

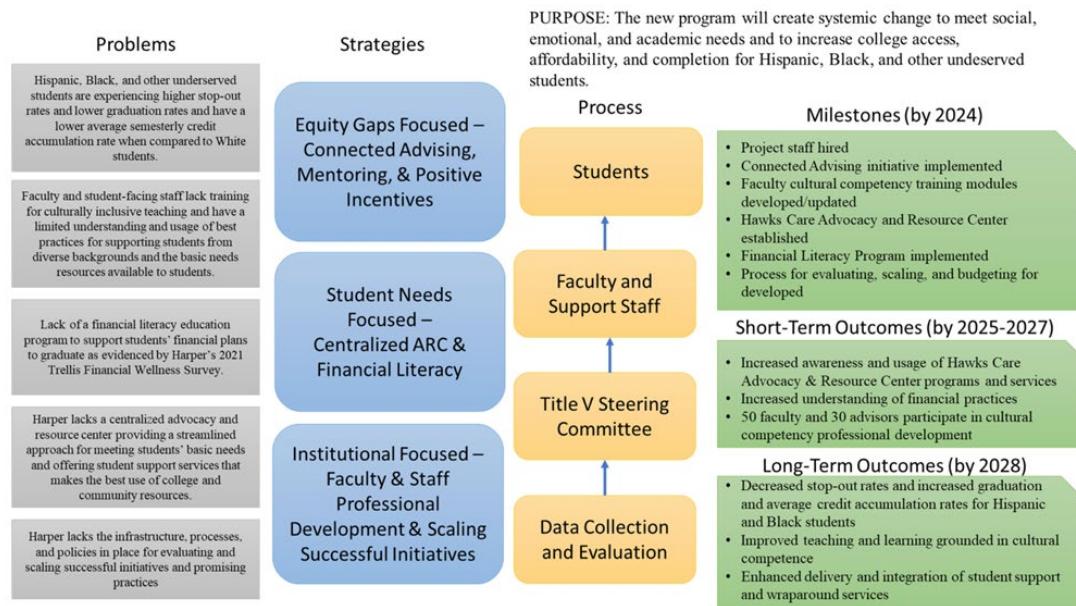
Request for Proposal Q01159
Third-Party Evaluator for the U.S. Dept of Education,
Title V Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (DHSI) Grant
Addendum #1
June 12, 2024

All changes to the Request for Proposal (RFP) are valid only if they are issued by written addendum. Each respondent must acknowledge receipt of any addenda in their proposal submission. Each respondent, by acknowledging receipt of any addenda, is responsible for the contents of the addenda and any changes to the proposal therein. Failure to acknowledge receipt of any addenda may cause the proposal to be rejected. If any language or figures contained in this addendum are in conflict with the original document this addendum shall prevail.

This addendum consists of questions received:

1. Can you tell us more about the October 2023 and October 2024 timeline for evaluation planning and reporting. How flexible are the deliverables for October 2024 formative reporting? In past projects we have collaborated to develop an evaluation plan, overview of project context and evaluation rubric that will structure the evaluation going forward. Is that something the team would consider with evaluation set up continuing into FY2 with instrument development and IRB continuing into FY2?
Response: The annual October report is based on the grant period of performance so evaluator recommendations based on assessment of grant performance can be reviewed and implemented in the subsequent period. Harper is required to submit the October 2024 formative report to the Department of Education. This report can be created to the best of the evaluator's ability in collaboration with Harper staff. The College understands developing the evaluation plan design and gaining an understanding of current project activities takes time and the final evaluation design plan may not be finalized prior to the October 2024 formative report.
2. There is reference to unlimited communication (pages 16-17). What kind of a buffer (time/budget) is the team willing to consider to accommodate this feature of the RFP?
Response: Unlimited communication is included in the \$150,000 grant funding allocated to the evaluator. Harper understands holidays and vacations, but aside from the regularly scheduled meetings, if questions arise, the College would expect to be able to send emails and phone communications, or hold ad hoc meetings based on schedule availability of all parties. A reasonable response timeframe is a few business days or less. The College does not want a cap on communication methods.
3. As evaluators working out of state, we are not currently BEP certified in Illinois. Is this a process we can start and continue through initial phases of the proposal?
Response: If you're not a BEP certified firm and unable to subcontract work to BEP vendors, please complete the form "Demonstrating Good Faith Efforts", and the utilization plan requesting a waiver as appropriate.
4. Is the team aware of federal (DOE) third party evaluators for federal grantee evaluation teams? If so, is there information on review criteria, submission and revision expectations or convenings/meetings?
Response: The team is not aware of federal third party evaluators for federal grantee evaluation teams. The Department of Education has not alerted the College to such an evaluation at this time. If the College is notified of such, this information will be shared.
5. Is insurance required for each individual evaluator, or is the lead evaluator's insurance sufficient coverage?
Response: The college expects the insurance to cover the firm we will be contracting with and the firm is responsible for any party they subcontract with.

