our current grant cycle ends in 2026. Will those pathways covered in that cycle have to be added to this grant eventually (if selected), or can we assume former grants/pathways will be renewed?

A: Applications from school districts/BOCES that have previously received funding for NYS P-TECH Programs: This application cannot be used to support, enhance, or expand an existing NYS P-TECH Program. School districts that have an existing NYS P-TECH program can apply to begin a new program at a new location and with new degree pathways. A school within a school model that is a distinct program would be considered a separate location.

3. The eligibility description for the grant states "A New York State public school district or a BOCES must serve as the fiscal agent/applicant for each application". Does this mean that a Charter School would have to apply through the Public School District under which they fall, or could they apply independent of the school district?

A: Per page 7 of the RFP, Public charter schools and non-public schools are ineligible to apply for these funds or participate in this program, either individually or as members of consortia.

4. Do we need to have a post-secondary partner or a BOCES partner?

A: A New York State public school district or a BOCES must serve as the fiscal agent/applicant for each application. All applicants must have an IHE (postsecondary) partner.

5. The RFP (page 7) says, "If a proposal includes multiple degree options in multiple fields, there must be at least one high education partner for each degree pathway offered…." Does this mean there has to be a different college or university partner for each degree option? Or can a single college or university be used for multiple degree options if that IHE offers associate degrees in the different academic areas?

A: One IHE partner may be used for multiple degree options as long as the associate degree is conducive with the career pathway(s) identified in the proposal.

6. Page 7 of the RFP says, "If a proposal includes multiple degree options in multiple fields, there must be an industry partner for each field…." Does this mean there has to be a different (separate) business partner for each degree option? Or can a single business be used if it has expertise and jobs that are associated with the multiple degree options covered in the P-TECH program?

A: A single business partner may be used if it has expertise and jobs that are associated with the multiple degree options offered in the P-TECH program.

7. Page 9 of the RFP refers to school district participants giving all non-NYS P-TECH students the opportunity to earn at least one college credit by the end of the grant period. If an applicant district already has AP, dual enrollment or early college high school programs in place, would those options meet the requirement?

A: Yes, as long as all non-NYS P-TECH students have access and the opportunity to obtain at least one college credit by the end of this funding period. This includes but is not limited to an Early College High School, Dual Enrollment, or Advanced Placement Courses. Such programming shall not be funded by this award (NYS P-TECH). This requirement shall be evidenced by an annual attestation by the Superintendent of Schools.

8. What are business/industry mentors expected to do with students?

A: Please refer to page 12 of the RFP under: Business/Employer: Essential responsibilities of business/employer partners.

9. On page 20 of the RFP, there is mention of "prioritizing partnerships that demonstrate the willingness and capacity to serve students who have been identified as traditionally underserved…" Will this prioritization be in the form of bonus points? Or something else?

A: No. The prioritization will not be through bonus points, but rather the strength of the program proposed.

10. On page 8 of the RFP, it states that if the proposal narrative includes more than one sending school district...the omission of any additional sending district Superintendents' signatures on the MOU may result in score reduction.... Failure to submit an MOU signed by at least one sending school district, as well as the BOCES.... will result in disqualification. As a BOCES, does this mean that for every district that sends students to the Ptech, the Superintendents of said districts must, or should, sign the MOU?

A:The Superintendents of additional sending districts *should* sign the MOU to obtain maximum scoring for the RFP. Failure to submit an MOU signed by at least one sending school district and at least one industry partner, as well as the BOCES (if applicable) and all degree granting IHEs, will result in disqualification.

11. When establishing memorandum of understanding (MOU) do we need multiple MOUs for each partner organization, or can we have one MOU that encompasses all the partners with their signature?

A: Either is acceptable.

12. We are in the process of developing a new high school (School B) that won't be opening for its first freshman class until September of 2025. Would it be acceptable to propose that the chosen pathway be rolled out in September 2024 with a 9th grade cohort at an existing school (School A), and expanded to include an additional 9th grade cohort in September of 2025 at School B when it opens? We would thereby be serving two school buildings with the same industry focus. This proposed program design aligns with our business partner's projections for local workforce needs in their burgeoning business.

A: The high school instructional program should be delivered to each incoming cohort in a manner that ensures consistent, rigorous instruction that is infused with the targeted career pathways and offers a college-going, professional environment throughout the school day. The NYS P-TECH requires continuous recruitment and enrollment of incoming 9th graders and pathways should be available for all enrolled P-TECH students. A grant awarded through this RFP cannot be used to expand a currently funded NYS P-TECH project.

