

Questions and Answers from the March 28, 2018 Los Angeles Cal-SOAP RFA Technical Workshop

Answers provided by Executive Director, Lupita Cortez Alcala and Assistant Deputy Director, Steve Caldwell

Are there any restrictions in terms of serving our populations (young men of color)? We are looking for a continuum.

No, there are no restrictions on that. We're looking to ensure that there is a lot of data on those students. How they're doing or not doing. Why you need to recruit them. How are you ensuring those high school students are going on to higher education? How are you ensuring the system is ensuring the students are moving on to college? The beauty of Cal-SOAP is that you know what your students need.

What's the difference between completed and submitted (Race to Submit Dashboard status)?

Submitted – the student submitted a FAFSA or Dream Act application.

Completed – the school district has submitted the student's GPA. Required by law, GPAs are required to receive a Cal Grant.

We can't process an award for students without the GPA. This is something Cal-SOAP can work on...helping schools submit GPAs. Also, you can work with private schools to help them submit their GPAs.

Can you provide clarification on the SBAC scores? Is your assumption that there has to be a certain level of tutoring?

Many of the RFAs and grant programs that exist that work with students and high schools and schools in general...right now we have the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and we want to know if it's helped in any way. I don't know that it will make or break you, but I think it will be helpful for us to see. There are multiple measures, it's not just that one assessment but I think that is very in line with the college readiness accountability measures. School districts are very aware of that, they have to do it anyway. If you can show other improvements in the college going rate, it's just one of the measures.

Can an adult school be counted as part of the consortium as a Career Technical Education partner?

There are certain requirements in law that state what must be included. I think you can but what we are looking for in an adult school are courses towards higher education. We don't want to exclude any partners as long as you have the four required by law. We wanted to make sure that it wasn't just, you have to go for a bachelor's degree now. That there are other options for students in that trajectory of higher education. Career technical education could also mean success for that particular student.

How are you thinking about the region of LA county and what do you think about scale? Is a competitive proposal one medium sized school district that wants to fully align? Or is it 25% of low income students for the region?

We don't have a particular amount. Our interest is serving as many students as possible. I know how large LA is and how many students and the amount of effort it takes to bring up, to really effect a

change. In some of our Commission items there are Cal-SOAP Project Director's reports, and some of the reports have tabs you should look at that talk about the services they provide and how many students they serve. You will note that some Cal-SOAPs receive more money but serve [fewer] students and others that receive less money serve more students. It has something to do with partners but also geography. We are very open to what we receive.

Is there a trend on the average number of students served per region?

The combined number of students is around 120,000. The tab item will show who is serving how many. They are all very different. If you look at Los Angeles area versus the north coast area, it's going to be a very different type of service and different numbers of students just because of the geography. It takes a long time to get between schools in the north where in LA it may take a long time to get between schools because of the traffic but they are still close by so you can serve a lot more students in the same area. It's pretty hard to compare and I would be careful with comparing them too much. This is a new opportunity. We're not trying to emulate what has been done in the past. We are trying to find some new opportunities and new creative and innovative thinking that's different.

What is the risk assessment measurement taking into account innovative programs?

We are looking at the outcomes delineated in the RFA. Are they graduating? Are they moving on to college? Are they filling out their financial aid applications? We are open to innovation. Make sure your programs align with the performance outcomes we're looking for.

Can one school district be a fiscal agent?

Yes.

Are there going to be multiple awards or one award for LA?

We're going to see what we get in terms of proposals. We reserve the right to have multiple awards. However, it's not a lot of money to go around. However, if one proposal is for \$300,000.00 and another is for \$415,000.00, there could be more than one. We'll see.

Will the current fiscal agent in our region still be in existence?

That depends on the awarded applicant. The current fiscal agent for the Los Angeles area is Rio Hondo College. The current consortium could win the bid with a different fiscal agent.

