NEW JERSEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Bridging the Digital Divide for New Jersey's Students
2020-RFI-OET-Covid19-109
DATE: July 27, 2020

ADDENDUM #1

The following constitutes an Addendum, which can be a Clarification and/or Modification to the above referenced solicitation.

_____

Answers to Respondent's questions

No.	Questions	Answers
1	Although this is not an RFP, is it okay to reference pricing as they relate to ideas of procurement methods?	The RFI is seeking information on strategies to obtain sufficient hardware and internet access for all students, including free and low-cost options. RFI responses may include information on pricing.
2	Will New Jersey be able to write emergency contracts to fit the scope/needs during the pandemic?	The RFI is focused on gathering information and perspectives about the digital divide. Any potential contracting or purchasing process by NJEDA, NJ DOE and/or other state entities, is not the purview of this RFI.
3	Is the State's Intention to create/mandate an overarching solution to school districts receiving the grants or to give guidance on potential solutions?	The RFI is not making any statement or providing any notification, directly or indirectly, regarding decisions regarding the reopening of schools and the methodology of educating New Jersey students. The NJ DOE 'Restart & Recovery Plan: The Road Back' guidelines released on June 26 provides guidance for districts to create reopening plans – including potential virtual learning – that is best suited to the needs of the students, teachers and families in their community. Please also note that this RFI is not a grant or funding opportunity.
4	Is the State's intention to finalize on just one solution or offer a catalogue of alternative solutions for the local School Boards?	The RFI is seeking perspectives and potential solutions. The NJEDA plans to share the information received with the NJDOE which may, in turn, distribute that information to the local school districts and school boards.

5	Is the state considering funding for non-public schools? Charters?	This RFI does not directly address the source or allocation of funding. Please note that this RFI is not a grant or funding opportunity. However, please also note that on July 16, Governor Murphy announced that $6 million in Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) funds will be available for nonpublic schools.
6	Are you looking to include staff (teachers) in this initiative?	The RFI includes several considerations specific to educators' remote learning capacity. For example, one of the core areas in which the RFI aims to gather information is training, technical assistance and professional development for students, parents/guardians, and educators who are not experienced in effective remote learning methods, including use of technology. Several of the questions in the RFI are designed to solicit information regarding educators' professional development needs (see, e.g. #s 15, 17, and 18).

Specifically, regarding access to educational technology hardware and connectivity devices, the RFI focuses primarily on bridging the digital divide to ensure student access. |
| 7 | Regarding the State's question "What are the biggest challenges/concerns/gaps in the State's current remote learning and educational technology ecosystem?" Can the State give more information on the challenges that it is facing and what the State is attempting to solve as a result of this RFI? | The RFI provides a broad overview of the scope of the digital divide throughout the state and the goals of the initiative (to ensure that New Jersey's students, educators and parents/guardians have sufficient access to the appropriate digital technology, internet connectivity and training to foster successful remote learning (as needed)). The RFI also asks respondents to provide information about the remote learning needs of specific populations that may be particularly impacted by the digital divide. Those sections of the RFI provide context for respondents to elaborate on challenges. |
| 8 | I recently applied, as well, for a Spencer Foundation Small Cycle Grant […]The study will determine the level of technological preparedness schools possessed prior to the statewide school shutdown order. […] In | Questions 15-19 of the RFI are related to professional development and training. Any perspectives or potential solutions to respond to those questions would be |