Target Population: Below 86% Graduation Rate

13. On page 25 of the RFP, there is mention of prioritizing "proposals from sending schools with a cohort high school graduation rate below 86%..." Will this prioritization be in the form of bonus points? Or something else?

A: No. There will not be bonus points provided. Proposals that receive a passing score and will have participating schools with a cohort high school graduation rate below 86% will be funded

first. However, should there be applicants who have graduation rates of 86% or above, and there is availability of resources to fund such projects, such projects will also be considered.

14. If BOCES is the fiscal agent and applicant, do all partner sending districts need to have a graduation rate of less than 86% in order to meet priority requirements? With multiple districts in a BOCES led application, how do you calculate the average graduation rate?

A: With regard to BOCES applications or where multiple districts apply as a consortium, priority will be given to proposals whose participating schools have an average cohort graduation rate below 86% based on the 4-year cohort graduation rate for the 2020/2021 school year (August) published annually by NYSED (see https://data.nysed.gov/). Should there be BOCES or consortium applicants whose participating schools' high school graduation rate average is 86% or above, and there is availability of resources to fund such projects, such projects will also be considered. You will add the total number of 4-year graduation rates divided by the number of districts to calculate the average graduation rate.

Target Population: Eligible Participants

15. Is there a minimum number of participating students for each year of the P-TECH program?

A: There is no minimum, but proposed budgets will be evaluated, and it should explain why the proposed expenditures are appropriate, reasonable, and necessary to support the projected number of students to be served. Budgeted items must be reasonable in cost and necessary for the project and to receive the maximum points for the proposal. The P-TECH program must adhere to the number of students provided in Attachment 2: Proposed Enrollment Plan in the RFP.

Evaluation/Evaluator:

16. Page 22 of the RFP mentions undergoing an annual evaluation. Should this activity be written into the grant proposal or will NYSED be arranging the evaluation?

A: NYSED does not arrange for the annual P-TECH evaluation. This should be included in the proposal (See page 40 ad 54 criterion 4.a): Regarding evaluation, the narrative should include potential resources or vendors who would be able to conduct an annual review of essential components of the RFP.

17. Page 22 of the RFP mentions undergoing an annual evaluation. How should this be reflected in the project budget?

A: Place outside evaluators on Code 40 Purchase Services on the FS10 and budget narrative. If the evaluator is internal, they would be placed in Code 15 Professional Salaries.

18. What is the minimum and maximum amount that a project should allocate for an independent evaluator? And should we allocate funds for an annual independent evaluation? Do we need to identify the evaluator prior to the submission of this application or can we identify the evaluator during the planning year?

A: There is no set amount for the evaluator. The narrative should include potential resources or vendors who would be able to conduct an annual review of essential components of the RFP. Proposed budgets will be evaluated, and it should explain why the proposed expenditures are appropriate, reasonable, and necessary to support the projected number of students to be served. Budgeted items must be reasonable in cost and necessary for the project and to receive the maximum points for the proposal, including the evaluator. If your evaluator is a subcontractor, subcontracting to individual vendors (separate and distinct from NYS P-TECH partners) will be limited to twenty percent (20%) of the total annual budget

19. Are external evaluation services required for the planning year?

A: Yes.

Activities, Training, and Services

20. What is expected for the required extended academic year or school day activities for this grant program? Can you give some examples of activities that might be included?

A: Tutoring, after school workshops, intensive academic interventions, internship opportunities are some activities typically used to support student success in completing the career pathway.

21. Is 90 hours the minimum number of hours for extended school day or school year activities that applicants should aim for? If so, is that annually or over the entire grant period?

A: The narrative should discuss how extended learning time (a target of 90 hours of additional instruction) is provided and describe at least an additional five (5) days of professional development over the grant period.

22. On page 9 of the RFP, there is mention of annual trainings. Can you provide some details about these trainings and what should be included in the grant budget for the trainings?

A: Attend, in-person or virtually, a NYSED-sponsored training when offered, as well as a plan to participate in quarterly virtual meetings. Key personnel, including but not limited to directors, principals, and/or other key staff responsible for this initiative, must attend this training.

23. Page 10 of the RFP mentions a requirement to provide “professional development for faculty to address the needs of all students regardless of academic ability.” Would these professional development activities be an eligible expense for the P-TECH budget?

A: Yes, professional development specific to P-TECH is considered an allowable expense.

24. Would the costs associated with the requirement to provide “relevant and ongoing professional development for the principal/school leader and all participating teachers, including support and frequent exchanges during the school year” be an eligible expense for the P-TECH budget?

