



Request for Proposals: Training Provider for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading in Early Grades

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: OCTOBER 31, 2019

MAKING RESEARCH RELEVANT

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Exhibit 1. Response and Submission Details

Title:	Request for Proposals: Training Provider for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading (MTSS-R) in Early Grades
Address for issuing office and for submission of proposals:	Dr. Anja Kurki American Institutes for Research 6003 Executive Blvd., Suite 300 Rockville, MD 20852
Request for Proposal (RFP) release date:	July 8, 2019
Letter of intent due date:	August 15, 2019
RFP questions due date:	August 15, 2019
Bidders webinar:	September 13, 2019
Proposal deadline:	October 31, 2019
In-person presentations:	December 2-6, 2019
Anticipated contract award:	January 10, 2020
Anticipated type of award:	Firm fixed price
RFP consists of the following sections:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Overview of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading (MTSS-R) Model and Training Requirements B. Technical Specifications C. Instructions to Providers D. Selection Criteria and Evaluation E. References F. Description of MTSS-R Implementation Model and Training G. Budget considerations

Introduction

The American Institutes for Research (AIR), in collaboration with Instructional Research Group (IRG) and School Readiness Consulting (SRC), issues this Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking qualified entities to provide intensive professional development (PD) on the implementation of a comprehensive multi-tiered system of support for reading (MTSS-R) model. The selected provider will collaborate with the study team on a large-scale, randomized controlled trial of MTSS-R in Grades 1 and 2 for the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education (ED).

The randomized controlled trial will test a comprehensive MTSS-R model involving four key components: (a) differentiated and explicit Tier I instruction for all students, (b) evidence-based Tier II intervention for students identified as being at risk for reading difficulty, (c) screening of all students and progress monitoring of students identified as being at-risk, and (d) the MTSS-R infrastructure necessary for schoolwide implementation, including the staff and procedures necessary to support MTSS-R implementation.¹

Because this comprehensive MTSS-R model can be operationalized in various ways, ED plans to test two different approaches. Including two different approaches provides an opportunity to study more than one promising way of implementing MTSS-R and offers a more general understanding of MTSS-R's effectiveness. AIR issued an RFP in early 2019 and selected Enhanced Core Reading Instruction (ECRI) provided by the University of Oregon Center on Teaching & Learning² as the first MTSS-R approach (Fien et al., 2015; Nelson et al., 2013). The ECRI approach develops students' foundational skills in Tier I by following principles of direct instruction (e.g., specific modeling of key reading skills and concepts with multiple opportunities to respond). The approach also offers Tier II intervention that is highly aligned with Tier I, including pre- and re-teaching Tier I content using instructional materials developed for ECRI.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks qualified entities to provide intensive professional development (PD) on the implementation of a comprehensive multi-tiered system of support for reading (MTSS-R) model. The proposed approach should differ from ECRI in its instructional methods for Tier I and/or Tier II (e.g., use of direct instruction routines in Tier I, pre-teaching Tier I content in Tier II). In particular, the second MTSS-R approach should not use ECRI materials.

¹ The study will not provide training or support for intensive intervention, or Tier III.

² (<https://dibels.uoregon.edu/market/movingup/ecri>)

The study will take place in approximately 10 geographically diverse school districts. In each district, approximately fifteen elementary schools will be randomly assigned to either (i) receive professional development (PD) and implement the ECRI MTSS-R approach, (ii) receive PD and implement the MTSS-R approach currently being selected, or (iii) continue with their current reading PD and approach to reading instruction.³

The selected provider will deliver PD to school staff and to a district-based coach in all participating districts. The PD will target a school-level team that will be responsible for MTSS-R implementation, Grade 1 and 2 teachers, special educators, interventionists and district-based MTSS-R coaches. The goal of the PD is to build school capacity for implementation of the MTSS-R model in Grades 1 and 2 with fidelity.

We encourage providers to form teams with other organizations to respond to this RFP if they do not have sufficient capacity to train in all four components of the MTSS-R model or to operate on the scale necessary for the study. If forming a team, the provider should submit one combined proposal that demonstrates an integrated PD program and clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of each member organization. For simplicity in the text that follows, we use *provider* to refer to an individual provider or provider team.

We seek proposals that operationalize the MTSS-R model we describe in this RFP. Providers must propose a detailed implementation plan that aligns with the MTSS-R model described in the RFP. The plan should include a detailed description of the MTSS-R components and how these components interact to form a cohesive system. In addition, we seek a detailed description of the PD necessary for schools to implement the model. Providers must propose PD that supports the implementation of the detailed MTSS-R plan described by the provider with fidelity.

An expert panel will evaluate proposals on the basis of (a) the operationalization of the MTSS-R model and the quality and intensity of the proposed training and technical assistance (i.e., the proposed MTSS-R PD program), (b) evidence of the proposed Tier II program's effectiveness, (c) staff experience, (d) organizational capability including the provider's track record in delivering equivalent MTSS-R training and support to schools, and (f) the provider's plan to manage and oversee the training. Following expert panel review of the proposals, AIR will invite up to four providers to Washington, D.C., for an oral presentation and interview. In consultation with ED and the expert review panel, AIR will select one provider or a provider team to deliver PD as part of the study.

³ AIR will select the 10 districts and randomly assign the 50 schools to implement each MTSS-R model. The provider will not identify districts or schools for study participation.

A. Overview of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading (MTSS-R) Model and Training Requirements

This portion of the RFP provides the rationale for evaluating MTSS-R in early grades, general parameters of the MTSS-R model that the study will test, the requirements for the PD program and training, and the impact study that will test the effectiveness of the MTSS-R model.

A.1. Project Rationale

Developing foundational reading skills and fluency is essential for subsequent learning (Fiester, 2010, 2013; Foorman et al., 2016). Students who are not fluent readers by Grade 3 often fall behind their peers academically and are less likely to complete their schooling (Hernandez, 2011). Nearly one third of students, and more than two thirds of students with disabilities, do not reach reading proficiency by Grade 4 (NAEP, 2017).

MTSS-R is a promising approach to improving young students' reading skills. MTSS-R includes evidence-based reading instruction for all students (Tier I); supplemental small-group interventions for students at risk of reading difficulty (Tier II); and individualized, more intensive supports for students who receive supplemental intervention but continue to struggle (Tier III).⁴ Placement of students in tiers is guided by frequent screening and progress monitoring assessment (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2012; Fuchs & Vaughn, 2012; Gersten & Dimino, 2006; Kovalski, VanDerHeyden, & Shapiro, 2013).

Key elements of MTSS-R are supported by a body of research on early reading. MTSS-R implementation is also consistent with the goals of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA). IDEA focuses on providing high-quality instruction to all students, including students with disabilities, who are increasingly served in the general education classroom. IDEA also intends to (a) promote better identification of students who need supplemental support or are served in the category of specific learning disability, and (b) prevent or mitigate reading issues that students may develop in the classroom. However, despite widespread popularity and policy relevance, schools often struggle to implement MTSS-R, and a comprehensive MTSS-R model has not been rigorously evaluated on a large-scale.⁵

⁴ Providing intensive Tier III supports is out of scope for this study.

⁵ According to Bradley et al. (2011), 61% of elementary schools reported using response to intervention (RTI), a similar framework, to respond to academic needs. Based on data collected in 2011, Balu et al. (2015) found that 71% of a representative sample of schools in 13 states reported use of RTI for primary-grade reading. A recent review of state policy found that all 50 states were recommending MTSS to address student academic or behavioral needs (Bailey, 2017).

The goal of the study is to implement a comprehensive MTSS-R model with fidelity in up to 50 elementary schools, provide intensive implementation supports, and assess the model’s impact on teacher and interventionist practice and student early literacy outcomes.

