



# MARIN COUNTY

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### Questions and Clarifications (Updated)

#### RFP: Literacy Professional Development Program

November 21, 2025

#### Eligibility

Q1: If our organization is not a nonprofit or a research institution, but we have significant experience reviewing and certifying professional learning organizations and their services, can we still apply?

RESPONSE: SB 147: SEC. 15. (a) states, “For the 2025–26 fiscal year, the State Department of Education shall allocate the funds appropriated pursuant to Provision 6 of Item 6100-488 of the Budget Act of 2025 to the Marin County Office of Education to contract with a **research organization or nonprofit organization** with expertise in evidenced-based literacy instruction, subject to the approval of the executive director of the State Board of Education, to support the implementation of the requirements of Section 33319.6 of the Education Code.”

Q2: Do the potential providers of Literacy Professional Development need to be California based?

RESPONSE: No. Literacy Professional Development Providers wanting to submit programs for approval may reside outside of California. Please refer to the [CDE Literacy Professional Development Programs web page](#) for more information about the requirements for professional development providers.

Q3: Please clarify whether the eligibility and minimum qualification requirements—specifically the five years of recent experience within the California educational context and familiarity with California education policy relating to evidence-based literacy instruction—apply exclusively to the Prime Contractor, or if the qualifications and experience of subcontractors and/or partner organizations may also be considered in meeting these requirements.

RESPONSE: Yes. As referenced in the RFP, Section V. General Proposal Information (B. Minimum Qualifications for Respondents): “**Respondents** must have a minimum of five years of recent (within the last seven years) experience working within the California educational context and have familiarity with California education policy relating to evidence-based literacy instruction.”

Q4: Are formal partnerships with other agencies, districts, or organizations allowed as part of this project?

RESPONSE: Formal partnerships with other agencies are allowed. As referenced in the RFP, Section VI. Proposal Specifications/Requirements for Submittal (F. Conflict of Interest): “Please disclose any past or current literacy-related work or other relationship(s) with instructional materials publishers, professional development providers, or MCOE, CDE, SBE and other state departments of education.”

## Scope of Services

Q5: Is CDE able to share the results of the October 2025 interest holder survey that gathered feedback on the criteria and guidance for literacy professional development programs?

RESPONSE: Yes, please email [PD@cde.ca.gov](mailto:PD@cde.ca.gov) for a copy.

Q6: Does CDE have an online system for collecting PD program submissions and/or LEA reporting data, or will the respondent need to develop a separate online software/system compatible with CDE's web infrastructure?

RESPONSE: After the posting of this RFP, the CDE identified an in-house platform that will be used for accepting submissions. Respondents do not need to include this in the proposed budget.

Q7: Are there any technical requirements for the online systems for collecting PD program submissions and LEA reporting? Can CDE provide examples of reporting data sought from LEAs?

RESPONSE: The CDE requires that the online system for collecting submission meet certain security requirements, some of which are as follows:

1. Storage administration should include the strict control and accessibility of all storage media.
2. All storage media should be inventoried on an annual basis, or sooner as dictated by clients, regulatory, or other contractual agreements.
3. Wherever possible, physical backup and transfer should be avoided or eliminated in favor of electronic transfer of encrypted backup files.
4. All data files and databases containing PII data will be encrypted using currently approved National Institute of Science and Technology (NIST) algorithms when being electronically transferred across an internal network. That list can be found here: [\*Cryptographic Standards and Guidelines\*](#). All data files and databases containing PII data will be encrypted using currently approved NIST algorithms and Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 140-2 mode or FIPS 140-2 approved ciphers when being electronically transferred across a public network.
5. All data files and databases that contain PII data that are backed up to physical media for transfer to secondary storage will be encrypted utilizing a FIPS 140-2 validated encryption solution. No unencrypted intermediate backup files will be created.
6. Physical media containing PII data should be maintained in a secure environment prior to its transfer offsite.
7. Physical media containing PII data should be monitored during the internal shipping process and must never be left unattended before handoff to the shipper.
8. Physical media containing PII data should be shipped in locked containers with no special markings or other indications of the sensitive nature of the contents.
9. Shipping procedures should include a positive acknowledgement of receipt of encrypted backup files at the destination.

