

Cooperative Program

Between

The Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission

And The Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents

Fiscal Year 2010

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Release Date: March 22, 2010

Proposal Due Date: On or before Friday, April 30, 2010 at 2:00 p.m.

RFP Administered By: The Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC) in collaboration with the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission – Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR) Disability Services ad hoc Group

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**Cooperative Program Between the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission
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Request for Proposals (RFP)**

1. Statement of Solicitation

1.1 Introduction and Program Description

Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC) and the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents (Chancellor) seek proposals for expanded services to groups of individuals (students) with disabilities and projects to promote collaboration and greater joint program effectiveness, resulting in greater retention and degree completion that leads to employment. Projects will be funded under an agreement between the Chancellor and ORSC which transferred the Chancellor's funds to ORSC for the provision of services and reimbursement to mutually eligible consumers and/or groups of students with disabilities. ORSC agrees to match the Chancellor's funding, on approximately a 3:1 basis, with federal ORSC monies.

The two organizations started meeting in 2008 through the ORSC – OBR Disability Services ad hoc Group and executed a service agreement to use approximately \$700K in state student support services General Revenue Funds (GRF) to leverage about \$2.6M in federal dollars for a total of \$3.3M annually. The purpose of this service agreement is to increase communication and coordination of services between ORSC and the Chancellor for the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services and auxiliary aids and services to mutually eligible VR consumers or services to groups of individuals with disabilities.

Proposals are sought under this RFP to utilize a portion of the funds to support groups of students with disabilities in their efforts with educational and career goals through the purchasing of new assistive and adaptive technologies, through creating statewide services to enable campuses to fully utilize assistive and adaptive technologies and through creating statewide services to transform print, audio, and video material.

For fiscal 2010 \$1.6 million has been allocated for the proposals utilizing new assistive and adaptive technologies. It is anticipated that similar amounts will be available in future years and result in additional RFPs. For fiscal 2010, to take advantage of immediately available funds, an initial set of projects have already been defined by the Products and Services Review Team, as established by the ORSC – OBR Disability Services ad hoc Group, and approved by the ORSC. These total \$1 million dollars. This RFP is seeking proposals in which to allocate the balance of funds dedicated for new assistive and adaptive technologies of no more than \$585,566.

The Review Team has been jointly created to recommend to the ORSC – OBR Disability Services ad hoc Group on a periodic basis, subject to funding availability, new assistive and adaptive products and services, including the costs for purchase or implementation, using the leveraged funds of the ORSC-OBR service agreement. It is an objective of the Review Team to

recommend products and services that leverage the investments beyond the capabilities afforded higher education institutions when working independently from one another.

All activities under this RFP shall be in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 701, et seq., as amended in 1998). The purpose of the Rehabilitation Act is to assist states in providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. Proposals of projects to be funded will go to the recommendation group as described in Section III (E) of this agreement.

1.2 The RFP Process

The RFP process will consist of the following steps:

- Release of RFP
- Questions & Answers (Q&A)
- Additional Information for Bidders (if needed)
- Submittal of Proposals
- Review and Evaluation of Proposals
- Award Recommendations
- Award and Grant Agreement Preparation and Execution

Each of these steps is discussed below.

1.2.1 Release of RFP

This RFP will be released by publication on The Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC) website at <http://rsc.ohio.gov/default.aspx> and the Chancellor's website at regents.ohio.gov and via the Ohio Access Technologies User Group email listserv among others.

1.2.2 Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted in writing via e-mail. Substantive questions and answers will be posted on the ORSC and Chancellor's website. Questions should be sent to Carl Sabo, Ph.D. at carl.sabo@rsc.state.oh.us and must include the subject line heading "ORSC-OBR Q&A." We reserve the right to edit questions to provide brevity and clarity and consolidate the same general questions if received from more than one prospective applicant. Prospective applicants may also contact Carl Sabo, Ph.D. directly at 614-438-1710. In the event that potential applicants feel that written guidance about this RFP is at odds with information received verbally, the written material – either part of this RFP or information contained on the ORSC and/or Chancellor's website – shall govern. All questions must be received by Wednesday, April 21, 2010.

1.2.3 Additional Information for Bidders

The Products and Services Review Team may make additional information available for bidders on the ORSC and Chancellor's website. It is the responsibility of applicants to check the websites regularly for new information.