The provider should define and operationalize the MTSS-R components (see below) and describe how these components interact to form a cohesive system. The provider’s operationalization of components must be appropriate for all students, including English learners, students with disabilities (SWD), and other at-risk students. Providers should also propose a specific PD program, including trainings and ongoing technical assistance, to support implementation of the components. The approach to operationalizing the model must meet the specific requirements in Section A.2, and the approach to PD must meet the specific requirements in Section A.3.

A.2. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading Model

In this section, we describe the four components of MTSS-R that the study will test. We expect the provider to elaborate on this conception, providing a detailed description of the MTSS-R components and the materials that will be required. (See Section C.2. Content and Organization of the Technical Proposal for further details).

Tier I Instruction: Emphasis on Differentiated and Explicit Instruction

Tier I refers to systematic, core reading instruction provided to all students. Tier I instruction will focus on student skills critical for early reading development in 1st and 2nd grade. The MTSS-R model to be tested emphasizes two aspects of core reading instruction: (a) data-based differentiated instruction and (b) the use of explicit instruction as appropriate throughout reading instruction. Data-based differentiation involves teachers using a variety of data—such as assessment data, in-class work, homework, or notes from student observation—to tailor the content or delivery of instruction. Data-based differentiated instruction can address students’ deficits both in foundational/decoding skills and in language/comprehension skills. Explicit instruction involves teachers offering supports or scaffolds that guide students through the learning process, starting with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning a new skill, clear explanations and demonstrations of the new skill, and supported practice with feedback until students reach independent mastery of the new skill. Improving Tier I data-based differentiated instruction and explicit instruction is hypothesized to improve student literacy outcomes, particularly foundational/decoding skills, and lead to fewer students in need of Tier II intervention.

In conceptualizing an approach to Tier I, the provider must specify its definition of data-based differentiation and explicit instruction and provide a rationale for its specification.

Tier II Intervention: Evidence-Based Tier II Programs

Tier II intervention is the provision of supports for students identified as at risk of reading difficulty that are delivered in addition to Tier I instruction. This study will test a model in which the Tier II intervention programs (a) are evidence based; (b) emphasize foundational reading/decoding skills; (c) include high-leverage instructional practices, such as modeling, multiple opportunities to respond, and explicit feedback; (d) can be delivered by a reading specialist, teachers, or paraprofessionals; and (e) are delivered with fidelity to guidelines established for the specific Tier II intervention programs. The delivery of Tier II intervention will also be supplemental to Tier I instruction and data driven, guided by information from progress monitoring and assessments embedded in the Tier II programs to meet students' needs. The Tier II intervention is hypothesized to improve literacy outcomes for at-risk students.

Students receiving Tier II intervention whose skills do not improve will be supported by already existing Tier III or special education services provided by the districts and schools. While referrals to Tier III or special education services will continue to take place and may be influenced by the provider's support for Tier II implementation and available data, providing Tier III and special education services is not part of this request. Providers should briefly address how they will coordinate with districts and schools in the context of federal and state special education laws and regulations.

In the planned study, all study schools that are randomly assigned to implement the MTSS-R approach proposed in response to this RFP will be asked to implement the same Tier II intervention(s). *As part of its approach, the provider must recommend from one to three evidence-based Tier II programs to be implemented in the study schools.*

Screening and Progress Monitoring

Screening and progress monitoring involve the systematic use of brief, reliable, and valid student assessments to guide student placement in evidence-based Tier II intervention and movement between tiers.

- *Screening* is defined as the collection and analysis of student assessment data at multiple times each school year to assess whether students are at risk for reading difficulty to determine their placement in Tier II.
- *Progress monitoring* is defined as the frequent collection and analysis of student performance data to assess whether students are making expected progress in their Tier II intervention and to guide their movement between tiers.

This study will test a model in which schools (a) use screening and progress monitoring assessments that measure foundational reading skills in Grades 1 and 2 (e.g., word identification and passage reading fluency); (b) employ a data system that supports the systematic collection and analysis of screening and progress monitoring data; (c) screen all students at least twice a year to identify students in need of Tier II intervention; and (d) collect progress monitoring data at least once every four weeks on students receiving Tier II intervention.

We anticipate that most schools included in the study will have valid screening and progress monitoring assessment systems in place; but we estimate that about 20 schools will not have such systems.⁶ In developing an approach to screening and progress monitoring, the provider must propose psychometrically valid screening and progress monitoring assessments to replace assessments currently used by the schools if they are not psychometrically valid.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading Infrastructure

MTSS-R infrastructure refers to the staff and procedures necessary to support MTSS-R implementation. The MTSS-R model includes a school-based MTSS-R team that meets regularly to lead and coordinate MTSS-R implementation. The model also includes a district-based MTSS-R coach who will support school staff in implementing the MTSS-R model.

- *MTSS-R team.* Typically, the MTSS-R team will include an administrator, a reading specialist or MTSS coordinator, relevant grade-level teachers and special educators, a school psychologist, an interventionist, paraprofessionals, and English as a second language (ESL) teachers, as appropriate. The team will (a) meet at least once monthly; (b) modify the school schedule to accommodate MTSS-R activities (e.g., planned MTSS-R meeting time, scheduled time for supplemental Tier II intervention); (c) support teachers and school staff in implementing the MTSS-R model; (d) oversee screening and progress monitoring; and (e) measure MTSS-R fidelity and adjust activities as necessary to improve implementation.
- *MTSS-R coach.* The district-based MTSS-R coach will support each school in implementing MTSS-R with fidelity. The coach will have expertise in early reading and tiered systems of support. The coach will spend one day per week in each study school. To support implementation, he or she will work with (a) the MTSS-R team (e.g., participate in team meetings, model use of screening and progress monitoring data), (b) teachers who struggle with data-based differentiation or explicit instruction, and (c) the interventionists who implement Tier II programs. This position could be filled by an existing district employee or the district may choose to make a new hire for the MTSS-R coach.

⁶ Our estimate was selected for budgeting purpose, for all the providers to use a common assumption.

In its conception of MTSS-R, the provider should explicitly specify the role of the MTSS-R team and MTSS-R coach in MTSS-R implementation.

A.3. Training and Ongoing Technical Assistance to Promote MTSS-R Model Implementation

The provider will offer PD, including training and ongoing technical assistance, to support consistent and comprehensive implementation of MTSS-R for all students, including English learners, students with disabilities (SWD), and other at-risk students. The two-year PD program will target MTSS-R school-based teams, Grade 1 and 2 teachers, special educators who work with Grades 1 and 2, interventionists, teaching assistants or paraprofessionals, and the district-based coaches.

The PD program must be well documented and replicable. The proposed trainings and associated materials must already exist and must have already been used in schools. This RFP does not provide funding for development of PD by the provider. However, some customization or adjustment of the training materials may be necessary to ensure that the overall training is cohesive and meets the needs of the evaluation. The MTSS-R trainings and supports must incorporate features of high-quality PD geared toward adult learners, including sufficient duration, a focus on content, active learning experiences, and collective participation of school staff. In addition, the training should be appropriate for school staff who vary in their familiarity with MTSS-R. Providers must describe how they plan to identify and address potential implementation problems to ensure that the proposed MTSS-R model will be implemented with fidelity. The ongoing technical assistance will also need to address the unique needs of the schools and acknowledge different types of at-risk students (especially ELLs).

