

*Assessments and Improvement Plans  
for the  
Vallejo City Unified School District*

# **Request for Applications**

*June 25, 2004*

*Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team  
1300 17th Street – City Centre  
Bakersfield, CA 93301-4308*



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## I. Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to solicit applications from qualified individuals and organizations to provide assessments, analysis and recovery plans for the Vallejo City Unified School District as authorized by state Senate Bill 1190 (Chesbro), Chapter 53, Statutes of 2004.

It is the intent of the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) to award funding to applicants demonstrating expertise, experience, and commitment in working with complex public schools issues. In addition, the purpose of the RFA is to determine the level of understanding of the project by potential applicants. The RFA will outline the statutory responsibility of FCMAT and provide a thorough explanation of the roles of outside providers. A thorough knowledge by all applicants of historical issues, other independent assessments and legislative interest relative to Vallejo City Unified School District is necessary. A complete understanding of SB 1190 (Chesbro) is required.



## II. Background

The Vallejo City Unified School District was created in 1858. The Vallejo City Unified School District is located in the city of Vallejo, Solano County, California, approximately 31 miles northeast of San Francisco. The district occupies an area of approximately 27.85 square miles. It provides educational services to residents of the city.

The district operates 18 elementary schools, four middle schools, four high schools, one continuation school, and an adult education school. The district has approximately 19,872 K-12 students and 2,000 adult students.

The district is not a Basic Aid school district. The district's annual revenue limit per Average Daily Attendance (ADA) was \$4,815.83 for 2003-04, and is projected to be \$4,931.89 for 2004-05.

On June 21, 2004, Senate Bill 1190 was signed into law. SB 1190 provides a state loan of \$60 million to the district and authorizes the Superintendent of Public Instruction to appoint a State Administrator as his designee to administer the district. The legislation also requires the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team to conduct by November 1, 2004, a comprehensive assessment of the district in five operational areas and develop a recovery plan for the district to implement. FCMAT is required to provide three six-month monitoring reports beginning in May 2005 through May 2006.





### III. Scope of the Project

- A. Each successful applicant will be required to assess the Vallejo City Unified School District in one or more of the five areas or sub-areas specific in SB 1190 and further delineated in this RFA. Each area of engagement requires the provider to complete a full analysis and report in a manner that is consistent with readily accepted professional methodology and/or the accepted FCMAT protocol. Prospective applicants possessing the necessary skills for this assignment and meeting the RFA consultant standards for project quality are encouraged to respond to any area or sub-area listed below.

#### **Pupil Achievement**

- Curriculum management assessment
- Curriculum content assessment
- Special services (must include special education and English-language learners; may include GATE, ROP, ROTC, or other categorical program assessment)
- II/USP and other accountability program assessment
- District's status relative to stated FCMAT professional and legal standards (see Appendix)

#### **Facilities Management**

- Protection and safety for pupils, employees, and district property
- Five-year assessment of capital needs
- Management control and procedures for managing all construction and modernization projects
- General and deferred maintenance issues
- Long-range planning and maintenance of effort
- Analysis of appropriate use of proceeds of bond revenue
- District's status relative to stated FCMAT professional and legal standards (see Appendix)

## **Personnel Procedures**

- Recruitment, screening, assessment, and hiring procedures, including specific efforts to retain staff
- Staff development - required and desired (such as HIV and mandated child abuse reporting)
- Office procedures and efficiency
- Monitoring compliance procedures (such as evaluations, assistance plans, credentials, TB tests, fingerprinting)
- District's status relative to stated FCMAT professional and legal standards (see Appendix)

## **Governance/Community Relations**

- Board policies, responsibilities and boardsmanship
- Communication system (students, staff, board and community)
- Community collaboratives and advisory councils
- Campus security
- District's status relative to stated FCMAT professional and legal standards (see Appendix)

## **Financial Management**

- Accounting and internal control study
- Multiyear projections (five years), including district's ability to meet loan schedule
- An analysis of any internal and external audits for compliance
- Status of management information systems
- An analysis of insurance coverage and potential unfunded liability for retirement benefits
- Review and analysis of independent contracts
- District's status relative to stated FCMAT professional and legal standards (see Appendix)

FCMAT submits that there are professional and legal standards all school districts are expected to meet. The successful applicant will be expected to assess the district against these predetermined standards and report findings and recommendations. FCMAT has provided the applicant with a list of the standards in the appendix of this RFA. However, the applicant is not restricted to only those standards. It is anticipated and expected that the applicants provide and note, as part of their proposal, additional professional and legal standards that will need to be tested. These additional standards shall be provided in a format consistent with the standards in the appendix. Professional and legal standards need to be designated as either a professional or a legal standard.

- B. The applicant should complete specified improvement plans for the Vallejo City Unified School District in one or more of the five areas or sub-areas as specified by SB 1190 and this RFA.

Once the assessment of the standards has occurred, the applicant will be required to develop specified improvement plans in one or more of the areas assessed. The improvement plans must include a method by which FCMAT can measure whether substantial and sustained progress has been made in the five study areas. The improvement plan shall also adhere to the specifics of SB 1190 and this RFA.

