



**Request for Proposal (RFP)**  
**Online Education Evaluation 2023-2025**

Innovation, Data, Evidence and Analytics Office  
(Digital Innovation and Infrastructure Division)

## RFP Specifications

<b>Release Date:</b>	September 15, 2023
<b>Responses Due:</b>	<b>November 3, 2023; 5:00 p.m. (PST)</b>
<b>Term of Agreement:</b>	January 12, 2024 through March 31, 2025
<b>Funds Available:</b>	\$500,000
<b>Funding Source:</b>	2023 Budget Act funding for Online Education Review and Recommendations
<b>Questions Deadline:</b>	October 13, 2023; 5:00 p.m. (PST)
<b>Bidder's Conference:</b>	None
<b>Eligible Respondents:</b>	Open to qualified respondents
<b>Number of Awards:</b>	1
<b>Division Vice Chancellor:</b>	Valerie Lundy-Wagner
<b>Direct all proposals to:</b>	<b>Jamaal Harbison</b> RFP Coordinator California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 1102 Q. Street, 6th Floor Sacramento, California 95811 <a href="mailto:jharbison@cccco.edu">jharbison@cccco.edu</a> (916) 322-2758

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# Online Education Evaluation 2023-2025

## 1.0 Introduction and Background

The California Community Colleges (CCC) form the largest higher education system in the nation with 116 colleges and 73 districts serving 1.8 million students each year. Community colleges provide associate degrees, workforce training and certificates, foundational courses in English and math and prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. CCC is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and provides a unique opportunity to improve the lives of millions by breaking down barriers and eliminating achievement gaps. (See [Vision for Success](#), the [Governor's Roadmap](#), and [Vision 2030](#).) The mission of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Chancellor's Office) is to empower the community colleges through leadership, advocacy and support.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, many community colleges offered online courses and programs. As a result of the pandemic, nearly all of these colleges transitioned to online courses to continue to serve students and the entire CCC community. In the post-pandemic period, colleges have returned to offering courses in person, but with a significantly larger proportion of courses offered in an online format. With such a significant shift in how courses and programs are offered, the Chancellor's Office is seeking a research team to study and report on how this shift has impacted student learning, access to courses, and student outcomes. This document provides instructions for submitting a proposal and the procedure and criteria by which a respondent will be selected. The Chancellor's Office, upon selection of one vendor, will prepare an agreement for the estimated period of January 12, 2024 through March 31, 2024.

## 2.0 Purpose and Scope of Work

The Chancellor's Office is requesting proposals from research teams that have experience and expertise in areas related to: (1) the CCC system and online education; (2) conducting peer-reviewed quantitative and qualitative research; (3) and demonstrated attention to issues of equity in its prior research. The successful research team shall study state and local policies, relevant institutional data, and conduct a randomized controlled trial to shed light on campus-specific activities, instruction, and student engagement, access gaps, and outcomes. Specifically, the Chancellor's Office seeks research in the following areas:

1. Collect and analyze current course offerings systemwide or through representative sampling to understand the courses and programs that are currently offered online, in-person, or through a hybrid model, and, to the extent possible, measure the effects of student preference for each modality on college enrollment management strategies and student performance.
2. Perform a literature review and collect current information on student outcomes relating to online education, including synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid learning models.
3. Conduct a randomized controlled trial or a study that meets What Works Clearinghouse Standards without Reservations or WWC Standards with Reservations that explores student outcomes relating to online education delivery for different student populations, such as first-generation college students, students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds in

postsecondary education, returning college students who have taken a break of one or more semesters or the quarterly equivalent, and students with some college credits but no college degree. If possible, explore outcomes by academic disciplines and course level.

4. As part of the project, the successful research team must also answer the following questions on the nature and value of online and hybrid course offerings at community colleges:
  - a. How are quality in-person, online, and hybrid course offerings designed and delivered to promote equitable student access and success?
  - b. Is there an optimal mix of online and hybrid course offerings when compared to in-person course offerings in connection with maximizing student completion? Would that mix differ as a function of institutional demographics?
  - c. Are there student populations that would not otherwise access postsecondary education were it not for a specific course modality? What are their success rates in the course modalities they can access?
  - d. What are current state and local policies that guide and direct the development of online course offerings and services? Should these policies be updated to allow the state to better meet students' needs and close student equity gaps?
  - e. How does the state fund online and hybrid course offerings at community colleges? What are the differences in cost of delivery between synchronous, asynchronous, online, hybrid, and in-person course offerings, considering differences that may occur in cost and feasibility by discipline? How are community college revenues affected as a result of student demand for these types of course offerings?
  - f. Do online or hybrid course offerings consistently provide necessary academic supports and basic needs student services? What student services should have online or hybrid course offerings?
  - g. Are there best practices for online and hybrid course offerings, with proven results in student success and student equity, that can be applied to and taken to scale at community colleges?
  - h. Comparing the transferability to the University of California and the California State University of online and hybrid course offerings with their fully in-person counterparts, are there barriers to transfer from the community colleges to the University of California and the California State University based on course modality?

**The research conducted will result in progress reports and ultimately a final report, which will be submitted to the Legislature no later than March 1, 2025.**

### 3.0 Proposal Evaluation

All proposals received on or before the final submission date and time will be evaluated as outlined below by a Review Committee appointed by the Chancellor's Office. The award of a vendor agreement will be made to one respondent that best serve the interests of the CCC. The Chancellor's Office reserves the right to modify and/or suspend any and all aspects of this procurement, to obtain further information from any firm or person responding to the RFP, to waive any informality or irregularity as to form or content of this RFP or any related response, to be the sole judges of the merits of the proposals received and to reject any or all proposals. Proposal will be evaluated on the below criteria.

1. Organizational Experience (25)
  - a. Staff Experience (up to 5 points)
    - i. Staff show sufficient experience to conduct the related research on behalf of the Chancellor's Office
  - b. Prior Work Experience (up to 20 points)
    - i. Prior work experience demonstrates capability to conduct relevant research including document reviews, quantitative research, qualitative research, and policy analysis.
2. Work Plan (40)
  - a. Course offerings analysis (10)
    - i. Demonstrates understanding of complexity and challenges of measuring student performance in a variety of course delivery methods.
    - ii. Demonstrates an understanding and ability to work with community colleges and analyze course offerings and availability.
  - b. Literature Review (5)
    - i. Demonstrates an understanding and ability to conduct a comprehensive literature review related to online and hybrid education.
  - c. Online Education Study (10)
    - i. Demonstrates an understanding and ability to conduct a study of online education that meets [WWC Standards](#).
      1. Clearly articulates challenges, options, and alternatives.
      2. Discusses human subjects' protection, as appropriate.
      3. Demonstrates or discusses Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility or other concerns in developing a research plan.
  - d. Nature and Value (15)
    - i. Demonstrates an understanding of the types of information and data available to answer the questions.
    - ii. Demonstrates an understanding of the policy considerations in online versus on ground education.
    - iii. Demonstrates an understanding of the transfer environment in California higher education.
    - iv. Demonstrates clear understanding of EDI principles and how they inform research priorities and policy analysis.
3. Cost (30)
  - a. Overall expenses
    - i. The cost estimates clearly outline expenses for:
      1. Identification of positions funded with associated salaries and fringe benefits
      2. Percentage of time devoted to the work
      3. Operating expenses
      4. Estimated travel and per diem expenses
      5. Indirect costs
      6. Other expenses

- b. Expenses by research project
    - i. The costs estimate clearly outlines the costs associated with answering each research question
  - c. Expense estimates seem to provide realistic estimates of costs based on the Chancellor's Office understanding of the work required.
  - d. Research proposal seems to provide a reasonable return on investment given the costs associated.
4. Timeline (5)
- a. The timeline meets the required deadlines for legislative reporting.
  - b. The timelines appears to be realistic for the workload associated with each research question.
  - c. The timeline provides adequate time for Chancellor's Office to provide access to materials and data (as necessary)
  - d. The timeline provides adequate time for the Chancellor's Office to review work products

#### 4.0 Timeline

The Chancellor's Office has identified the following tentative timetable for the RFP.

- September 15<sup>th</sup> – Request for Proposal Issued
- October 13<sup>th</sup> – Questionnaire Period Ends
- November 3<sup>rd</sup> – RFP Responses Due
- November 9<sup>th</sup> – Selection Team Evaluations Complete
- November 13<sup>th</sup> – Notice of Intent to Award Issued
- December 11<sup>th</sup> – Tentative Final Award Date
- January 15<sup>th</sup> – Proposed Start Date of Vendor Agreement

#### 5.0 Proposal Content and Format

Proposals should be of professional caliber in content and appearance. All descriptions and information should be clear, concise, and provide sufficient information to minimize questions and assumptions. Proposals should be no more than 25 pages. The Chancellor's Office accepts no financial responsibility for any costs incurred in the preparation of proposals. Upon receipt at the Chancellor's Office, all proposals submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of the Chancellor's Office.

The following instructions prescribe the mandatory written Proposal Format. Proposal Format instructions must be followed, and all listed items must be included. Failure to prepare proposals in the following required format may result in elimination from proposal evaluation. Each proposal must include the following:

*Table of Contents.* A Table of Contents must be included in the proposal.