1.2.4 Submittal of Proposal

It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to ensure that the Products and Services Review Team receives proposals in the prescribed manner by the submission deadline. Late proposals will not be reviewed. A Lead Applicant must ensure that a proposal submitted in response to this RFP complies with all the requirements set forth in the RFP. All Lead Applicants are advised to read this RFP carefully to ensure a complete understanding of the proposal requirements. In particular, the form, format and content of all proposals must follow the directions provided in Section 2 and use the forms presented in Appendix B.

The Lead Applicant(s) is/are solely responsible to ensure the submitted proposal is complete, accurate, responsive to the requirements of the RFP, and received on time by the Task Group. Incomplete proposals and those not complying with the requirements of the RFP may be excluded from evaluation or evaluated as submitted at the discretion of the Task Group.

Proposals may be submitted on or before the deadline of 4/30/2010 at 2:00 p.m. by email only to Carl Sabo, Ph.D., at carl.sabo@rsc.state.oh.us. The subject line should be titled "ORSC-OBR Proposal." All components of the proposal must be included in a **single** document. Send as Word or Open Office format required. Please see Section 2 of this document for the required proposal format.

1.2.5 Review and Evaluation of Proposals

The Products and Services Review Team shall deliberate after receipt of all proposals.

The Review Team reserves the right to require interviews of potential awardees or to request additional information and documentation from applicants submitting proposals that are both complete and comply with the requirements of this RFP. Proposals found not to comply with the RFP requirements may be eliminated from the competition and will not be reviewed further. The Review Team will evaluate the proposals based on the quality, cost-effectiveness, compatibility and synergy with other projects, scalability to the statewide level and sustainability of the proposed services to students and other overlapping clientele with disabilities.

1.2.6 Award Recommendations

The Review Team shall make the final determination about which proposals, if any, shall be presented to ORSC and recommended for funding. The Review Team shall also determine the amount of recommended funding for each applicant and the nature of any conditions on funding.

All recommendations of the Review Team will be submitted to the ORSC executive team for final approval.

All Lead Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their proposal after the ORSC makes funding decisions.

1.2.7 Award and Grant Agreement Preparation and Execution

Award of grant funds will be based on the proposal as submitted, including such modifications as may be agreed by the Lead Applicant(s), the project budget and any conditions set forth by the Task Group and ORSC. The grant will remain open for the duration of the project plus an additional reporting period during which quarterly reports are required to be submitted. The duration of the additional reporting period will be stipulated in the grant agreement.

The ORSC will prepare a grant agreement. The grant agreement will incorporate the proposal and project budget, as either may have been modified by evaluation findings, funding decisions or other terms or conditions consistent with the approval of award. Grant agreements are sent to Lead Applicants for review and signature. Once the signed grant agreement is returned, the grant agreement is executed and entered in the ORSC accounting system. Invoices and reports may be submitted subject to the terms of the grant agreement. Once the grant agreement is executed, the Lead Applicant is considered and will be referred to as “Grantee.” The grants will be funded on a reimbursement basis directly through ORSC.

A Grantee is required to complete the project as described in the proposal as submitted and with only those modifications as agreed by the Grantee and ORSC in finalizing the grant agreement. Any subsequent changes to the grant agreement must be approved in advance and in writing by the Task Group and ORSC.

The Lead Applicant on a proposal chosen for a grant will be required to submit reports and invoices through mechanisms determined by ORSC as outlined in each individual grant

1.3 Award Terms and Conditions

1.3.1 Funding Availability

The ORSC reserves the right to fund any proposal in full or in part, to request additional information to assist in the review process, to require new proposals from interested parties, to reject any or all proposals responding to this RFP, or to re-issue the RFP if it is determined that it is in the best interests of the State of Ohio. Issuing this RFP does not bind the state to making an award. ORSC staff in partnership with the Chancellor’s staff administers the program. ORSC and the Chancellor reserve the right to adjust the dates for this RFP for whatever reasons are deemed appropriate. ORSC reserve the right to waive any non-substantive infractions made by an applicant, provided that the applicant cures such infraction upon the request of ORSC.