The provider will:

- Conduct readiness activities that help the district identify a qualified MTSS-R coach, establish school MTSS-R teams, and assess the need to replace the screening and progress monitoring system used by districts/schools because it is not psychometrically valid, March–June 2020.
- Conduct in-person readiness training for appropriate school staff members that addresses specific district and school issues (e.g., whether a school needs to install a new data system to support screening and progress monitoring or revise their instructional schedule to accommodate MTSS-R model implementation), March–June 2020.
- Specify the approach to coaching and support to be used by the MTSS-R coaches.
- Conduct training:

- Provide up to five days of in-person training for appropriate school staff members from each school and the district MTSS-R coaches prior to each implementation year. Staff members expected to attend each training day may vary depending on the training content for that day and according to the staff person’s role in implementing the MTSS-R model. The training sessions will cover all components of the MTSS-R model, June–August 2020 and June–August 2021. Content trainings in Year 2 may include “booster” trainings of previous content.
- Provide up to one day of additional in-person training for district-based MTSS-R coaches. The trainings will cover the provider’s proposed approach to coaching.
- Conduct ongoing technical assistance:
 - Conduct up to four on-site school visits in each school each year to monitor implementation and provide support as needed, school years 2020–21 and 2021–22.
 - Provide virtual support (e.g., video-conference) between site visits to each school team. These supports will be tailored to each school’s needs according to implementation fidelity data, school years 2020–21 and 2021–22.
 - Provide virtual support to the MTSS-R coaches tailored to the needs of each coach, school years 2020–21 and 2021–22.

Exhibit 5 in Section F provides a summary of the expectations for MTSS-R model and a high-level summary of the required elements of the professional development training model. The provider is encouraged to use the information in sections A.2. and A.3. and Exhibit 5 as a starting point for its operationalization of the four MTSS-R components and the PD program.

A.4. Impact Evaluation Design

AIR will conduct a multisite randomized controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness of the two MTSS-R approaches on instructional practices in Tier I and II and reading outcomes for students (ECRI and the approach selected as a result of issuing this RFP). The study team will randomly assign schools to three groups within 10 participating, geographically dispersed, school districts:

- Fifty schools will receive training in the ECRI MTSS-R approach (treatment group A).
- Fifty schools will receive training in the MTSS-R approach selected as a result of issuing this RFP (treatment group B).
- Fifty schools will not receive the study’s training but will continue to receive PD that is ordinarily provided by their district or school (the “business-as-usual” control group).

AIR will recruit districts and schools by the end of April 2020. AIR will reach out to districts that include at least nine elementary schools that have at least 60 students each in Grades 1 and 2. Only schools that meet all the following criteria will be eligible for the study;

1. Do not have a comprehensive MTSS-R model that is implemented with fidelity.
2. Have not received intensive training and support (e.g., multi-day trainings followed up with ongoing implementation support) for MTSS-R within the last three years.
3. Have a Tier I core reading program that includes materials that support the use of evidence-based instructional strategies and schools do not rely solely on leveled readers or trade books.
4. Have Grade 1 and 2 classrooms in which reading instruction is conducted in English.
5. Have at least one assigned school staff member available to be trained in the delivery of Tier II intervention or a commitment from the district/school to reorganize staff as needed to implement Tier II intervention.
6. Have a schedule that allows for time allotted specifically to Tier II reading instruction.
7. Have the organizational capacity and staff buy-in to commit to an intensive, two-year MTSS-R training program.
8. Have a proficiency rate of 50% to 75% in third-grade reading.

We anticipate that, in each treatment school, approximately 10 staff members—classroom teachers, special education teacher(s), school psychologist, administrator(s), and paraprofessional(s)—will participate in MTSS-R implementation.

As part of the data collected for the study, the study team will document the delivery of MTSS-R trainings, including staff attendance, and MTSS-R implementation fidelity. The study also will examine the effects of the MTSS-R model on teachers' instructional practices and students' early literacy skills. The study will collect data on (a) implementation, through site visits and school staff and teacher surveys; (b) teacher practice, through classroom observations and school site visits; and (c) student achievement, through individualized student testing. Study data will be made available through restricted use files, and providers can request access to the data upon completion of the project.

B. Technical Specifications

This portion of the RFP describes the technical tasks, anticipated timeline, and schedule of deliverables. The technical proposal should include enough detail for the expert review panel to

assess the merits of how the MTSS-R model described in Section A.2 is operationalized and how the provider’s proposed MTSS-R PD program fulfills the minimum requirements described in Section A.3 and in Exhibit 5 of Section F to support implementation of the proposed MTSS-R model.

B.1. Statement of Work

The selected provider will enter into a contract with AIR for the period of January 2020 through June 2022. The provider will participate in weekly check-in calls with AIR staff throughout the performance period. During the first six months of the contract, the provider will attend a kickoff meeting, assist with site recruitment, and finalize training materials and plans. Beginning in March 2020, the provider will offer PD to the study schools, including readiness activities during the second half of the 2019–20 school year, and then trainings and ongoing supports during school years 2020–21 and 2021–22. Specifically, the provider will train 50 schools (including school staff and the district-based coach) to implement the four components of the MTSS-R model. Exhibit 2 offers a general timeline of provider tasks; and Exhibit 3 on page 17 lists task-specific deliverables. The tasks outlined in this section will be the responsibility of the provider. Any proposal that does not demonstrate how the provider will meet the requirements of this section will be disqualified from further consideration.

Exhibit 2. Broad Timeline for Provider Activities

Tasks	Timeline
Kickoff meeting	January 2020
Assist with site recruitment	January 2020–April 2020
Finalize PD plan and materials	January 2020–June 2020
Readiness activities	March–June 2020
Initial trainings for four MTSS-R components, initial training of MTSS-R coach	June–August 2020
First-year ongoing technical assistance, supports to MTSS-R coaches	September 2020–June 2021
Second-year trainings, four MTSS-R components	June–August 2021
Second-year ongoing technical assistance, supports to MTSS-R coaches	September 2021–June 2022

Task 1. Attend Kickoff Meeting.

The provider will meet with study team members and staff from ED within 10 working days after award of the contract. The meeting will be held at AIR’s office in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the meeting will be to review the contract activities and timeline and discuss any

areas of concern. Prior to the meeting, the provider will submit three copies of all proposed program-related materials, such as agendas, hand-outs/training materials, and training manuals, to AIR. These materials will provide the study team and ED with knowledge of the MTSS-R PD program in its entirety.⁷ The provider will submit the PD materials and meeting agenda to AIR within seven working days after the contract award date. The provider will also submit a kickoff meeting summary within 10 working days after the kickoff meeting.

Deliverables: PD materials
Meeting agenda
Summary of the kickoff meeting

⁷ Sample program materials appended to the provider's technical proposal are intended to provide the review panel with snapshots of the content of the program. The full set of program materials will be submitted by the provider prior to the kickoff meeting.

Task 2. Provide Recruitment Materials and Participate in Recruitment Phone Calls

AIR is solely responsible for selecting the final pool of participating schools. To assist the AIR team with site recruitment, the provider will develop a program brochure. The brochure will detail the features and implementation requirements of the MTSS-R PD program. The provider will submit a draft of the program brochure to AIR within 10 working days after the contract award date. The study team and ED will provide feedback on the draft program brochure within five working days. The provider will submit the final program brochure to AIR within five working days after receiving the feedback.

It is likely that districts and schools will have questions regarding the MTSS-R training program. When AIR requests the provider's participation in the recruitment calls we make to districts and schools, the provider will help further explain the MTSS-R PD program. For budgeting purposes, providers should estimate that they will participate in 20 recruitment calls lasting 60 minutes each.

Finally, the provider will prepare a brief recorded webinar presentation describing its MTSS-R approach. The provider will submit a draft script for the webinar to AIR within 14 working days after the contract award date. The study team and ED will provide feedback on the draft script within five working days. The provider will submit the final script to AIR within five working days after receiving study team and ED feedback. Within 10 working days after submitting the final script, the developer will provide the recorded webinar to inform potential districts and schools.

Deliverables: Draft program brochure
Final program brochure
Draft script for webinar
Final script for webinar
Recorded webinar

Task 3. Revise the Proposed Operationalization of the MTSS-R Model, PD Plan, and Materials (as Necessary).