*Cover Letter.* Your proposal cover letter should be signed by an officer authorized to bind your organization contractually, state that the proposal is firm for a 90-day period from the proposal

submission deadline, and provide the name, title, address, and telephone number of the individual to whom correspondence, inquiries, and other contacts should be directed during the selection process.

*Doing Business in California.* A statement acknowledging that the respondent and any subcontractor(s) who would be involved in the project have been in existence as a business entity performing services similar in scope and magnitude as required in this RFP for at least three years in California. Respondent must acknowledge they are in good standing with the State of California by attaching a copy of its valid business license.

*Research Proposal.* A description of respondent's approach to each of the four primary research topics outlined in the Purpose and Scope of Work above.

- Where relevant, please provide details of the organization's plan for data collection, data management, data security, and human subjects protection.

*Cost Proposal.* The total cost of the project, with a detailed breakdown showing how the costs were determined for the overall project and a relative or proportional cost for each of the four research topics outlined in the Purpose and Scope of Work.

*Timeline.* An estimated timeline for each phase of the research.

*Capabilities and References.* Provide a brief description of the organizations experience in conducting similar research, which should include examples of prior work and staff experience as noted in the proposal evaluation section.

*Other information.* Any other information that the respondent would like to share related to the RFP. While this RFP has a specific timeline and cost estimate, additional information around even more substantive and/or longer-term research in this area would be welcome in this section.

## 6.0 Award of Agreement and Appeal

### 6.1 Notice of Intent to Award

Following the submission and acceptance of the Review Committee's recommendation, the Chancellor's Office will issue a Notice of Intent to Award, identifying the most qualified respondent to whom the Chancellor's Office intends to award an agreement, if any. The selected respondent will be required to sign a vendor agreement consistent with the attached template (Attachment #1). The Chancellor's Office reserves the right to change or edit the vendor agreement at any time prior to signing by the selected respondent.

### 6.2 Appeal of Award

An appeal of the award must be in writing signed by respondent's president or designee. The appeal must be emailed to the Vice Chancellor of IDEA, Valerie Lundy-Wagner at [vlundywagner@cccco.edu](mailto:vlundywagner@cccco.edu) within ten (10) calendar days after the date the notice of intent to award is posted. The appeal must specify the grounds of appeal and must be based on the process and/or procedures used in the review and recommendation of applications for awards. The Chancellor's Office will review all the information submitted with the appeal and render a decision within 10 calendar days of the date of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Chancellor's Office is final.

## 7.0 General Conditions

*Respondent Inquires.* During the RFP process (from release of this RFP to final award), respondents are not permitted to contact any Chancellor's Office employees unless to fulfill pre-existing contractual obligations. No gratuities of any kind will be accepted, including meals, gifts or trips. Violation of these conditions will constitute immediate disqualification. It is the responsibility of the respondent to inquire about any requirement of this RFP that is not understood. Responses to inquiries will be disseminated via email. Refer to cover page for respondent inquiry and response deadlines and Chancellor's Office contact.

*Public Records.* Respondents are hereby notified that the Chancellor's Office is a public agency subject to the California Public Records Act (CPRA) and any proposals, or portions thereof, submitted to the Chancellor's Office in response to this RFPs may be subject to disclosure under CPRA.

*Reserved Rights.* The Chancellor's Office reserves the right to select any organization or reject any or all organizations as determined by the Chancellor's Office; to make such selection without holding interviews or oral presentations; to request additional information; and to negotiate the final terms and conditions of a vendor agreement with the selected organization.

*Oral Statements.* The Chancellor's Office shall not be bound by oral statements or representations contrary to the written specifications.

*Ownership and Use of Documents.* All documents, reports, proposals, submittals, working papers or other materials submitted to the Chancellor's Office from a respondent shall become the sole and exclusive property of the Chancellor's Office, in the public domain, and not the property of the proposer, and are subject to public disclosure under the CPRA. A respondent shall not copyright, or cause to be copyrighted, any portion of any of said documents submitted as a result of this solicitation. Further, the Chancellor's Office may utilize concepts submitted via proposal without compensation.

*Qualifications of Respondent.* The Chancellor's Office may make such investigations as deemed necessary to determine the ability of the proposer to perform the work, and the proposer shall furnish all information and data for this purpose as the Chancellor's Office may request.

*Execution of Contract.* A contract shall be binding on the Chancellor's Office until it has been approved by the Chancellor's Office, approved as to form by the parties' respective legal counsel, and fully executed by the parties.

*Errors in Proposal.* If respondent discovers an error in its proposal submitted in response to this RFP, it is the respondent's responsibility to present all corrections during the RFP window (the time following the RFP release and the date the RFP responses are due). Corrections received after the RFP window may result in disqualification from consideration.