1.3.2 Award Decisions

The funding decisions of the ORSC are final. Lead Applicants also will be notified of the outcome of their application(s) at the conclusion of the review process. The respondent understands that the information provided herein is intended solely to assist the respondent in submittal preparation and the information provided is believed to be accurate. However, any errors or omissions subsequently determined will not be construed as a basis for invalidating this solicitation. Interested parties bear the sole responsibility of obtaining the necessary information to submit a qualifying proposal. By submitting a proposal, responders expressly agree to these terms.

1.3.3 Local Match Requirements

There are no local funding match requirements.

1.3.4 Collaborators

Collaboration is encouraged by all ORSC-OBR applicants, including but not limited to local ABLE and AWE programs within the University System of Ohio. Collaboration among multiple institutions of higher education, including private nonprofit colleges and universities, is also encouraged whenever it adds value to the outcome and the statewide leveraging of the proposal. Projects are reviewed on their ability to have statewide impact, utility and be replicated.

All collaborative proposals must explain the roles of all key parties in the implementation of the project.

Where appropriate, collaboration may extend to organizations and institutions like high schools, career technical centers, adult career centers, ABLE programs and other organizations serving individuals with disabilities.

1.3.5 Term of Awards

The ORSC-OBR Grant Period for this RFP will be one year from an agreed to effective date. We expect that some proposals that are submitted will have multi-year time horizons. Those receiving funds for one year will be eligible to submit a renewal proposal through an expedited review process in subsequent years, and first year grant recipients will receive preferential treatment in the interest of supporting sustainable, long-term programs. While multi-year proposals are welcome, it should be understood that funding awards will only be made for the first year with subsequent year funding conditioned on program progress, subsequent applications and availability of funds.

1.3.6 Distribution of Funds

The methods and timing for distribution of funds will be determined by the ORSC and will be spelled out in grant agreements with awardees. Awardees should be aware that funds will be distributed directly to the single, designated fiscal agent for each project. Awardees should also know that funds may not be awarded as a lump sum at the start of the project but on a reimbursement basis.

1.3.7 Limit on Number of Proposals Submitted

There is no limit on the number of proposals that may be submitted by a single eligible applicant or in which a lead applicant or collaborating organization may participate.

1.3.8 Evaluation Criteria

Only the most meritorious proposals are sought for funding. Proposals that are complete and compliant with the RFP requirements will be evaluated based on the quality, cost-effectiveness, compatibility and synergy with other projects, scalability to the statewide level, and sustainability of the proposed services to students and other overlapping clientele with disabilities.

1.3.9 Award Preparation Costs

All costs incurred in preparation of a proposal shall be borne by the applicant including Lead Applicants and Collaborating Partners. Proposal preparation costs are not recoverable under an award. The State of Ohio shall not contribute in any way to recovering the costs of proposal preparation.

1.4 Mandatory Compliance & Legal Notice

1.4.1 Obligations to the State; Compliance with Laws

Grantees will be required to certify in the grant agreement that they do not owe: (1) any delinquent taxes to the state or a political subdivision of the state; (2) any moneys to the state or a state agency for the administration or enforcement of any environmental laws of the state; and (3) any other moneys to the state, a state agency or a political subdivision of the state that are past due, whether the amounts owed are being contested in a court of law or not.

Grant agreements will require Grantees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws in the performance of the project. Grantees must accept full responsibility for payments of all unemployment compensation, insurance premiums, workers' compensation premiums, all income tax deductions, social security deductions, and any and all other or payroll deductions required for all employees engaged by the Grantee on the performance of the work authorized by the grant agreement.

1.4.2 Legal Notice

The grantee understands that if its application is accepted by the ORSC and the Chancellor the grantee shall enter into an agreement with ORSC governing the use of the awarded funds.

The grantee agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws in the conduct of the work hereunder.

ORSC and the Chancellor reserve the right to fund any application in full or in part, to request additional information to assist in the review process, to require new applications from interested parties, to reject any or all applications responding to this announcement, or to re-issue the announcement if it is determined that it is in the best interests of the State of Ohio. Issuing this announcement does not bind the State to making an award. ORSC and the Chancellor administer the program. ORSC and the Chancellor reserve the right to adjust the dates for this announcement for whatever reasons are deemed appropriate. ORSC and the Chancellor reserve the right to waive any non-substantive infractions made by a grantee, provided that the grantee cures such infraction upon the request of ORSC and the Chancellor.