ED intends to study the impact of PD on MTSS-R using existing materials. Therefore, **this RFP does not support development work by the provider.** However, some adjustment of existing materials may be needed to ensure that the overall PD is cohesive and appropriate for the study. In addition, some refinement of the timeline described in this RFP for conducting the trainings may be needed to meet the needs of the study (e.g., districts' training schedules). If necessary, the provider will adjust its existing MTSS-R PD plan, materials, and timeline to meet the requirements of the impact study and reflect any feedback that the study team and ED have provided.

Although the selected provider’s proposal should include a detailed description of each of the four MTSS-R components and an initial PD plan, the provider will prepare a revised plan based on feedback from the study team. The revised PD plan will include further specification for conducting the PD and specific dates for all training activities. The revised plan also will reflect any changes resulting from the negotiation process and discussion among the selected provider, AIR, and ED.

All adjustments will be complete in time for the MTSS-R training to begin prior to summer 2020. The provider will submit to AIR a draft revised PD plan and materials that incorporate the adjustments by April 30, 2020. AIR and ED will provide feedback on the draft plan and materials within two weeks. The provider will submit the final revised PD plan and materials to AIR by June 1, 2020.

Deliverables: Draft of revised training plan and materials
Final revised training plan and materials

Task 4. Conduct MTSS-R Readiness, Training, and Ongoing Technical Assistance for 2 Years of Implementation.

Task 4 and its subtasks describe the provision of personnel, materials, instruction, and support to meet the goals specified in the PD plans provided in the proposal and finalized in Task 3. Training will take place in each of the 10 districts at sites that are convenient for school staff. Staff from multiple schools within a single district that were assigned to receive MTSS-R training (i.e., treatment schools) should receive training together. The provider cannot require that staff from different districts travel to one common training location. It will be the provider’s responsibility to track completion of PD events and provide documentation to AIR regarding completed events by the 10th of each month.

4.1. Conduct MTSS-R Readiness Activities (March through June 2020).

The provider will be responsible for conducting readiness activities during the second half of the 2019–20 school year. The provider will work with each district to identify—and hire if necessary—one or more staff to serve as the district-based MTSS-R coach for the schools implementing the MTSS-R model. This position could be filled by an existing district employee, or the district may choose to make a new hire for the MTSS-R coach.

In addition, the provider will assess each treatment school’s existing screening and progress monitoring assessments and data collection procedures and replace the existing assessments if they are not psychometrically valid. The provider also will work with each treatment school to establish an instructional schedule to accommodate MTSS-R implementation (e.g., MTSS-R

teams have adequate time to meet, and Tier II interventions can take place outside the core reading block). Providers will also support treatment schools to establish an MTSS-R team.

4.2. Conduct the MTSS-R Training Prior to MTSS-R Implementation in the 2020–21 School Year (Summer or Fall 2020).

The provider will conduct training for relevant staff to successfully implement their roles within the MTSS-R model. This will include the following:

1. Train the MTSS-R team to use the screening and progress monitoring system and data-based decision making to support implementation, measure implementation fidelity of all four MTSS-R components, and coordinate MTSS-R implementation and carry out any improvements that are necessary.
2. Train the MTSS-R team to introduce and train other school staff to use the screening and progress monitoring system as needed.
3. Train the district-based MTSS-R coaches in the proposed coaching approach and develop their capacity to support the MTSS-R team, classroom teachers, and interventionist in implementation of MTSS-R.
4. Train Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers to implement evidence-based practices for data-based differentiated and explicit instruction in Tier 1.⁸
5. Train the interventionist(s) to implement the evidence-based Tier II programs proposed by the provider.

4.3. Provide Ongoing Technical Assistance Across the 2020–21 School Year (Year 1).

The provider will conduct ongoing support across the 2020–21 school year for school staff to implement MTSS-R with fidelity. This support will include up to four in-person visits to each of the 50 treatment schools to support the implementation of MTSS-R systems and practices. The provider will monitor implementation fidelity, using a systematic rubric (or rubrics) that explicitly measures whether the four MTSS-R components are implemented as intended and establishes well-defined thresholds for acceptable implementation. The provider must identify and describe the rubrics and provide information about the psychometric properties of the rubrics, if applicable. The provider will also use information from these fidelity checks to inform ongoing technical assistance, problem-solve, and remedy implementation issues. The provider will submit the collected fidelity data to AIR after each round of site visits. The provider should consider other methods of delivering additional supports or content, such as monthly webinars between site visits.

⁸ Only schools that use a Tier 1 curriculum will be in the study. Classes may use trade books or leveled readers for instruction, but these would be considered supplemental to the core reading curriculum.

The provider will also support district-based MTSS-R coaches between site visits and will determine the type (e.g., Skype calls, webinars) and frequency of supports.

4.4. Provide Booster and/or New Trainings Prior to MTSS-R Implementation in the 2021–22 School Year.

Prior to Year 2, to ensure that the MTSS-R model continues to function with fidelity in the second year of implementation, the provider will conduct trainings to cover new content and/or booster trainings to review already covered content. These trainings can also be used to train new staff who have recently entered the school because of staff turnover.

4.5. Provide Ongoing Support Throughout the 2021–22 School Year (Year 2).

Throughout the 2021–22 school year, the provider will conduct ongoing technical assistance for school staff to continue implementing MTSS-R with fidelity, including up to four in-person visits to each of the treatment schools to support the implementation of the MTSS-R model. As described in Task 4.3, the provider will systematically monitor implementation fidelity during the site visits, using explicit thresholds for acceptable fidelity, and submit the fidelity data to AIR after each round of site visits. The provider will also use information from these fidelity checks to inform ongoing technical assistance, problem-solve, and remedy implementation issues. We encourage the provider to consider other methods of delivering additional supports or content, such as monthly webinars between site visits.

The provider also will support district-based MTSS-R coaches between site visits, determining the type (e.g., Skype calls, webinars) and frequency of supports.

Exhibit 3. Schedule of Deliverables

Deliverable	Date
Task 1. Attend Kickoff Meeting.	
Training materials	Within seven working day after the contract award date
Meeting agenda	Within seven working days after the contract award date
Kickoff meeting	Within 10 working days after the contract award date
Summary of kickoff meeting	Within 10 working days after the kickoff meeting
Task 2. Assist With Site Recruitment.	
Draft program brochure	Within 10 working days after the contract award date
Final program brochure	Within five working days after study team and ED feedback
Draft script for webinar	Within 14 working days after the contract award date
Final script for webinar	Within five working days after study team and ED feedback
Presentation of webinar	Within 10 working days after acceptance of the final script
Task 3. Finalize Training Plan and Materials (as Necessary).	
Draft revised training plan and materials	April 30, 2020
Final revised training plan and materials	June 1, 2020
Task 4. Conduct MTSS-R Readiness, Training, and Ongoing Support for 2 Years of Implementation.	
Delivery of readiness activities, training for Tier I and Tier II, ongoing technical assistance, and support to local MTSS-R coach according to training schedule	Ongoing, January 2020–June 2022
Monthly progress report including information of completed PD events	By 10th of each month
Providing fidelity data to AIR	Two weeks after each round of site visits has been completed; final data files July–September 2022.

B.2. Roles and Responsibilities of the Study Team and the Selected Provider

This section summarizes the roles and responsibilities of the study team and the selected provider.

Study Team Responsibilities (AIR/IRG/SRC)

- *Coordination.* AIR and its partners will support the provider and districts in coordinating the training activities across sites as necessary, providing support in scheduling MTSS-R summer trainings, locating and contracting facilities, inviting participants, and monitoring and tracking participation.
- *Support of district and school staff time.* AIR and its partners will be responsible for the cost of any district or school staff time (e.g., time that the MTSS-R team, coach, and school staff will spend in trainings, as well as time that the team and coach will spend supporting MTSS-R implementation).
- *District and school recruitment.* AIR and its partners will select the districts and schools that will receive MTSS-R training as part of this project.
- *Random assignment of schools.* AIR and its partners will randomly assign schools to receive either training in all four key components of the MTSS-R model or typical district and school PD activities (business as usual).
- *Implementation data collection for the study.* AIR and its partners will collect independent, evaluative data on the fidelity of implementation of the MTSS-R model and all associated outcomes.
- *Analysis and reporting.* AIR and its partners will conduct all analyses and draft all reports.