	respect to the RFI, I am specifically seeking to provide insights and suggestions on training and professional development "for students, parents/guardians and teachers who aren't experienced in effective remote learning methods, including use of technology." […] In closing, my question is whether this is the type of project that you would like further developed in the RFI to be submitted on July 31, 2020.	appropriate to include in a response to the RFI.
9	[Regarding] pre-school students that are sent to providers [rather than public schools], do the providers apply for funding on their own?	This RFI is not a grant or funding opportunity. However, please note that on July 22, the Department of Education announced a <u>Digital Divide Grant</u> opportunity and the link provided includes additional information on this program, including where to direct specific grant questions.
10	Will the request for funds be entered in the EWEG System? If not, how will districts apply for these funds?	This RFI is not a grant or funding opportunity. However, please note that on July 22, the Department of Education announced a <u>Digital Divide Grant</u> opportunity and the link provided includes additional information on this program, including where to direct specific grant questions.
11	Has the state looked at contracting one internet provider for MiFi's so the cost could be decreased due to the quantity?	The RFI is focused on gathering information and perspectives about the digital divide. Questions 11-13 of the RFI relate to internet access and broadband connections. If respondents have information to share about potential pricing models or contracting mechanisms, they may share that information in their response. However, please note that any potential contracting or purchasing process by NJEDA, NJ DOE and/or other state entities, is not the purview of this RFI.
12	In addition to providing information on remote education, would NJEDA also be willing to receive information regarding potential technologies that help assist with safe in person learning?	Yes.
13	Does the State of New Jersey plan to purchase Chrome or Windows devices for students and teachers as part of their comprehensive solution?	The RFI is not making any statement or providing any notification, directly or indirectly, regarding decisions regarding the reopening of schools and the

		methodology of educating New Jersey students. The NJ DOE 'Restart & Recovery Plan: The Road Back' guidelines released on June 26 provides guidance for districts to create reopening plans – including potential virtual learning – that is best suited to the needs of the students, teachers and families in their community. The type of device and/or technology utilized is expected to vary by school district.
14	What grade levels will this technology be targeted? K through 12?	The RFI is focused on bridging the digital divide for New Jersey's Pre-K-to-12 students.
15	Is the plan to standardize on one operating system in mind for tablets/Chrome Books?	The RFI is not making any statement or providing any notification, directly or indirectly, regarding decisions regarding the reopening of schools and the methodology of educating New Jersey students. The NJ DOE 'Restart & Recovery Plan: The Road Back' guidelines released on June 26 provides guidance for districts to create reopening plans – including potential virtual learning – that is best suited to the needs of the students, teachers and families in their community. The type of device and/or technology utilized is expected to vary by school district.
16	What format do you want professional development and student and parent training in – virtual only or hybrid?	Questions 15-19 of the RFI are related to professional development and training. Any perspectives or potential solutions to respond to those questions including virtual and/or hybrid, would be appropriate responses to the RFI.
17	What learning management platform, if any, is used statewide?	New Jersey does not mandate the use of a learning management platform. Any learning management system a school district utilizes is a local decision left to the discretion of the district board of education. As such, the type of learning management system utilized is expected to vary by school district.
18	Has the State of New Jersey adopted a digital learning or educational technology framework statewide or is there one that the	The RFI is not making any statement or providing any notification, directly or indirectly, regarding decisions regarding the reopening of schools and the

	DOE would like to adopt in the course of this initiative?	methodology of educating New Jersey students. The NJ DOE 'Restart & Recovery Plan: The Road Back' guidelines released on June 26 provides guidance for districts to create reopening plans – including potential virtual learning – that is best suited to the needs of the students, teachers and families in their community. The type of device and/or technology utilized is expected to vary by school district.
19	We'd like to engage our partners in the corporate world as well as our donors to help us with this cause. What is the best way to go about identifying how these Chromebook can be donated and to which school district?	As part of the grant program released by the NJ DOE, more detailed information will be collected on each district's needs. This district level information from the NJ DOE will help connect school districts in need with identified partners and potential solutions.
20	Are there any guidelines that we need to follow as a non-profit to make sure we aren't overstepping our boundaries in terms of what we are able to do to help with this cause?	Please note that this RFI is not a grant or funding opportunity. The RFI does note that "consistent with guidance from the United States Department of Education, districts must continue to meet their obligations to all students including students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs), students experiencing homelessness, low-income students, and students at risk of not meeting the State's challenging academic standards. Any item, good, service, or professional development/technical assistance provided by a vendor may need to be modified to assist a district in meeting this requirement."