All costs incurred in preparation of an application shall be borne by the grantee. Application preparation costs are not recoverable under an award. The State of Ohio shall not contribute in any way to recovering the costs of application preparation.

The funding decisions of ORSC and the Chancellor are final. All lead applicants will be notified in writing whether their application(s) meet the requirements specified in the announcement and, therefore, whether their proposals will be reviewed by ORSC and the Chancellor for funding consideration. Lead applicants also will be notified of the outcome of their application(s) at the conclusion of the review process.

The applicant understands that the information provided herein is intended solely to assist the applicant in submittal preparation. To the best of the Chancellor's knowledge, the information provided is accurate. However, ORSC and the Chancellor do not warrant such accuracy, and any errors or omissions subsequently determined will not be construed as a basis for invalidating this solicitation. Interested parties bear the sole responsibility of obtaining the necessary information to submit a qualifying application. ORSC and the Chancellor retain the right to modify or withdraw this solicitation at any time. By submitting an application, applicants expressly agree to these terms.

2. General Proposal Requirements

2.1 General Instructions

Electronically delivered proposals must be emailed to Carl Sabo at carl.sabo@rsc.state.oh.us with “ORSC-OBR Proposal” in the subject line by **4/30/2010 at 2:00 p.m.** All components of the proposal must be included in a **single** document. Send as Word or Open Office format required.

- Proposals are to be formatted to print on 8.5 × 11-inch paper.
- All pages must be numbered consecutively using the format “Page # of total number of pages” (e.g., Page 2 of 6). Page numbering applies to all pages that are part of the proposal, including attachments, such as letters of collaboration. The proposal itself (not including attachments, letters of collaboration, etc.) should **not exceed 10 pages** double-spaced. Additional pages of attachments, letters, etc., should be kept to a minimum and directly relevant to the proposal.
- The proposal title must appear at the bottom of each page.
- Proposals should not include color figures that cannot be understood when photocopied in black and white.
- The first page of the proposal must be the Application Cover Sheet. Include a page immediately after the Application Cover Sheet that lists each page in the proposal that includes trade secret information and the number of occurrences of trade secret information on that page. The next page must be a one page abstract or summary of the project proposal. A one page summary of the associated budget line items should be included as the last page of the proposal itself (not including attachments, letters of collaboration, etc.).
- Do not include a cover letter.

2.2 Trade Secret Information

All Lead Applicants are strongly discouraged from including in a proposal any information that the Lead Applicant considers to be a “trade secret,” as the term is defined in Section §1333.61 (D) of the Ohio Revised Code. All information submitted in response to this RFP is public information unless a statutory exception exists that exempts it from public release. If any information in the proposal is to be treated as a trade secret, the proposal must:

- Identify each occurrence of the information within the Proposal with an asterisk before and after each line containing trade secret information and underline the trade secret information itself.
- Check the “Trade Secret Information Included” box on the Applicant Cover Sheet.

- As mentioned, include a page immediately after the Application Cover Sheet that lists each page in the proposal that includes trade secret information and the number of occurrences of trade secret information on that page.

To determine what qualifies as Trade Secret Information, refer to the definition of “trade secret” in the Ohio Revised Code, which is reproduced below for reference:

“Trade Secret” means information, including the whole of any portion or phase of any scientific or technical information, design, process, procedure formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique or improvement, business information or plans, financial information or listing of names, addresses, or telephone numbers, that satisfies both of the following:

- It derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to and not being readily ascertainable by proper means by other persons who can obtain economic value from its disclosure or use.
- It is the subject of efforts that are reasonable under the circumstances to maintain its secrecy.

2.3 Proposal Template Sections

Include all sections 2.3.1 through 2.3.10, with each section clearly marked in the proposal. Section 2.3.11 is optional

2.3.1 Application Cover Sheet

The first page(s) of the proposal must be the completed Application Cover Page found in Appendix B to this RFP. The signature of the President of the institution or his/her authorized agent must be included.

Include a page immediately after the Application Cover Sheet that lists each page in the proposal that includes trade secret information and the number of occurrences of trade secret information on that page.

In cases where there are Co-lead applicants, multiple Application Cover Sheets should be included, one for each Co-lead applicant. The first of these cover sheets must be completed in its entirety; subsequent cover sheets only need to include the name, address and dated signature of the Co-lead applicant listed on that sheet.

