

**Making A Connection Program RFP
Bidders' Conference
Questions and Answers**

April 24, 2012

SERVICE STRATEGY COMPONENTS

- Q.** Upon enrollment in the MAC Program, can participants enroll in school (including night and weekend classes) as part of their Individual Connection Planning (ICP)?
- A.** No. Upon enrollment in the MAC Program, a participant cannot enroll in secondary, technical or post-secondary school as part of their ICP because the MAC Program is an alternative to school. A participant may however, enroll in General Educational Development (GED) programs.
- Q.** Can an applicant propose to use other program materials or develop its own service delivery model in addition to or instead of the MAC curriculum provided?
- A.** Other service delivery models can be used in addition to, but not instead of the MAC Program curriculum offerings and activities outlined in the RFP. An applicant can use other program materials as necessary if applicable to the MAC Program module curricula and activity.
- Q.** Can a youth or young adult participate in a specific vocational program provided by the applicant agency or a partner agency to complete the 50 hours of community service or volunteer placement?
- A.** A partner agency is allowable, but not the applicant's own agency. The premise of community service or volunteer placement is to promote the refugee youth or young adult's active participation in the community. Placements should be in an area of interest and/or broad exposure to many different types of vocational opportunities.
- Q.** If the curriculum is provided for native language literacy, is it effective to use with the various different levels of native language literacy we encounter in our populations and can it be instructed by someone not fluent in the particular native language? For example, can a Karen coach still be an effective instructor for a Nepali child?
- A.** Native language literacy involves teachers fluent in the student's native language providing instruction utilizing the student's primary language. The MAC curriculum materials can be used with all levels of native language literacy. They should be taught not in English, or as ESL, but in the participant's native language.

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

- Q.** Can resumes be included with or used instead of the Key Personnel Profile?
- A.** Resumes may be included but cannot be submitted in place of the Key Personnel Profile.
- Q.** Does the MAC Coach need to be a trained guidance counselor?
- A.** No.
- Q.** MAC Coaches are to have a range of job responsibilities that include acting as a guidance counselor, case manager, job coach, etc. What level of formal training are the MAC Coaches expected to have in each of these areas?
- A.** There is no required level of formal training in any of the areas for a MAC Coach.
- Q.** Will each MAC Coach be responsible for a single job function acting as guidance counselor, case manager, job coach, etc. or will each position or will each position be expected to cover all of the functions?
- A.** A MAC Coach is expected to be able to cover those functions as needed.
- Q.** What is the job placement requirement under this program? Are there a specific number of placements that must be made under the program? Is job placement linked to a payment point?
- A.** Although the ultimate objective of the MAC Program is to prepare participants for unsubsidized employment, there is no specific number of job placements required. Job placement is not a requirement of any payment point. However, page 10 of the RFP details the need to report performance outcome measures, such as the number of job placements, to OTDA/BRIA on a quarterly basis.
- Q.** Can the MAC Academy curriculum activities take place in multiple locations?
- A.** Yes.
- Q.** Will the awarded applicant be expected to subcontract?
- A.** Subcontracting is not required to implement the program services. However, all applicants must submit the Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) Utilization Plans identifying subcontractors and/or vendors that are certified M/WBEs. These subcontractors would be for second tier services that can be counted toward satisfying OTDA goals. A list of these types of services can be found at the bottom of page 19 of the RFP under Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise and Equal Employment Opportunity Participation.
- Q.** What does BRIA suggest be the consequences for non compliance with the MAC Contract?

- A. BRIA cannot offer suggestions. Applicants are required to describe the elements of their proposed MAC Academy participant contract in the Program Description & Implementation portion of their proposal narrative. The RFP describes what the MAC contract should establish on page 6.

CLIENT ELIGIBILITY & ENROLLMENT

- Q. Based on current resettlement trends, the 300 MAC Academy participants would not be possible given the priority to those arrived within the last 24 months, even if every student within the age parameters of 16-21 were enrolled in the program. How set is BRIA on the 300 MAC Academy participants number?
 - A. Clarification is necessary here. BRIA's intent is that *outreach and recruitment* will target approximately 300 prospective participants. However, BRIA expects that a reasonable number of participants *enrolled* in the MAC academy will be approximately 150.
- Q. Is there any flexibility with the age of eligible participants?
 - A. No.
- Q. Can a 20 year old refugee youth in the U.S. for three to four years be enrolled in the MAC?
 - A. Yes, although priority should be given to refugee youth and young adult arrivals within the last twenty-four months.
- Q. Can a participant choose to go back to high school?
 - A. Yes, but he/she must be disenrolled from the MAC Program.
- Q. Can a participant be employed while enrolled in the MAC Program?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Can a participant be employed at the time of enrollment in the MAC Program?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Can a participant already be enrolled in a General Educational Development (GED) program and then enroll in the MAC Program?
 - A. Yes. A participant cannot be enrolled in or graduated from secondary, technical, or post secondary school.
- Q. To what extent does an applicant's level of formal schooling in their home country affect his/her eligibility for the MAC program?

