

### **Purpose, Goals, and Objectives**

This Request for Applications (RFA) is to receive competitive proposals to provide job-embedded professional development and support to early childhood through high school literacy coaches and/or school system leaders. Any resulting contractual agreements from this RFA will be with Louisiana School(s)/School Systems, in accordance with provisions of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE). Literacy supports may include the following:

- Literacy Coach support
  - Early Childhood
  - Kindergarten through 5th
  - Middle/High
- School system leader support
  - Growing leader capacity to support literacy coaches

### **BACKGROUND**

#### *Priorities and Theory of Action*

The Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) serve over 700,000 students and 45,000 teachers across 1,500 schools and 70 school districts.

Louisiana's [\*Believe to Achieve\*](#) plan includes the Department's belief statements, state data to help track progress toward Louisiana's six critical goals, and new priorities that will direct the LDOE's efforts as they work toward achieving the critical goals. Each priority outlines focus areas for the key actions and initiatives.

#### **Louisiana Believes...**

- Children are our highest priority
- Families are our partners
- Educators are valued professionals
- Graduates must be ready
- Equity matters
- Choice expands opportunities
- Schools are invaluable to communities
- Our future is bright

#### **Critical Goals**

- Students enter kindergarten ready
- Students will achieve Mastery level on third-grade assessments and enter fourth grade prepared for grade-level content
- Students will achieve Mastery level on eighth-grade assessments and enter ninth grade prepared for grade-level content
- Students will graduate on time
- Graduates will graduate with a college and/or career credential
- Graduates will be eligible for a TOPS award

#### **Educational Priorities**

- Ensure every student is on track to a professional career, college degree or service

- Remove barriers and create equitable, inclusive learning experiences for all children
- Provide the highest quality teaching and learning environment
- Develop and retain a diverse, highly-effective educator workforce
- Cultivate high-impact systems, structures and partnerships

All Louisiana students will have improved literacy outcomes through high-quality instruction and interactions by an effective teacher supported by leaders and families. The Department has identified literacy as a focus under the priority of providing the highest quality teaching and learning environment from birth through graduation. The Department has released a [Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#) that identifies the state and school system/lead agency actions. One of the state actions is to use regional literacy specialists to build a cadre of site-based literacy coaches. School systems can then offer training and resources for teachers and leaders to effectively implement observation tools, facilitate communities of practice, and provide reflective feedback to improve instructional practices.

### **Early Literacy Commission (ELC) Recommendations**

1. Every teacher uses a high-quality curriculum to teach students the foundations of reading and language and literacy.
2. Every student who struggles to read receives timely research-based literacy interventions.
3. Every school has a culture in which all teachers are responsible for and equipped to deliver effective literacy instruction.
4. Every school leader maximizes the use of time and personnel through scheduling and collaborative planning.
5. Every teacher effectively uses evidenced-based practices to meet the literacy needs of all students.
6. Every educator preparation program emphasizes evidence-based literacy practices.
7. Every school system implements a comprehensive literacy assessment plan that includes valid and reliable assessment tools used for different purposes at different times during the school year.
8. Every teacher uses literacy assessment data to monitor students' progress and inform instruction.
9. Every school community expands opportunities for parents and families to be engaged in their children's literacy development.

### **Louisiana's Literacy Pillars**

- Student literacy outcomes will increase when schools create and monitor literacy goals.
- Literacy outcomes will improve when students are provided high-quality core instruction together with explicit literacy interventions and extensions based on individual student needs.
- Ongoing professional growth is an essential component of effective teaching and literacy development.
- Families play an essential role in the literacy development of children at all ages and stages.

Resources continue to be developed and published in the [Literacy Library](#) to support effective implementation of the pillars.

### *Pre-Existing Structures and Resources*

During the 2020 Louisiana Legislative Session, the Louisiana Legislature identified \$2 million to begin to implement the commission's recommendations. This investment allowed LDOE to launch a pilot that provided literacy coaches in 13 elementary schools across five school systems for the 2020-21 school year. With literacy coaching as a core component of the state's reading revival, LDOE created a comprehensive literacy coaching program for kindergarten through

second grades. Literacy coaches provide teachers with the support they need for instructional planning, observational feedback on reading lessons, training in using data to inform instructional practices, and ongoing professional growth to increase their knowledge of the science of reading.

In the 2021-2022 school year, LDOE used a portion of a \$100 million federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant to expand the program. Each school system had the opportunity to opt-in for every school that serves students in kindergarten through second grade and is designated as in need of intervention. This expanded the program to 177 schools and provided job-embedded professional development and support for the literacy coaches from 16 regional literacy specialists. The expansion now reaches 24% of the state's 743 elementary schools.