Provider Responsibilities

- *Readiness.* The provider will conduct the readiness activities described in Task 4.1.
- *Training.* The provider will design the training, prepare materials, and provide the training and support as described in Tasks 4.2 to 4.5.
- *Support of provider staff time and travel.* The provider will pay for the cost of transportation and lodging of its own training staff, as well as any provider staff time.
- *Cost of Tier II intervention programs.* The provider will include the cost of Tier II program materials, trainings, and ongoing technical assistance in their proposed budget; schools will cover the time of the interventionists and/or other staff (i.e., paraprofessionals) delivering Tier II intervention.
- *Cost of replacing screening and progress monitoring system.* The cost of providing a new screening and progress monitoring system in up to 20 schools should be included in the provider's estimated budget.

- *Providing information to districts.* The provider will assist AIR in sharing information about the MTSS-R model and the PD program with potential districts and schools during recruitment.
- *Collecting implementation data to guide implementation fidelity.* The provider will collect information on MTSS-R implementation fidelity in each of the participating treatment schools to inform ongoing technical assistance. The provider will share these data with AIR two weeks after each round of site visits.

C. Instructions to Providers

This section provides direction on the content, organization, and format of the technical and business sections of the proposal.

C.1. General Instructions

Providers are encouraged to submit their best offers because they may not have an opportunity to revise their proposals and the award may be made without discussion. Each offer should consist of **two separately packaged proposals**: a technical proposal and a business proposal.

All information necessary to judge the technical soundness of the provider-operationalized MTSS-R model, the proposed PD program, and management capabilities of the provider should be contained in the technical proposal. The technical proposal must not refer to pricing data. **Simply restating the requirements of this RFP will not be sufficient.** The technical proposal should provide a detailed description of the MTSS-R model and the PD program, with emphasis on how PD relates to supporting successful implementation of the MTSS-R model. The technical proposal should demonstrate the provider's knowledge, capacity, and experience relevant to providing high-quality training and ongoing technical assistance.

ED is funding the study through a contract with AIR. AIR will fund the training through a subcontract to the selected provider and will manage this subcontract. The subcontract will be structured as firm fixed-price, with payments tied to acceptance of deliverables. The maximum funding available for the provider subcontract is \$2,500,000.

Expenses. Any costs incurred by the provider in preparing and providing a response to this RFP are solely the responsibility of the provider. However, should the provider be chosen to provide an in-person presentation, the costs associated with that process will be covered by the project (i.e., travel and one night of lodging).

Amendment of RFP. Any amendments to this RFP will be provided in writing at AIR's website.

Period of performance. The anticipated period of performance of this subcontract is approximately 33 months, from January 10, 2020, to September 2022. The schedule of work is provided in Subsection B.1: "Statement of Work."

Letter of intent. Entities interested in responding to RFP should submit a letter of intent. The letter of intent should be emailed to Anja Kurki, at AIR akurki@air.org, no later than August 15, 2019. In this letter, please state your intent to submit a proposal and include the names of your organization and any partnering organizations, if known. This letter is not binding.

Questions. Questions regarding this RFP should be sent to Anja Kurki, at AIR akurki@air.org, no later than August 15, 2019. Responses to technical questions will be provided online at <https://www.air.org/page/training-provider-opportunity-multi-tiered-systems-support-reading> no later than September 1, 2019. It is the responsibility of providers to check this site regularly to see if questions and answers have been appended to the solicitation. The answers to questions will also be made available at the bidders meeting on September 13, 2019.

***Proposal submission.* An original and four copies of your written technical proposal and an original and two copies of your business proposal, as well as electronic versions of the technical and business proposals, must be submitted to Anja Kurki at AIR no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time on October 31, 2019. Offers received after the official deadline for proposal submission will not be considered.** Proposals must be mailed to the following address:

Dr. Anja Kurki
American Institutes for Research
6003 Executive Boulevard, Suite 300
Rockville, MD 20852
Telephone: 202-403-5153
E-mail: akurki@air.org

The technical proposal (text plus all figures, charts, tables, and diagrams) has a limit of 30 single-sided pages. The six specified appendices will not count as part of the 30 pages. Any materials longer than the 30-page limit (other than the exceptions noted) will not be reviewed. The business proposal does not have a page limit. The provider should supply a detailed budget narrative. All text must be double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font with standard character spacing; exhibits can use 10-point Times New Roman (or larger) font but should remain clear and easy to read. Pages should be 8.5 by 11 inches, with a 1-inch margin along all four sides.

Anticipated award date. January 10, 2020.

C.2. Content and Organization of the Technical Proposal

The technical proposal should include the following content and be organized in the following sections:

Title Page. The title page must include (at a minimum) the name of the provider or provider team; the name, title, and contact information of the proposal author or authors; and contact information for a person with authority to negotiate for the provider.

Table of Contents. The table of contents should provide an easy means to locate each section of the proposal.

Introduction. The introduction should briefly present the provider's understanding of the goals, processes, and products of the project; its approach to operationalizing each of the four MTSS-R components; and its approach to the MTSS-R PD program. If a provider team submits the proposal, the introduction should also include a short description of team members and their roles.

Operationalization of the MTSS-R Model. This section should describe in detail the key components of the proposed MTSS-R model, clearly indicating the way the provider will operationalize the components of the model as presented in Section A.2. Any products, such as Tier II programs and screening and progress monitoring systems, that the provider will recommend and support if schools do not have valid systems in place should be described in this section, and any examples of these products or materials should be included in **Appendix A**.

Tier I Instruction. As described in Section A.2., the intervention will entail supporting Tier I teachers in implementing data-based differentiated and explicit instruction. In its proposal, the provider must clearly specify its definition of data-based differentiated and explicit instruction and provide a rationale for its specification. In particular, the specification of data-based differentiation should address:

- Selection of appropriate student data sources for differentiation, including student assessments (such as end of unit tests, in addition to screening and progress monitoring), administration of these assessments, and analysis of data from these assessments.
- Linking the assessment results to appropriate instructional materials and actionable instructional strategies, including grouping for instruction (i.e., small groups, pairs, one-on-one).

The specification of explicit instruction should address

- Explicit instruction sequence (i.e., teacher modeling, opportunities to practice and receive feedback).
- Specific instructional strategies that are associated with increased student literacy outcomes, especially for lower performing students.

The materials used for data-based differentiated and explicit instruction may include supplemental materials provided in the Tier I curriculum, provider-adapted supplemental Tier I curriculum materials, or additional materials identified by the provider.

Tier II Intervention. As described in Section A.2, all study schools will be asked to implement the same Tier II intervention(s). *In its proposal, the provider must recommend and justify their selection of one to three evidence-based Tier II programs to be implemented in the study schools.* The programs must meet several criteria:

- The programs should be feasible to implement in schools that differ in the types of staff assigned to deliver Tier II instruction, including teachers, reading specialists, and paraprofessionals.
- The programs should minimally cover foundational/decoding skills and also language/comprehension skills as needed.
- If more than one comprehensive Tier II program is proposed, the programs should use similar instructional approaches to the extent possible (e.g., include use of high-leverage instructional practices).

Providers should also justify why they selected these Tier II programs. Providers should also describe how the Tier II programs complement Tier I instruction to provide a coherent approach to early grades reading instruction. Providers should also describe their approach to identifying students for Tier II intervention, using screening and progress monitoring tools. More detail about screening and progress monitoring is provided below.

Screening and Progress Monitoring. As described in Section A.2, the study will *not* require districts or schools to change their existing screening and progress monitoring system if the current system includes psychometrically valid assessment tools. Thus, the provider should be equipped to support tools in wide use. In this section, the provider should describe their capacity to support a wide variety of screening and progress monitoring tools currently in use in the field for Grades 1 and 2.