- C. The complete assessment and improvement plans shall be submitted to FCMAT within three months after the approval date of the provider's contract.
- D. As part of the assessment process, the provider shall determine a baseline for purposes of measuring progress within each of the five assessment and improvement plan areas for the purpose of considering the position of the Vallejo City Unified School District in relationship to the predetermined professional and legal standards. The provider is required to determine where the district is relative to the standards and translate that information to the rubric established for this project. This rubric assigns a scaled score to each standard and is included in the appendix section of this RFA for your review and understanding. The provider will assign a scaled score to each standard. FCMAT has the right to adjust the scaled score after consultation with the provider.
- E. The provider will give special attention to the identification of safety and health standards and describe the steps that will be required by the applicant to assist the Vallejo City Unified School District in meeting those standards.

- F. The provider will cooperate and communicate with FCMAT, the district Superintendent, the Solano County Office of Education (SCOE), the district Advisory Governing Board, Legislature, and any third-party evaluator. The provider will prepare and provide to FCMAT monthly status reports to evaluate progress of the assessment and improvement plans and meet with any above-mentioned group upon request of FCMAT and as the provider's schedule allows.
- G. In the event the provider discovers any issue of illegality or impropriety as a result of their review and/or analysis of the specified areas, that information will be immediately communicated to FCMAT.

Applications should include the following:

- H. Describe how the applicant will engage the Advisory Governing Board, representatives of employee organizations of the district, and the community in the assessment and recovery plans as specified. The applicant is required to meet with these representatives throughout the process.
- I. Include a description (including a time line) of how the applicant will provide FCMAT with timely and comprehensive progress reports regarding the applicant's ability to meet the project deadlines.
- J. Provide a listing of staff, both primary and secondary, that will be assigned to the project, and a summary of their qualifications. Specify the point person or supervisor of the project and quantify the percentage of time this individual will devote to the project.
- K. Develop a line-item budget depicting the cost of the project. Keep detailed documentation of all costs incurred in providing the services requested in this RFA. These documents will be requested on a monthly basis.

## IV. General Application Information

### A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include private and public consultants and agencies that have a proven record of providing high-quality products and services. Examples of the applicant's work product similar to this project should be submitted or referred to with the RFA. The applicants shall demonstrate expertise, experience, and commitment in the area(s) selected for study. Applicants with an appreciation and understanding of large urban school districts are urged to apply.

### B. Contracting Funding and Time Period

This is a competitive application process. There is no guarantee that the submission of an application will result in funding or that funding will be allocated at the level requested.

It should be noted that the costs submitted in the application are critically important. Using the funds provided through the contract, each applicant will be required to deliver a comprehensive assessment and improvement plan for the specified study area or sub-areas by October 4, 2004, and three subsequent six-month progress reports through April 2006. No additional funds will be added to the contract once the contract is awarded. Any in-kind contribution by the applicant should be noted in the response to the RFA.

It is anticipated that contracts will be awarded about July 13, 2004.

### C. Application Content

The application must include:

1. Executive Summary (15 pts.)  
The executive summary must provide an overview of the applicant's capability of conducting the assessment and developing the improvement plan in the specified area.
2. How the Applicant Will Meet the Goals of This RFA (20 pts.)  
Each applicant is unique and will have individual approaches to meeting the goals of this RFA as identified in the Scope of the Project section. The proposal must include an explanation of how the applicant will conduct the assessment and develop the improvement plan. This section must also include how the applicant will provide progress reports to FCMAT.

The applicant is not limited to the professional and legal standards listed in the appendix, but at a minimum must include those standards listed. Any additional standards proposed by the applicant should be identified on a separate sheet.

3. Applicant's History, Capability/Project Staffing (25 pts.)

The application must provide evidence that the applicant's staff has sufficient experience to conduct assessments and improvement plans in the specified areas. A listing of all staff members to be assigned to the project, their area of expertise, their area of assignment, and a brief summary of their qualifications is requested for this RFA. Strong management capability is established through descriptions of previous experience in conducting similar projects. The project manager(s) and key personnel must be identified. Applicants are responsible for the entire assessment and recovery plans in each study area. It is understood that the applicant may need to subcontract for certain sub-components as a result of this requirement. The applicant must disclose any current or past financial relationship with the district. Please note the nature of the relationship and how the relationship will be addressed with this project.

4. Scope of Work and Projected Time Line (20 pts.)

Applications should describe in narrative format the scope of the work and activities that would support the accomplishment of the items referred to in the Scope of Project of this RFA. Additionally, an estimated time line for completing the assessment and developing the recovery plan is required. All significant milestones and tasks that must be carried out should be included in this section. The general work plan should include the person(s) responsible for each activity and the date for the completion of each activity.

Consistent with the requirements outlined in the bill, the applicant should:

- Describe the instruments to be used to assess the district in the specified study area(s).
- Describe how the recovery plan(s) adheres to the specifics of SB 1190 and this RFA.
- Describe the method by which FCMAT can measure whether substantial and sustained progress has been made in the specified study area(s), and include: benchmarks, appropriate progress checkpoints, criteria for determining "sustained" and "substantial" progress.

5. