

# Massachusetts Priority Partners for Turnaround Initiative

## Priority Partners Investment Fund RFQ

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and  
Secondary Education

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## Attachment A – 12RFQAPAEW2

### Background

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (the Department) is committed to supporting sustainable efforts to turn around low performing schools identified as Level 3 or 4 in the Massachusetts Framework for District and School Accountability and Assistance. Accordingly, as part of Massachusetts Race to the Top Project 6A, the Department has established a Priority Partners for Turnaround Network comprised of educational improvement service providers and will invest in piloting initiatives that support the growth, innovation, and collaborative efforts of these providers.

The Department seeks additional information from approved Priority Partners for Turnaround that seek a contract to invest in new initiatives aimed at better serving Level 3 and 4 districts and schools, particularly in high-priority areas, including but not limited to targeted solutions for middle and high schools, English language learners, special needs populations, district-level support and coordination, and tiered instruction. Vendors approved under RFR 10APAJPI and identified as Priority Partners for Turnaround, are eligible to apply, per section E2 of Massachusetts' Race to the Top Plan, which stipulates that funding will go to a Priority Partner.

### Purpose

Over the past 8 months, the Department has identified, Priority Partners for Turnaround that can support districts and schools in addressing various conditions for school effectiveness. Providers that were approved during this process are now part of the network of Priority Partners for Turnaround.

**This RFQ invites responses from vendors on 10APAJPI who are approved Priority Partners for Turnaround that seek to contract with the Department to implement initiatives in one of the following areas:**

- **Expansion of services geographically into or within Massachusetts Level 3 and 4 districts and/or schools;**
- **New product and/or service development in Massachusetts Level 3 and 4 districts and/or schools, aligned with high need areas;**
- **Collaborative product or service development to engage with one or more Massachusetts Level 3 or 4 district and/or school with another Priority Partner for Turnaround.**

### *Expansion of Services Geographically*

The Department is committed to ensuring that all Level 3 and 4 districts in Massachusetts have access to high-quality products and services and as such, seeks to incentivize the growth and expansion of proven partners into more Level 3 and 4 districts and schools by mitigating the costs associated with these efforts. Examples of proposals may include investments in Priority Partners not currently working in Massachusetts or investments in the capacity of existing Massachusetts organizations to allow for expanding into additional districts and schools.

### *New Product/Service Development*

The Department is committed to supporting Level 3 and 4 districts/schools in implementing the Conditions for School Effectiveness and promoting interventions that hold the promise of accelerating student achievement and contributing to district and school turnaround efforts. The Department has identified high priority areas in which districts/schools could most benefit from working with proven partners and where additional innovation in products and services could make a significant impact. These include, *but are not limited to*:

- Targeted middle and high school interventions
- English language learner solutions
- Special needs services
- District-level support and coordination.
- Support for districts/schools in providing effective tiered instruction.

Examples of proposals in this area may be expanding the Priority Partner's existing model to serve additional grade levels; provide new services in response to demand from the field; or tailor the model to serve targeted student populations.

#### *Collaboration*

The lack of coordination and integration of service providers can be a barrier to successful implementation; conversely, effective collaboration among partners can ensure that districts/schools are better served and that partners' services are best leveraged. The Department seeks to incentivize partner collaboration by supporting Priority Partners that bring their expertise together to better serve a district/school. This may include, but is not limited to, a new way to approach the marketing or sales process, an integrated pricing model, joint product/service development, or the strategic alignment and integration of existing products/services.

#### **Awards**

Approved vendors under 10APAJPI who are Priority Partners may submit proposals for contract awards up to \$500K. Proposals selected as part of this process may be awarded a portion of the funds being sought. Applicants are encouraged to seek additional funds, either through third-party providers or operating funds to fully execute the proposed project.

All potential bidders may submit questions regarding this RFQ posting no later than February 1, 2012 – 5:00 EST. All questions will be reviewed and posted to the Comm-PASS website (in the same location of this RFQ) with their corresponding answer. All Emails must be sent to [ewerner@doe.mass.edu](mailto:ewerner@doe.mass.edu). The subject line must contain the following: **Questions pertaining to 12RFQAPAEW2**. Questions and Answers document will be posted to Comm-PASS (same location as this RFQ posting) on or around February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 – 5:00 EST.

The Department reserves the right to reopen an additional Question and Answer time period if deemed necessary.

#### **REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:**

- A. Prequalified vendors through RFR 10APAJPI and identified as Priority Partners for Turnaround.
- B. Established processes for measuring project outcomes throughout the engagement and protocol for adapting practices depending on progress.
- C. Financial stability that ensures commitment to the project for the duration of the contract.

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:**

**NOTE:** Employees of potential service providers who contract with both districts as well as State Agencies should seek advice regarding potential conflict of interests from the State Ethics Commission at [www.mass.gov/ethics](http://www.mass.gov/ethics) or (617)727-0060.

The responses to this RFQ should not exceed 15 pages. A select number of candidates may also be required to give a management presentation to the selection committee. Each applicant must submit data and information in the following qualification areas:

### ***1. Project Description***

Please state specifically the category of application that is being submitted (Expansion, New Product/Service Development, Collaboration)

Provide a description of the proposed project, including:

- Perceived need for the project that includes qualitative and/or quantitative data on the existing market gaps/demand.
- Alignment with Department initiatives/priorities.
- Project goals and objectives
- How this project builds on existing strengths and activities while emphasizing new innovation or expansion

### ***2. Project Feasibility***

2a. Applicants should have an established plan to complete the project described in section 1. Describe the following elements of the plan:

- Strategies and action steps that will be employed to complete the project
- Estimated timeline (projects may be one year or multi-year)
- Budget (aligned with 10APAJP1 approved submission)
- Staff capabilities
- Partnership relationships that exist or will be sought out to complete the project
- Experience executing new initiatives (please provide examples)
- Matching/supplemental funds that have been secured to complete the project.
- Demonstrated commitment from a Level 3 or 4 district or school.

2b. The Department reserves the right to award partial contracts. Please describe how you may change the project or supplement the income if a full contract allocation is not awarded.

### ***3. Anticipated Impact***

Each of the Priority Partners has a record of effectiveness in improving student outcomes. Any new initiative will be expected to build on this expertise. Please show reasonable evidence that the proposed practice, strategy, or service will have an impact on improving student outcomes, closing achievement gaps, and/or contributing to overall district/school improvement efforts, as measured by anticipated outcomes, estimated number of students who will be reached, etc.

**4. *Ability to Build Capacity for Sustained Improvement***

This investment initiative is meant to jump start new initiatives to accelerate improvement in MA. Throughout the Priority Partner initiative, the goal has been to identify providers whose model will create sustainable change. Describe how the applicant intends to operate the project beyond the length of the contract.

Submissions (original, two copies, and jump drive version) must be hard copies and directed to:

Mauricio Vasquez  
Fiscal Officer  
Division for Accountability, Partnerships & Assistance  
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148

by March 15, 2012 at 3PM EST.