If necessary, the provider will help districts and schools install a new system and ensure that it is operational. We estimate for budgeting purposes that approximately 20 of 50 schools may need a new screening and progress monitoring system. Providers should choose a screening

and progress monitoring system for schools to use in the study if their current systems are not adequate. Providers should justify their selection of the screening and progress monitoring tools, explaining why they are suitable for MTSS-R in Grades 1 and 2 and summarizing their psychometric properties.

For both scenarios (existing or new screening and progress monitoring tools) providers should also describe how screening and progress monitoring data will be used to inform Tier I and Tier II instruction in study schools.

Infrastructure. In this section, providers should elaborate their approach to MTSS-R infrastructure, beyond the description provided in Section A.2. In its proposal, the provider should explicitly describe the expected roles of the MTSS-R team members and the leadership and functioning of the team. Providers should also describe the role and expectations of the district-based MTSS-R coach who will support school staff in implementing the MTSS-R model.

Description of the PD Program Supporting MTSS-R Model Implementation. In its proposal, the provider should articulate a PD plan that adheres to the minimum requirements listed above in Section A.2. This section should describe the proposed approach to PD and coaching and clearly explain how the PD and coaching will result in the school staff implementing the MTSS-R model with fidelity. In particular, the section should discuss relevant research literature to support the provider's proposed approach to PD and coaching. *Providers are not expected to include reviews of the evidence base for coaching or PD using ESSA standards.*

This section should also describe how the PD can be implemented on the scale required in the study, in districts that are geographically dispersed. The provider also should identify any potential challenges that it foresees relative to supporting school staff to implement the comprehensive MTSS-R model and should propose solutions. For example, the providers should describe any anticipated challenges in implementing MTSS-R in schools that enroll English Learners and how those challenges will be resolved.

The provider should indicate which elements of the PD program are based on existing PD programs and describe whether the PD activities for the four MTSS-R components have been previously implemented as a combined package or are being joined for this project. If the PD activities for different MTSS-R model components are being joined for this project, this section should clearly articulate how the provided trainings and technical assistance form a coordinated and cohesive PD program. Any training materials or products associated with the implementation of the PD program should also be described in this section, and any examples of these products or training materials should be included in **Appendix A**.

Evidence of Effectiveness of the Proposed Tier II Program(s). This section should describe the evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of the proposed Tier II program(s). In describing the evidence for Tier II interventions, providers are encouraged to consider Levels I to III for evidence-based interventions as defined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The reviewers will use Levels I to III (strong, moderate, promising) to assess evidence of effectiveness.⁹ Providers should include, in **Appendix B**, links to or copies of up to three of the most relevant publications and reports they wish the study team will use to evaluate the evidence of effectiveness of the proposed Tier II intervention program(s). Providers may also include, if available, links to evidence reviews as applicable, such as an evaluation conducted by What Works Clearinghouse or the National Center on Intensive Intervention. Please include links to the webpage and offer a brief summary of the evidence. The publications should be articles or evaluation reports (not articles that discuss or summarize the results of other studies) that include the following types of information (as available):

- Description of the study design (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental, regression discontinuity, correlational), sample size (number of schools, teachers, students), and types of outcomes (e.g., teacher or staff practice, student early literacy outcomes)
- Similarity of treatment and comparison groups at baseline
- Level and type of attrition (differential versus nondifferential)
- Description of the effect (e.g., effect size, an average effect versus a subgroup effect)

Evidence of effectiveness is not required for other core components of the MTSS-R model or the provider’s proposed PD program. However, if the provider can include evidence of effectiveness for any other component of the MTSS-R model or the PD program, the provider may supply copies of up to three of the most relevant publications and reports and, if available, submit links to existing evidence reviews.

Statement of Work. This section should provide a detailed discussion of the way the provider will complete each task outlined in Section B.1 of this RFP. The statement of work should expand on each of the tasks, including a discussion of procedural issues related to completing each task, and a description of the staff members who will play a major role in each task.

⁹ Providers should use the following Level I to III definitions of *evidence-based* in their submission: The term *evidence-based*, when used with respect to a state, local educational agency, or school activity, means “an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on (I) strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study; (II) moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study; or (III) promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias.

For Task 4 (“Conduct MTSS-R Readiness, Training, and Ongoing Technical Assistance”), the proposal should include a description of the purpose, type, sequence, and timeline of proposed trainings and support activities and should address the way these elements will enable schools to implement all components of the MTSS-R model with fidelity. The discussion should address the necessary features in A.3. “Training and Ongoing Technical Assistance to Promote MTSS-R Model Implementation.” The description of readiness activities, trainings, MTSS-R coach training, and ongoing technical assistance should be supported by examples of materials (including agendas, schedules, training materials, and manuals) to demonstrate the quality of the proposed PD program. Access to electronic copies of the materials is preferred to submission of hard copies (e.g., through websites, drop boxes, etc.). If materials are submitted as hard copies, all sample materials related to readiness activities, trainings, and support should be included in **Appendix C**.

The discussion of Task 4 should also describe the information that the provider will use to determine if the training goals have been met for each of the four MTSS-R components and, if not, what activities will be used to remedy the relevant problems. The provider should describe its plans for assessing implementation fidelity, the fidelity instrument/rubrics, measures, and information about their psychometric properties if available and should include the instruments in **Appendix D**.

If the proposal includes multiple providers who will conduct similar trainings across different districts through a consortium, this section should describe the materials that will be used by all providers and how the training, with any variations, will result in the proposed MTSS-R program being implemented consistently and with fidelity across sites.

Management Plan. This section should detail the overall management plan, as well as lines of authority, coordination, and communication within the provider organization or organizations. If the proposal is submitted by a team, it must include a clear description of each organization’s roles and responsibilities and plans for communicating, monitoring, managing, and ensuring quality across organizations. This section should describe past experience working together on similar projects.

Providers should submit an organization chart identifying all key personnel, including staff and consultants, by name, title, and position in the project’s management structure. This chart should clearly depict the lines of authority and responsibility for all staff and organizations involved in this training, including time commitments during all aspects of the project. This section also should include a project management chart showing the timelines for all major tasks and subtasks, with start and completion dates for each task, as well as intermediate dates

for any precursor steps and draft deliverables. The chart must identify the staff responsible for each task.

Staff Qualifications. This section should include brief descriptions of the qualifications of key personnel, including key trainers and staff providing direct support to schools and conducting site visits, and the way these key people will meet the requirements of the contract. This section should include the proposed hours of each staff person, by subtask, and should describe the specific responsibilities of each. All must have demonstrated ability to meet deadlines, conduct high-quality training, and keep AIR informed of and involved in major decisions or events that are likely to affect the training. The résumés of the key personnel, including trainers and staff providing direct support to schools and conducting site visits, should be included in **Appendix E**. Résumés of proposed key staff are limited to **four pages each**. Résumés should include prior experience relevant to proposed roles for this project as well as descriptions of the work conducted, the recipients of the support (e.g., number of schools), and the specific role played by the staff.

Corporate Capabilities and Experience. The statement of corporate capabilities and experience should demonstrate that the provider has sufficient staff to deliver the proposed trainings and support. If the proposal is submitted by a team, it must include a clear description of each organization's capabilities and experience. This portion of the proposal should describe the provider's experience with similar projects and discuss anticipated training and implementation challenges and provider's capacity to solve them. The provider should include a list of schools and districts in which it is currently conducting or has recently conducted similar work (within 3 years) in **Appendix F**. The list should include a description of the completed work, the duration of the work, and the dates when the work was completed.

The provider should ask three individuals or organizations to submit letters of reference. The letters should include a brief description of the work/project and the relationship with the person/organization providing the reference, as well as current contact information. Providers should not include letters of reference in their application package, rather they should be sent separately and directly from the individuals or organizations providing a reference.