A: Yes, professional development specific to P-TECH is considered an allowable expense.

25. Are the additional five days of professional development mentioned in the scoring rubric for the entire grant period or for each year of the grant?

A: Professional development would be provided for five days over the entire term of the grant.

26. Do the five days for professional development mentioned in the scoring rubric cover faculty and principals/school leaders? Or is it five days for each of these groups for a total of 10 days?

A: The professional development minimum is 5 days over the course of the entire term of the grant. Only professionals directly related to the P-TECH program are eligible to use P-TECH grant funds.

Pathways/Degrees

27. On page 5 of the RFP, it states "Degree programs which are not allowable include but are not limited to:...". What other programs are not allowable?

A: Other nonallowable programs include those that are not STEM related.

28. Would a nursing program qualify for P-Tech?

A: Yes. As nursing programs have limited accepted seating, we would encourage projects to have a well-developed plan with their IHE partner to ensure that students will be able to successfully complete this career pathway within program duration.

29. Would the following Computer Information Systems program be eligible for any of the Computer Hardware and Software Engineering Pathways Bonus Points?

A: SED program office does not review and approve pathways in advance of RFP proposal submissions. SED considers computer hardware and software engineering in the broadest terms as typically used in the applicable fields.

30. Could you give some examples of pathways that would fall under the "computer hardware and software engineering pathways" that would lead to the five bonus points for applicants?

A: SED program office cannot provide examples in advance of RFP proposal submissions. SED considers computer hardware and software engineering in the broadest terms as typically used in the applicable fields.

31. We are interested in knowing if we can pursue pathways in the Allied Health Services, i.e., A.A.S. in surgical technology, medical laboratory technician, radiologic technology, radiologic tech/radiation therapy technology, health information technology; cardiovascular technology, etc.

A: Yes. As these programs have limited accepted seating, we would encourage projects to have a well-developed plan with their IHE partner to ensure that students will be able to successfully complete this career pathway within program duration.

32. Can you provide us with clarity on the definition of focus areas "computer hardware and software engineering"? What associate degree programs would qualify for eligibility in this category?

A: SED considers computer hardware and software engineering in the broadest terms as typically used in the applicable fields. SED program office cannot provide examples of associate degree programs in advance of RFP proposal submissions.

33. Can you provide a definition of "STEM field" or programs that would be eligible for P-TECH pathways. Page 5 of the RFP lists a few degree programs that are not allowable, but what programs are allowable? Are PTECH pathways limited to "technology and manufacturing"? Would programs such as Business Administration (AAS) and Audio/ Visual or Theatre Technology or Communications be eligible programs, for example?

A: SED considers a STEM field in the broadest terms as typically used in the applicable fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. SED program office cannot provide examples in advance of RFP proposal submissions.

Allowable Uses of Funds

34. Will the funding pay for teachers and administrators of the program?

A: Professional salaries are an approvable cost. FTEs should reflect the percentage of time spent directly with P-TECH program or its students. See the RFP for more details regarding budget scoring.

35. Will the funding pay for the curriculum?

A: Curriculum development is an approvable cost; see page 23 and the RFP for more details regarding the rubric and budget scoring (page 41).

36. Can the funds be used for scholarships, grants, stipends, or internship funds for students?

A: The education provided through P-TECH including college coursework is cost free to the student. Therefore, providing scholarships or grants to P-TECH students is not applicable. It is required that business partners provide work-based learning opportunities for P-TECH students at some point during their career pathway. It is encouraged that business partners offer internships and paid internships to P-TECH students. Using P-TECH grant funds to pay students directly for P-TECH student internship opportunities is an allowable expense.

37. Is it an allowable cost to use grant funds for service contracts with partnering districts sending students to the PTECH program? Or put more plainly, can grant funds be used to help districts with enrollment costs?

A: Yes.

38. Can the P-TECH funding be used to cover college and university tuition costs for participating students?

A: Yes.

39. Can the P-TECH funding be used to pay business/industry partners for the time they devote to participating in the program?

A: While not prohibited, proposed budgets will be evaluated, and should explain why the proposed expenditures are appropriate, reasonable, and necessary to best support the students. Budgeted items must be reasonable in cost and necessary for the project.

40. Can business/industry mentors be paid with P-TECH funds?

A: While not prohibited, proposed budgets will be evaluated, and should explain why the proposed expenditures are appropriate, reasonable, and necessary to best support the students. Budgeted items must be reasonable in cost and necessary for the project.