There has always been an issue with fiscal agents versus the consortium/governance. The fiscal agent sees themselves as the ones that call the shots since they hire the project director. If done well, along with the partners, might make that work. In the past, it's been challenging a little bit in trying to make sure the roles and responsibilities are delineated. The fiscal agent is really the agency that deals with hiring the project director, making sure the funding is available, but also they should be a significant part of the consortium along with other partners. They could be one in the same. There should be a good balance so that the other partners don't feel like they don't count as much.

Is it true that different types of organization have different labors and legal operations, so different types of fiscal agents might benefit?

Yes. Different types of fiscal agents have different pay scales and those with higher salaries may have less to go towards programs.

Can a consortium have more than 4 partner schools or organizations?

Yes. There is no limit. You just want to ensure that they will be an active partner. Don't include partners in your application if they are not going to contribute.

As long as you have the partners required by law, the other partners that come to the table could vary quite a bit. We do want more than that, we want more than four.

We are going to be reading a lot of these so as concise and clear and grammar and error and spelling free is appreciated. We don't want to see a dissertation but we are asking a lot so if you can get to the point that would be very helpful.

What do you see the case management looking like?

It's about how to holistically serve the student. There have been different trends around individualized learning plans, much like an IEP... about how you serve the students. Take for instance, we know that some tutoring goes on in the classroom and the teacher says "help the student do that" but no one has looked at what they need, what are they not doing so well in, in English or math or science, or study skills, whatever else. What we mean by that is, how are those students being served? Are all of their needs being addressed? Are you in partnership with the school and the teacher to ensure that whatever you providing that student is being delivered appropriately. Is it informed by anything, the school or the teacher. Is information being shared? Are you taking care of all their needs to ensure that they are going to be successful. If you get them to fill out the FAFSA, but if they aren't prepared to go to college, I'm not sure they are going to be successful. Or you didn't fill out any applications for college, or you can get them signed up for the courses, you didn't actually transition them from their senior year to their first year of college, you could actually lose a lot of students – there's not this soft handoff. It's kind of like the school is done with them, high school is done with them, they have graduated. The community college says we never got them, they didn't come here. Do you know how many students we award financial aid to that never pick up their check? 30%. Some go out of state or make other plans but many students don't know that they have it. That's a problem.

This will help show the success of Cal-SOAP and be able to tell the legislature that we're helping these students, they're going to college and they are succeeding their first year, they're enrolling and making it and that's because somebody came in decided that they are going to take them through the process and we need to be able to show that better. We need to be able to tell the story better.

How do you feel about a cohort model?

As long as you meet the benchmarks, you're partnering and focusing on the largest gaps and other programs aren't providing the same services, we are open to what the need is in the area. I can't stress enough that there are a lot of disadvantaged youth that's very diverse and so it is really important for you to focus on gaps, the largest gaps. Not always the largest population of students. Don't necessarily focus on a particular ethnic group, gender, be open to what the need is in any one area served. We don't have any preconceived ideas of what we are looking for.

It seems that you're looking for a different type of fiscal agent. Can you talk to through the reimbursement process and what that looks like?

We're not necessarily looking for a different type of fiscal agent. We're moving to more of a grant process. We're moving away from an allocation and reimbursement. We're not going to be micromanaging your expenditures. In the first year it will be 25% up front, 25% in the middle, and 50% towards the end of the year. In the second year, it will be 50% up front and 50% at the end.

In the current Cal-SOAP requirements, we report intensive students. Is that not going to be the reported in the new RFA?

Although it is not expressly defined as "direct (intensive)", the required outcomes are based on directly served students. The successful application will also include "general" services such as Cash for College workshops. Regardless of the type of service, we are looking for individualized data.

Middle school and high school are indicated in the RFA. What type of services can be provided to middle schools?

You can provide "college-going" mentality in the families as well as providing direct services to families. For example, giving study skills. Anything that contributes to a college culture in a systemic way.