The letters should be sent directly to AIR by no later than October 31, 2019, 5 p.m. Eastern Time, to the same address shared above, attention Dr. Anja Kurki.

List of appendices:

- Appendix A. *Description of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading in Early Grades (MTSS-R) Model and PD Program*: Examples of products/materials associated with proposed Tier II program(s) and screening and progress monitoring system (limit to 15 pages).
- Appendix B. *Description of Evidence of Effectiveness*: Previous research on effectiveness of the proposed Tier II programs, coaching model, and the PD program (limit to three research articles/reports for each).
- Appendix C. *Statement of Work*: Sample of materials related to proposed MTSS-R readiness activities, training, and support (electronic access preferred; limit paper copy examples to 30 pages).
- Appendix D. *Fidelity Instruments*: Proposed MTSS-R fidelity instruments, measures, and information on psychometric properties, if available.
- Appendix E. *Staff Qualifications*: Résumés of key staff, trainers, and staff providing direct support to schools.
- Appendix F. *Corporate Capabilities and Experience*: List of schools and districts in which the provider has conducted or is currently conducting similar work.

C.3. Content and Organization of the Business Proposal

The provider's business proposal **must** include the following information:

- A statement of the total costs that will be incurred by the provider in preparing and delivering the readiness activities, training, and support, as described in this RFP. The total costs should include all tasks and deliverables described in this solicitation.
- An itemized budget estimate for the cost of preparing and delivering the readiness activities, training, and support, as described in this RFP. This budget estimate should include all costs for materials and services, by task and subtask. These costs should include the salaries and expenses of trainers and other support staff; the development and printing costs of all materials and products used in MTSS-R implementation, including shipping materials to district/school sites; and expenses for travel of trainers and support staff to sites, including air fare, ground transportation, hotel, and meals. *The budget should not include the costs of teacher honoraria, substitute teacher payments, or compensation for school-based coaches' time, participants' meals, or training facilities. These costs will be covered by AIR.*

Providers are requested to organize their cost estimates according to the major cost line items indicated below:

1. *Direct labor.* The provider should list project personnel salaries and wages only (and include expenses for consultants under “Other Direct Costs”). For all personnel, the provider should give the title, salary, and number of hours that each person will devote to the project. The rates in the price proposal should not be loaded rates or average rates. In addition, for all personnel, the business proposal must include a table of current and pending staffing (percentage of FTE) for the length of the proposed performance period (January 10, 2020, to September 30, 2022).
2. *Fringe benefits.* The provider should list estimated fringe benefit costs according to the most recent audited financial statements or Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and should include a copy of the most current NICRA. A provider that does not have a negotiated rate agreement will need to justify and negotiate the proposed rates.
3. *Other direct costs.* The provider should indicate all significant direct costs not covered above. *The cost of providing Tier II program materials and a psychometrically valid screening and progress monitoring system should be included here.* Other examples are printing and reproduction, materials and supplies, facilities and equipment, consultants, outside services, postage and delivery, communications, and travel. These costs should be broken down in sufficient detail to analyze by instance and unit. If proposing consultants, the provider should include all consultant fees on separate lines, providing the name, rate, and level of effort (LOE) for each proposed consultant. If the rate and LOE are unknown, the provider should enter “TBA” into the budget and provide the estimated rate and LOE.
4. *Indirect costs.* The provider should apply all applicable indirect costs according to its recovery practice, indicating whether it has an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or NICRA approved by the federal government. If the provider does not have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by a federal agency, it must provide audited balance sheets and profit-and-loss statements for the last two complete years and the current year-to-date statements (or lesser period of time if the organization is newly formed).
5. *Budget narrative.* Providers should provide a detailed budget narrative of all costs proposed. The narrative should include sufficient detail to explain the way all costs were derived.
6. *Fee.* Providers wishing to include fee must indicate the total proposed percentage and provide a justification or rationale that is consistent with prior business practices.
7. *Payment schedule.* Providers must include a payment schedule based on the deliverables listed in Section B.1. “Deliverables.”
8. *W-9 and “Simplified Representations & Certifications and Vendor Profile Form”* (download separate forms from the website). Providers must complete this form.

9. *Personnel and organizational conflict of interest forms* (download separate forms from the website). Each named key person must complete a conflict of interest form (Personal and Outside Interest Disclosure Form). In addition, an organizational conflict of interest form (Subcontractor/Consultant Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form) must be completed for each organization that is named in the proposal.
10. *Sample AIR Subcontract Agreement* (download a separate form from the website).
Providers must include their acceptance or note exceptions to suggested terms and sign the representation form.

AIR reserves the right to request, prior to issuing any award, additional pricing information on all proposed costs, as well as other documentation, such as a certificate of insurance, recent contract reference information, documentation of existing commitments, evidence of adequate business integrity, and personnel policies and procedures.

D. Selection Criteria and Evaluation

Proposals will undergo a three-stage review process. In the first stage, the study team will review proposals to ensure that they are complete. Any incomplete proposals will not move on to the second stage. In the second stage, an expert review panel will review all complete proposals and select up to four proposals for final consideration. The third stage will consist of in-person presentations by the finalists at AIR in Washington, D.C., after which the expert review panel will make a recommendation for award. The final selection of the provider will be made by AIR in consultation with ED and the expert review panel.

D.1. Minimum Qualifications

The expert review panel will review only complete proposals received by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on October 31, 2019**. Incomplete proposals will not be considered.

D.2. Technical Proposal Review Criteria

Technical proposals that meet minimum requirements will be evaluated against the criteria specified in Exhibit 4. Each criterion will be weighted as indicated in Exhibit 4, for a total of 100 points.

Exhibit 4. Technical Review Criteria

Criteria	Description	Points
Quality of proposed MTSS-R model and PD program	Proposals will be evaluated based on the quality of the proposed MTSS-R model and comprehensiveness, coherence, and intensity of the PD program supporting the envisioned MTSS-R model.	40
Evidence of effectiveness for proposed Tier II intervention program(s)	Strength of evidence of effectiveness will be judged on the basis of ESSA Levels I to III for evidence-based (strong, moderate, promising) and well-implemented randomized controlled trials receiving more points than quasi-experimental designs.	20
Staff qualifications	Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the inclusion of a well-developed staffing plan in which staff qualifications match staff responsibilities, staff members have adequate breadth and depth of experience, and the proposed time commitments of staff are adequate for the proposed work.	20
Corporate capability	Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of evidence of having provided similar prior readiness, training, and support activities in school districts, and capacity to provide the proposed readiness activities, training, and ongoing support activities for school staff implementing the MTSS-R model at the scale required by the study.	10
Management approach	Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the inclusion of a credible plan for management and oversight.	10

D.3. Finalist Presentations

On the basis of the above evaluation criteria, AIR, in consultation with ED and an expert review panel, will select up to four finalists to present their training and support models for the study. Subsequently, AIR, in consultation with ED and an expert review panel, will select one provider (or one provider team) for inclusion in the study.

D.4. Review of Business Proposal

Costs will be evaluated for congruence with the quality of the proposed work. The total budget is \$2,500,000 (\$25,000 per school per year). Strong proposals will have a realistic budget for each of the tasks, with a detailed budget justification.

Price will be a factor in selection; however, quality factors are more important than price. AIR will determine whether the difference in quality justifies the difference in price. Cost sharing in the provision of training could be a method by which the provider keeps the price down.