Education code section 33319.6 states that LEAs receiving apportioned funds will be required to report on the number of teachers that received PD and which PD program was used at the LEA and schoolsite level.

Q8: Does CDE anticipate a cap on the number of approved PD programs it will allow on the list?

RESPONSE: No, the CDE does not anticipate putting a cap on the number of approved PD programs it will move forward for State Board of Education approval. Please refer to the [CDE Literacy Professional Development Programs web page](#) for more information about the requirements for professional development providers.

Q9: Are there existing systems or platforms that CDE prefers, or are already present and could be leveraged, for collecting PD program submissions and public comments? Or is the preference a separate system housed with the vendor?

RESPONSE: After the posting of this RFP, the CDE identified an in-house platform that will be used for accepting submissions. Respondents do not need to include this in the proposed budget.

Q10: Of the required public engagement activities included in Section IV, Scope of Services, D (Facilitation and Public Engagement), which of these activities are required to be in person vs. virtual?

RESPONSE: This has not yet been determined.

Q11: Professional Learning Format:

- Can the training be offered free of charge to participants?
- Can the project and research be used to create a Professional Development Program, or is it required to be programs that are already in place?

RESPONSE: Please refer to the [CDE Literacy Professional Development Programs web page](#) for more information about the requirements for professional development providers.

Q12: Please confirm the types of reports the contractor is expected to produce for the CDE and the timeline for submission.

RESPONSE: As referenced in the RFP Section IV, Scope of Services (C. Communication), preparing draft reports and documents for CDE/SBE review, approval and submission, including:

- Reports to designated entities as required by statute
- Presentation materials for board items

## **Review Committee**

Q13: Does CDE have an approximate number of reviewers in mind for the review committee? Do reviewers need to be California residents?

RESPONSE: The CDE will make that determination after receiving all Professional Development providers' Intent to Submit forms. The CDE anticipates up to 30 reviewers. The number of reviewers will depend on the number of submissions the CDE receives.

Q14: Are there any known requirements for the composition of the review committee, such as the number of representatives, knowledge, background, or certification requirements, geographic location, etc.?

RESPONSE: The CDE will select a review committee whose members represent a range of literacy expertise, experience, and demographic factors.

Q15: Please describe the readers' conference, including its purpose and any known requirements related to frequency, duration, and location. What level of involvement does CDE expect to have in the readers' conference

RESPONSE: The purpose of the readers' conference is to fulfill the requirements of Assembly Bill 121, Section 15 (Statutes of 2025) of the Education Omnibus Trailer Bill (Section 33319.6 of the California *Education Code*). The review committee will determine which professional development programs meet the SBE adopted Criteria and Guidance for the Selection or Development of In-service Professional Development Programs, which will then be presented for SBE approval. The selected Respondent will be expected to work with and under the direction and guidance of CDE and SBE project staff. Please refer to the [CDE Literacy Professional Development Programs web page](#) for more information about this project.

## **Budget**

Q16: Please confirm the contract period for this project. Do funds need to be spent by June 30, 2026, and is carryover of funds permitted?

RESPONSE: The contract period for this project runs through June 30, 2026, with the option to extend the contract period at the sole discretion of MCOE, CDE, and SBE. If an extension is granted, the awardee will receive guidance for carryover of funds.

Q17: Is the full indirect rate allowed under this grant? Are there any limitations or specific requirements we should be aware of regarding budget structure?

RESPONSE: The project budget should reflect all actual costs necessary to complete the proposed deliverables, including indirect costs. Indirect costs should not be listed as a separate line item.

Q18: Are there any restrictions on when or how funds may be spent? Are substitute teacher costs an allowable expense under this program?

RESPONSE: The annual detailed budget breakdown and budget justification should include the proposed costs to complete the activities described in the Proposal.

Q19: Are the travel arrangement, lodging costs and stipend reimbursements for the Review Committee members included in the 500k award for this solicitation?

RESPONSE: While Respondents are expected to arrange travel, lodging and stipend reimbursement for the review committee members, the cost of travel, lodging and stipends will be covered by funds outside the \$500k.

Q20: Who is responsible for costs associated with hosting the readers' conference or any other in-person meetings?

RESPONSE: See response to Question 19. Respondent will be expected to cover additional costs associated with hosting the readers' conference. Budget details will be finalized with the awardee as part of the contract process.