A. A participant's level of formal schooling in their home country does not affect their eligibility for the MAC Program.

Q. Once a participant has met the requirements of the MAC Academy-Final Phase, can they be immediately enrolled in a BRIA employment program, such as Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG) or Refugee Social Services Program (RSSP)?

A. Yes.

Q. Can participants be enrolled in both the MAC Program and another BRIA employment program, such as TAG or RSSP, at the same time?

A. No.

Q. How can we ask a minor to sign a contract?

A. In the case of a minor, the parent/guardian would also need to sign the contract.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Q. Does the total number of Individual Connection Planning (ICP) payment points achieved have to equal total number of MAC Academy Final Phase payment points achieved?

A. No.

Q. Should an applicant's program design show that all participants enrolled in the MAC Academy will complete a total of 250 hours in order to be awarded the grant?

A. No.

Q. If we are a social services work site and can have welfare mandated students sent to us, can we double classes to eight hours a day to be in compliance with social services requirements of 35 hours a week of instructional activity?

A. The premise of an alternative school setting, such as the MAC Academy, is to not duplicate the long hours of a school day and to keep the undivided attention of the participant.

Q. How does BRIA want us to assure that prospective participants and parents have a real choice between this program and attending regular school?

A. Such an assurance is not required of this program or in the proposal narrative.

FUNDING AND BUDGET

- Q.** Are both payment schedules, 12-month budget period and 24-month contract term, required at the time of application submission?
- A.** Yes.
- Q.** The grant award is scheduled to be \$150,000 in the first year and \$200,000 in the second year. Any possibility this can be reversed given the upfront cost that an applicant would need to support the first year, like technology for the staff and classrooms?
- A.** No. It's expected that the 12-month payment schedules submitted by applicants will ultimately reflect lower proposed units of achievement for the first budget period based on a lower total award amount for the budget period.
- Q.** Will an advance be possible for the applicant that receives the award?
- A.** Yes. Page 16 of the RFP, under Section XI. Award Procedures, Payment, states, "OTDA may, at its discretion, advance up to 25% of the first budget period amount if requested and if deemed appropriate by OTDA/BRIA."
- Q.** If the applicant subsidizes the program in year one from a line of credit, can we schedule to recuperate costs in year two, if the calculations show that upfront costs will make year one more expensive than year two?
- A.** No. The contract resulting from this procurement will be performance-based. Under this contract, the contractor is not reimbursed for line-item expenses. Compensation is directly tied to the completion of service outcomes. Therefore, a payment schedule equal to the first 12-month budget period amount (\$150,000) and the 24-month contract term amount (\$350,000) are required at the time of application.

CURRICULUM

- Q.** When will the awardee be provided the curriculum?
- A.** The MAC Curriculum will be made available to the awarded contractor at the time of award notification. A draft excerpt was provided on pages 20-33 of the RFP.
- Q.** Will the awardee be trained on the use of the curriculum?
- A.** Yes. BRIA and the curriculum developer will provide a one-day program training.
- Q.** Does the curriculum cover all elements of the MAC Academy, or will the awardee need to develop curriculum for native language literacy, leadership training, or any other modules?

A. The curriculum covers all elements of the MAC Academy as described on pages 7 and 8 of the RFP.

Q. Where does the curriculum come from and how has it been shown to be effective?

A. The MAC curriculum is developed by a BRIA contractor with the knowledge and background associated with providing the material to youth and young adults as well as refugee service

Q. Will BRIA pay for the production cost of the curriculum or will we need to budget that into the E-Budget?

A. There is no production cost for the MAC Curriculum to applicants because BRIA is providing the MAC curriculum to the awardee.

GENERAL

Q. Will the award be made to one service provider or entity for the whole state?

A. Yes.

Q. Are the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) goals of 10% each correct?

A. Yes.

Q. The suggested turnaround is nine working days from notification to start date. What are the assurances that the grant will be awarded in the extremely short turnaround period outlined in the procurement schedule?

A. OTDA reserves the right to modify the dates.