2.3.2 Lead Applicant(s) and Collaborator(s) Information

Complete and include the Lead Applicant(s) and Collaborator(s) Contact Information on the Cover Sheet. (Note that a letter of collaboration must be included for each listed Collaborating institution.)

2.3.3 Abstract of the Project

Not to exceed 1 page.

2.3.4 Complete description of Project

Provide a description of the project. The description and costs should include a clear picture of the technology and quantity of technology needed and impact on Vocational Rehabilitation Consumers

2.3.5 Provide a summary of the benefits to VR consumers

Include an estimate of number of individuals that may be served by the Project.

2.3.6 Duration, Nature and Estimates of Costs being requested

Provide a complete description of the timing and nature of costs. This should include an overall budget of the project.

2.3.7 Known Models or Connections to Other Projects

Provide a list of similar projects, both within the state and around the country/world.

2.3.8 Scalability to a Statewide Level

Provide a description of how this project can be available/accessible to any campus that wants to participate. The description should address how statewide implementation will leverage the technology and costs or otherwise bring these services to campuses that otherwise would not be able to or would have to spend much more.

2.3.9 Human Resources Involved in the Project/Initiative

Provide a summary description of the key people that will be working on the project and respective role(s).

2.3.10 Reporting to ORSC and OBR

Provide an explanation on how reporting to ORSC/OBOR regarding the project progress and results will be conducted.

2.3.11 Additional Information

Additional information you deem useful may be included in an appendix.

2.3.12 Page and Format Limitations

The proposal itself should not exceed 10 double-spaced pages – applicants are encouraged to exercise judgment and to use only as much space as is necessary to communicate effectively. Appendices and attachments are allowed. The body of the document should be no smaller than 11 point type and no larger than 14 point type.

Appendix A

Definitions

Collaborator – An individual not employed by or related to the Lead Applicant or an organization, institution, company or other legal entity that is not an affiliate of the Lead Applicant which is participating in the proposed project as submitted by the Lead Applicant.

Effective Date – The date upon which a Grant Agreement between a Lead Applicant and the ORSC is effective.

Fiscal Agent – The single organizational entity responsible for managing state funds and submitting required reports under the terms of the grant agreement.

Grant Agreement – A legal agreement setting forth the terms and conditions upon which Grant Funds are awarded and the respective rights and obligations of the Lead Applicant(s) and the State of Ohio with respect to Grant Funds and the project for which they are to be used.

Grant Funds – Financial assistance in the form of money awarded by a government agency to an eligible applicant in order to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of development authorized by the state.

Grantee – Once the Grant Agreement is executed, the Lead Applicant is considered and will be referred to as “Grantee.” In the case of multiple Lead Applicants, the Grantee shall be the organization designated as the fiscal agent.

Key Personnel – Individuals from the Lead Applicant and/or Collaborators who represent a project’s leadership from a technical, business or managerial perspective.

Lead Applicant – an organization eligible under the terms of this RFP that is submitting a proposal. It is possible to have more than a single Lead Applicant under this RFP. In the case of multiple Lead Applicants, all such applicants shall be termed “Co-lead Applicants.” Lead applicants shall be legally and financially responsible for the administration of any resulting award of Grant Funds.

Project – The plan of activity or activities that make up the total scope of work for which an award of Grant Funds is requested and for which a Proposal is approved.

Proposal – A proposal as submitted by a Lead Applicant seeking an award of Grant Funds in response to this Request for Proposals.

Appendix B

ORSC-OBR COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

Assistive Technologies Grant Application Cover Sheet

Project Name	
Lead Applicant - Project Grant Contractor <i>Must be higher education agency</i>	<i>Name and Address of Postsecondary Institution</i>
Chief Contact <i>Individual must be authorized to sign agency grant contract and legally responsible as agency representative.</i>	<i>Name/Title of legal representative Address, Telephone, FAX, and E-Mail</i>
Project Director(s)- Key Personnel(s)	<i>Name/Title, Address, Telephone, FAX, and E-Mail</i>
Collaborating Institutions	<i>Name of Institution(s) and key personnel at each institution</i> <i>1.</i> <i>2.</i> <i>Etc.</i>