E. References

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F. Description of MTSS-R Implementation Model and Training

Exhibit 5. MTSS-R Implementation Model and Training

MTSS-R Component	MTSS-R Implementation Model	MTSS-R Training	MTSS-R Training Participants
<p>Tier I: Differentiated and explicit instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier I curriculum is implemented, including data-based differentiated and explicit instruction to support both foundational/decoding and language/comprehension skills. • Data are used to guide differentiated instruction. • Grouping practices (e.g., small same-ability or mixed-ability groups, student pairs) are used to differentiate instruction and to promote the delivery of high-leverage, explicit instructional practices. 	<p><i>In-person Tier I training (summer 2020 and 2021):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider will conduct trainings in Tier I instruction, including data-based differentiation and explicit instruction. <p><i>Ongoing supports (school years 2020–21 and 2021–22):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider will visit each school site 4 times each year to support Tier I instruction, monitor the fidelity of implementation, and provide formative feedback to the MTSS-R team on how Tier I is being implemented. • Provider will support local MTSS-R coach in supporting teachers in data-driven differentiated and explicit instruction, as needed. 	<p>School staff including all first- and second-grade teachers, special educators, and administrator, all MTSS-R team members, and the district-coach</p>

MTSS-R Component	MTSS-R Implementation Model	MTSS-R Training	MTSS-R Training Participants
Tier II intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools implement evidence-based Tier II intervention(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff implement evidence-based Tier II program(s) Tier II intervention program is delivered with fidelity (dosage, frequency, use of recommended high-leverage instructional practices). Implementation fidelity is measured by the provider Tier II intervention is supplemental and does not supplant the Tier I curriculum. 	<p><i>In-person Tier II training (summer 2020 and 2021):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider will conduct trainings in Tier II intervention(s) proposed, including use of high-leverage instructional practices, use of progress monitoring data to guide intervention delivery and student grouping, and guidelines on fidelity of implementation (training could vary if multiple Tier II interventions are proposed). <p><i>Ongoing supports (school years 2020–21 and 2021–22):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider will monitor fidelity of implementation during site visits (4 times a year) and provide formative feedback to the MTSS-R team, and any interventionist(s) providing Tier II intervention. Provider will support the district-based MTSS-R coach in offering additional supports to interventionists, as needed. 	Interventionists, relevant paraprofessionals, MTSS-R team representatives (e.g., relevant teachers, administrator) and the district-based coach
Screening and progress monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screening: Schools collect and analyze student assessment data to assess whether students are at risk for reading difficulty to determine their placement in Tier II: 	<p><i>Readiness activities/training (spring 2020):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider works with the district/school to implement the current data system or works with schools to adopt and use a new data system for screening and progress monitoring. 	MTSS-R teams, MTSS-R coaches, and interventionists (if not part of the MTSS-R team)

MTSS-R Component	MTSS-R Implementation Model	MTSS-R Training	MTSS-R Training Participants
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Screening for all students occurs at least two times per year using psychometrically valid measures. – Students are screened on word identification (Grades 1 and 2) and passage reading fluency (Grade 2). – Cut scores are systematically used to identify students for Tier II intervention. • Progress Monitoring: Frequent collection and analysis of student performance data to assess whether students are making expected progress in their Tier II intervention and to guide their movement between tiers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Progress monitoring occurs at least every 4 weeks for students receiving Tier II intervention and uses tools that are psychometrically valid and have demonstrated evidence of sensitivity to student improvement. – The progress monitoring system covers a range of appropriate skills for Grades 1 and 2 reading, including word identification and passage reading fluency. 	<p><i>In-person screening and progress monitoring training (summer 2020 and 2021):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider will conduct in-person training regarding the use of the data system, procedures for systematic data collection, and use of data to identify students for Tier II and movement of students across tiers. <p><i>Ongoing supports (school years 2020–21 and 2021–22):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider will visit each school site to support and monitor data-based decision making based on screening and progress monitoring data and will provide formative feedback to MTSS-R team and interventionists. • Provider will support district-based MTSS-R coach between site visits, at least once a month (e.g., Skype calls, video conferencing). 	

MTSS-R Component	MTSS-R Implementation Model	MTSS-R Training	MTSS-R Training Participants
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Decision rules are established and used consistently to set and revise instructional goals for students receiving Tier II intervention. – Decision rules are established and used consistently to move students out of Tier II intervention. 		
MTSS-R infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTSS-R Team: A school-based MTSS-R team includes at least an administrator, representatives of grade-level and special educators, a reading specialist or MTSS coordinator, and a school psychologist and relevant paraprofessionals as applicable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Team adjusts instructional schedule as needed to accommodate MTSS-R model implementation. – Team uses specific screening and progress monitoring tools and associated data. – Team monitors fidelity of implementation (for all four core components of the MTSS-R model) and intervenes as needed to adjust implementation activities and supports. 	<p><i>Readiness activities/training (spring 2020):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider will introduce the MTSS-R framework, the specific MTSS-R model implemented in the study, and the training program that will be established to support MTSS-R model implementation to district and school administrators and other appropriate school staff (e.g., reading specialist). • Provider will work with school districts and AIR to identify a qualified, district-based MTSS-R coach and install screening and progress monitoring systems, as needed. • Provider will help schools establish MTSS-R teams before content trainings begin and help the team adjust instructional schedules as needed for MTSS-R model implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTSS-R team • MTSS-R coaches

MTSS-R Component	MTSS-R Implementation Model	MTSS-R Training	MTSS-R Training Participants
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Team provides support for teachers, reading specialists, and interventionists, as needed (e.g., additional trainings, resources). – Team develops and refines MTSS-R implementation plan and documents meetings and decisions. • MTSS-R Coach: A district-based coach provides supports schools to implement MTSS-R <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A district-based coach provides support to implementing schools 1 day a week. – To support implementation, the MTSS-R coach works with (a) the MTSS-R team (e.g., participate in team meetings, model use of screening and progress monitoring data), (b) teachers who struggle with data-based differentiation or explicit instruction, and (c) the interventionists who implement Tier II programs. 	<p><i>In-person MTSS-R framework training (summers 2020, 2021):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider will train district-based MTSS-R coaches in the proposed coaching model for supporting teachers and interventionists. • Provider will conduct in-person trainings on the MTSS-R model and will help MTSS-R teams develop a 2-year MTSS-R implementation plan. The training will cover the concept of MTSS and implementation expectations for each of the four components of the MTSS-R model specified for this study, the roles and responsibilities of each team member, procedures for running efficient team meetings, and meeting documentation. <p><i>Ongoing support (school years 2020–21 and 2021–22):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider will visit each school site to support and monitor implementation of the four components of the MTSS-R model and provide formative feedback to the MTSS-R team and coach? (up to four site visits, timing TBD by provider). 	

G. Budgeting Considerations

For purposes of budgeting for training and ongoing support, please use the following assumptions:

- In-Person Training Events
 - Staff from all schools assigned to the same training provider who have a similar role in MTSS-R implementation (e.g., the MTSS-R teams, grade 1 and 2 teachers, staff in charge of Tier II intervention delivery) should participate together in the same in-person trainings;
 - To reduce training provider travel costs, different training events (e.g., teacher and MTSS-R coach trainings) can be scheduled in the same week;
 - Do not include teacher or other district staff compensation in your budget. AIR will compensate teachers for their time if trainings take place outside teacher contract hours.

- Ongoing Support
 - Do not include compensation for the MTSS-R coach in your budget. AIR will compensate districts for the MTSS-R coach salary;
 - To reduce travel costs, training provider site visits to all treatment schools in the same district can be scheduled to take place during the same week;
 - Assume a school site visit will last one full day. In planning for site visits, here are some questions to consider:
 - Can some tasks be completed before the site visit takes place, for example through video conferencing?
 - Do all teachers need to be observed during a site visit or is it sufficient to observe a sample?
 - Can the district-based MTSS-R coach conduct some of the tasks typically done during the site visit with school personnel before the site visit?

- Travel:
 - Use government per diem rates to budget for lodging
- Staffing:
 - Consider tailoring the proposed staffing arrangement to each activity. For example, it's possible that some tasks or a portion of tasks could be efficiently completed by consultants or other entities (e.g. proposing team members or consultants located in the proximity of participating districts may reduce the cost of travel).



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