6. Are references for the lead evaluator's previous work sufficient, or are additional references required for each supporting evaluator? If the supporting evaluators do not have three references in this field, would additional references from other industries be requested?
Response: Please refer to section C.03.3 and provide a narrative of qualifications for your workteam.
7. What's already been implemented re: grant and evaluation (October 2023-present)?
Response: The evaluator will be provided more information during a kick-off meeting. Harper has implemented grant activities during the first 8 months of grant period, including hiring key personnel, implementing Connected Advising, beginning development of the Financial Literacy Program, and more. The proposal included performance metrics and targets and data is being gathered from grant activities, but the data has not been evaluated.
8. What's the internal capacity for ongoing evaluation already? For example, is there currently an internal evaluator working who we would be collaborating with?
Response: Harper has an Institutional Research (IR) team that will collaborate with the HSI grant team and the evaluator. IR assists with the data collection and will collaborate with the grant project team and third-party evaluator to review the data and prepare the October 2024 and subsequent reports. No evaluation of current data has taken place at this point in the grant period.
9. There is reference to creating an internal evaluation system (pages 16-17). Does the team already have something in mind?
Response: The College utilizes the Ellucian Banner student management system for student demographic and outcomes data collection, Formstack and Survey Monkey for surveys or data input, and Microsoft Power BI to view real-time data. Harper is also currently implementing Salesforce CRM to provide dynamic reporting on other projects. The College would like to work with the evaluator to leverage existing tools and platforms when creating an internal evaluation system specific to the collection and assessment of data related to the activities and interventions in the grant.
10. There is a list of data to be gathered (pages 16-17). Is any of this data already being collected?
Response: Yes, the College uses Banner to collect data for credit hour accumulation rates, graduation rates, course success rates, and stop-out rates. The usage rates of the Hawks Care Advocacy and Resource Center programs and services and the number of students participating in Connected Advising are also being tracked. The remaining data points are not being tracked as those are new activities still in the implementation phase.
11. What are the current or proposed frameworks for terms like participation, integration, coordination, collaboration, financial health, fluency, and/or literacy, multicultural competency, culturally responsive teaching and advising practices, etc. (pages 16-17)?
Response: Many of these terms are based on the literature reviewed during the proposal development process, including research, journal articles, and reports written by various experts, researchers, and organizations such as the Association of Community College Trustees and the ECMC Foundation. The College is developing working definitions for some of these terms, such as financial health, financial fluency, culturally responsive teaching and advising practices, etc. Terms such as participation, integration, coordination, and collaboration are defined in the grant proposal and are specific to grant activities and/or outputs. Proposal development documents, including research interventions are based on, may be shared at the evaluation kick-off meeting.
12. Can you share more about the scope of this work, e.g., who is included in the description of "other underserved students"?
Response: The full grant application will be shared with the selected third-party evaluator upon contract execution. The image below provides a high-level overview of the grant's Five-Year Plan. Other underserved students may include, but are not limited to, veteran, LGBTQIA+, low-income, first-generation, and immigrant student populations. However, grant activities are geared toward Hispanic and Black student outcomes, with the overall goal of increasing diversity and equity at the College, while decreasing barriers to enrollment, persistence, and completion.



13. What do Hawks Care Advocacy and Resource Center programs and services entail? Is there a list of these we might review? (pages 16-17)

Response: *Hawks Care Advocacy and Resource Center provides resources and referrals to help students meet their basic needs. Current on-campus services include a food pantry, a career clothing closet, gas gift cards, grocery gift cards, and a Lyft transportation program, and staff who connect students in need to other campus and community resources. A full comprehensive list will be provided to the third-party evaluator.*

14. On pages 16-17, there is reference to: "Number of initiatives evaluated, scaled, and funded". How is the team defining initiatives right now? What mechanisms for evaluation are currently in place?

Response: *Initiatives are projects or activities implemented by Harper faculty and/or staff designed to increase student success outcomes. They are internal to the College, but may involve external stakeholders. Harper lacks consistent assessment and scaling practices necessary to best leverage institutional financial and human resources. Currently, there is not an established framework for evaluating, scaling, and funding successful initiatives.*

15. Who are the responsible parties external evaluators will be collaborating with to prepare the project's annual and final performance reports for submission to the DOE? Can you share templates the DOE has provided for reporting up to this point?

Response: *The external evaluators will collaborate with the Title V Project Director and other staff with input from the Institutional Research Office and the Grants Office, along with other stakeholders throughout the College, such as the Provost, Director of Advising Services, and Director of Student Recruitment and Outreach.*

16. What mechanisms are in place or do you plan to put in place for professional development for faculty and staff? Increasing student financial health and knowledge?

Response: *This information is included in detail in the Project Narrative, which will be shared with the third-party evaluator upon contract execution. The College has an Academy of Teaching Excellence, which offers numerous workshops, programs, and tools for faculty members to improve teaching and learning. Harper does not currently have programs to teach students holistic financial literacy. A new Financial Literacy Program is one of the strategies implemented in this grant to increase student's financial health and knowledge.*

17. Is there more or less resource emphasis in one of the areas for the 6 objectives on page 14? Right now, the emphasis (page 16-17 data to be collected), seems to be on outputs over processes and outcomes.

Response: All 6 of the objectives listed are of equal importance to ensure the College is meeting its goal of reducing equity gaps, increasing student success, and removing barriers, particularly for Hispanic and Black students. Resource allocations for grant activities are based on the level of effort required to implement them. Some activities will also have more complex evaluation tasks, such as Connected Advising as more data can be gathered to evaluate the activity. The details of each strategy, including the scope of activity, data, information to be gathered, and resources allocated to each strategy, will be shared with the evaluator. The Five-Year Plan image shared in question 12 provides an overview of the project.

The examples of data to be collected and assessed on page 17 will be used to evaluate the seven project outcomes described on page 15. While the data collection focus primarily highlights outputs, this is an implementation evaluation and the College is equally committed to evaluating processes and outcomes. The outputs provide immediate indicators of program implementation, which are essential for understanding reach and engagement. To ensure a holistic evaluation, the College plans to integrate process evaluation to examine the quality and fidelity of the implementation, as well as outcome evaluation to measure the impact on student success.

18. Is there currently a project IRB application submitted and/or approved?

Response: An IRB application has not been submitted.

Sincerely,

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