Beyond early literacy, school systems had an opportunity to request funding to place literacy coaches in middle and high schools designated as in need of intervention. An additional 70 literacy coaches were placed at this grade band across the state.

### **PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

Firms/individuals who are interested in providing services requested under this RFA must submit a proposal containing the mandatory information specified. The proposal must be received by the RFA Coordinator on or before 2:00 p.m. Central Daylight Time on the date specified in the Schedule of Events. Application materials should be uploaded to <https://louisianabelieves.smapply.io>

It shall be solely the responsibility of each proposer to ensure that its proposal is delivered at the specified place and prior to the deadline for submission. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

### **Desirable Qualification for Proposer**

All vendors approved through this RFA will be expected to:

- Provide supports in one or more of the following areas
  - Literacy Coach support
    - Early Childhood
    - Kindergarten through 5th grade
    - Middle/High
  - School system leader support
    - Growing leader capacity to support literacy coaches
- Participate in monthly check-ins with the Department
- Provide quarterly reports on progress of supports being provided

### **PROPOSAL FORMAT**

Proposers interested in submitting an application for this RFA, shall include the following components:

- A. Cover Letter:** A cover letter should be submitted on the proposer's official business letterhead explaining the intent of the proposer.
- B. Table of Contents:** The proposal should be organized in the order contained herein.

**C. Proposal:** This section should include the following:

**1. Section 1: Provider Summary**

- a. Organization name
- b. Organization contact name
- c. Contact email address
- d. Contact phone number
- e. Brief description of organization (corporate structure, number of years in business, mission statement etc.)

**2. Section 2: Provider Goals and Background**

- a. Interest in Literacy Specialists support program
- b. Approach to literacy instruction
- c. Summary of relevant projects or experiences
  1. Literacy coaching/mentoring
  2. Examples should reflect three (3) years prior to the application deadline.
- d. Information about all current and pending contracts including schedules and staff assignments

**3. Section 3: Program Description and Scope of Services**

- a. The company's strategy to implementing the literacy supports/deliverables
- b. Qualifications of specialist(s) and details of the hiring process - Minimum of the following:
  - Master's Degree from an accredited educational institution.
  - Certification in elementary, secondary, or special education with a minimum of seven (7) years of professional experience with a minimum of three (3) years of successful classroom reading instruction experience in grade band servicing.
  - Certification in evidence-based reading instruction (example: CERI, LETRS, AIM)
  - Experience in presenting educational training programs with demonstrated knowledge and practice in the areas of early language arts and evidence-based reading instruction
  - Knowledge of child growth and development – specifically language and literacy development including related disorders – for children in PK-12 settings.
  - Ability to assess levels of student/teacher/school achievement effectively, analyze test results, and prescribe actions for improvement.
- c. Technology formats or platforms that will be used to deliver remote coaching/support services
- d. Availability of specialists - percentage of time that can be spent on coaching/support services
- e. The company's professional development plan to continue to build literacy expertise of literacy specialists

**4. Section 4: Engagement and Support**

Description of implementation plan of the following tasks:

- Provide job-embedded coaching to literacy coaches, including face-to-face and virtually.
- Articulate best practices in structured literacy grounded in the science of reading.
- Provide daily technical support to school-based literacy teams in their capacity to support instruction of the 5 components of reading, including but not limited to knowledge of the Louisiana state standards, implementing high-quality curriculum, administering assessments, analyzing data, and engaging families and community.
- Model effective coaching and conferencing techniques.

- Provide clear, practical, timely, and constructive written and oral feedback to school-based team members about school literacy coaching and instructional practices.
- Meet regularly with school system or school leaders to review data and make informed recommendations for next steps in instructional practices, including teacher collaboration support.
- Collaborate with school system and school staff to evaluate and improve literacy program implementation
- Provide feedback on local literacy plans
- Collect, organize, and maintain data and records on key tasks, activities, and participants and provide to LDOE staff upon request.
- Foster a culture that is supportive of adult learning and improvement.
- Be as specific to the grade band and/or grade level as possible.
- Focus on equity and access for ALL students.
- Participate in LDOE-led communities of practice.
- Collaborate with LDOE to continue to improve practices of literacy coaches, implementation and next steps.

**5. Section 5: Proposed Pricing**

Approved partners are authorized to contract directly with school districts for the Literacy Coaching Program. The proposer must provide the cost breakdown (not to exceed \$400 per hour) school systems would be charged for the support, including:

- a. Administrative costs
- b. Training of staff
- c. Technology
- d. Overall cost per hour of literacy coaching
- e. Any additional costs

**6. Section 6: References**

Attach at least 3 one-page letters of support for your organization. References should include similar large-scale projects that have been developed and implemented.