41. Can the required Industry Liaison be paid with P-TECH funds?

A: While not prohibited, proposed budgets will be evaluated, and should explain why the proposed expenditures are appropriate, reasonable, and necessary to best support the students. Budgeted items must be reasonable in cost and necessary for the project.

42. The RFP (page 22) mentions, "It is advisable that projected costs associated with students earning credits for the associate degree be modeled over the period of enrollment rather than on a per-credit or per-course basis." It's unclear with "modeled over the course of enrollment" means. Can you explain this?

A: You will want to project the cost of the entire associate degree over the term of the grant for all P-TECH students that you plan to enroll.

43. Are transportation costs an allowable expense for this project?

A: Yes.

44. I looked under allowable expenses, could the payment for *the development of curricula that emphasizes rigorous STEM content within a chosen P-Tech program* mean that we hire someone in that initial planning year to do that?

A: This is an allowable use of funds.

General Items

45. Is there any updated information surrounding an RFP info session yet?

A: The Q & A is the mechanism by which additional information is provided for the RFP. A link to a recorded webinar will also be posted by **Monday, March 27, 2023** on the NYS P-TECH website within the Cohort VI accordion. (Pathways in Technology (NYS P-TECH) Program)

46. Can you please elaborate on the purpose of this first bullet point in the k-12 responsibilities section. Is this language to ensure that students that would not be included in the P-TECH program, but still attending the k-12 school receive some of the same exposure to P-TECH initiatives as the P-TECH students?
    a. Giving all non-NYS P-TECH students access and the opportunity to obtain at least one college credit by the end of this funding period. This includes but is not limited to an Early College High School, Dual Enrollment, or Advanced Placement Courses. Such programming shall not be funded by this award (NYS P-TECH). This requirement shall be evidenced by an annual attestation by the Superintendent of Schools.

A: If you are a school within a school NYS P-TECH model (as opposed to a standalone P-TECH school), non P-TECH students at that school must have access and the opportunity to obtain at least one college credit by the end of this funding period. The purpose is for non-P-TECH students to have access to college coursework, although you may not use P-TECH funds to provide that access.

47. Can industry partner MOU language be altered (see below)? As a public entity we are limited with including language surrounding hiring.
    a. Committing to provide completers of the NYS P-TECH program serious consideration for a job interview and/or a job following completion of the program and satisfactorily meeting any employment evaluations and/or applicable hiring standards.

A: This language has already been revised to provide flexibility. Any additional changes to an MOU must be provided with track changes in your proposal. SED reserves the right to reject any proposal whose MOU is substantially altered from the P-TECH requirements.

48. How much square footage would we need to start?

A: The applicant must determine the best way to accommodate the spacing needs of their students in a standalone or school within a school model.

49. How much would the start-up be and is this money for the start-up and the districts would have to sustain the programs once the funding is finished?

A: Subject to available appropriation authority, it is the intent that annual funding would continue in subsequent years.

50. How long does the funding last (number of years?).

A: Funding is based on a 7-year grant. NYS P-TECH incorporates an integrated program between 4 and 6 years in duration.

51. Will there be a Word version of fillable version of the application? The only this available is the PDF that I can see online.

A: Yes. 2023-2030 NYS Pathways in Technology Early College High School (NYS P-TECH) Program

52. On page 13, the chart at the bottom of the page has “Current 6-Yr” as part of the header. What does the “Current” refer to (since current P-TECH programs can’t receive this new round of funding)?

A: “Current 6-Yr" is referring to the traditional model of P-TECH up until the release of Cohort VI RFP.

53. Page 31 of the RFP mentions a skills map. Can you provide a link to an example of a skills map or explain what this is?

A: SED refers to Skills Map in the broadest, most generalized, use of the term. Skills mapping typically means creating a visual representation of the skills needed to perform well in any given role and comparing that with the existing skills held by employees throughout the organization.

54. Is there a maximum page allotment for the Abstract?

A: The abstract should provide a brief summary of the planned program and does not contribute to the overall scoring of the proposal.

55. We are interested in applying for the P-Tech RFP this month. Do you mind letting me know if you think there will be another grant opportunity next year? Meaning, if we cannot get a community partner on board by the deadline, will we have another chance next year?

A: SED cannot predict with certainty whether or not another RFP will be issued in the next year.

56. If we apply for one program but then apply to two, all within the P-tech model, is there flexibility in the application at that point?

A: If an applicant is awarded a P-TECH project they will be expected to adhere to the workplan that is scored and approved.