**7. Section 7: Signature**

The Proposer must sign the application for it to be validated and submitted for review.

**8. Section 8: Description of Deliverables** - Applicants can submit for one or more than one grade band.

- **Deliverable 1a (D1a): Early Childhood Literacy Coach Support** This section should include the following:
  - **Description of coaching cycle, specialized in Early Childhood**
    - Describe your coaching approach
    - Describe expertise in providing literacy coaching support in Early Childhood
  - **Sample timeline** of services provided throughout the school year.
  - **Job Description** of person responsible for providing services

- **Deliverable 1b (D1b): Elementary Literacy Coach Support** This section should include the following:
  - **Description of coaching cycle, specialized in Grades K-5**
    - Describe your coaching approach
    - Describe expertise in providing literacy coaching support in Kindergarten through Grade 5
  - **Sample timeline** of services provided throughout the school year.
  - **Job Description** of person responsible for providing services
- **Deliverable 1c (D1c): Adolescent Literacy Coach Support** This section should include the following:
  - **Description of coaching cycle, specialized in Grades 6-12**
    - Describe your coaching approach
    - Describe expertise in providing literacy coaching support in Grades 6-12.
  - **Sample timeline** of services provided throughout the school year.
  - **Job Description** of person responsible for providing services
- **Deliverable 2 (D2): School System Support** This section should include the following:
  - **Description of coaching cycle, specialized in School System leader support**
    - Describe your coaching approach in building capacity of school system leaders in supporting their literacy coaches
  - **Sample timeline** of services provided throughout the school year.
  - **Job Description** of person responsible for providing services

**Points Allocation**

The LDOE will score each RFA using the following points allocation structure, based on the [Proposal Format](#) section in Part I: Administrative and General Information:

The Proposers may submit one or multiple proposals of this Request for Application (RFA). Proposers should submit cost breakdown for all parts of the RFA included in the application.

**Evaluation Criteria**

For a proposer to be considered for approval for Deliverable 1a, 1b, 1c, or 2 they must receive a minimum score of 35 points.

For a proposer to be considered for approval for Deliverable 2, they must receive a minimum score of 35 points.

**Deliverable 1a, b, c:**

- 15 points: Description
- 10 points: Sample timeline
- 5 points: Job description
- 10 points: Sections 1-4, & 6
- 5 points: Section 5 (Proposed Pricing)

**Deliverable 2:**

- 15 points: Description
- 10 points: Sample timeline
- 5 points: Job description
- 10 points: Sections 1-4, & 6
- 5 points: Section 5 (Proposed Pricing)

**Copies of Proposals**

The State requests that application materials be uploaded to [https://louisianabelieves.smapply.io/prog/literacy\\_specialists\\_vendor\\_guide\\_rfa](https://louisianabelieves.smapply.io/prog/literacy_specialists_vendor_guide_rfa).

All materials, both uploaded to the link should include original signatures. Applicants will establish an account and should select Literacy Foundations Training to apply to this RFA. Applications for the first review window are due March 22, 2022. After the first application window, applications will be accepted on a yearly basis. The next window for applications will tentatively open in Spring 2023. For inquiries about application windows email [LouisianaLiteracy@la.gov](mailto:LouisianaLiteracy@la.gov).

**Evaluation Process Notes**

The LDOE evaluation team will evaluate each application based on the Evaluation Criteria.

- Applications must meet criteria listed above to be accepted.
- A vendor’s application package will be accepted and listed as an approved vendor in the vendor list if:
  - the application achieves a 35 or above on all eligibility indicators; and
  - the application conforms with all of the RFA’s administrative and legal requirements.
- No appeals will be considered at any stage.
- Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to submit new proposals during future RFA application processes.

**RFA Selection Processes**

The table below outlines the RFA selection process for the approved vendor list.

	RFA Process	Application Window
Step 1	Vendors submit an application via <a href="https://louisianabelieves.smapply.io/prog/literacy_specialists_vendor_guide_rfa">https://louisianabelieves.smapply.io/prog/literacy_specialists_vendor_guide_rfa</a> .	Closes March 22, 2022
Step 2	Vendor presentations (if needed)	March 28, 2022
Step 3	The LDOE schedules and convenes review panels to review applications.	Reviewed by April 8, 2022
Step 4	Approved applicants will be added as approved vendors.	Within 7 days after approval
Step 5	Kickoff meeting for approved vendors	April 2022
Step 6	Approved vendors published	April 2022

Contact [LouisianaLiteracy@la.gov](mailto:LouisianaLiteracy@la.gov) with questions.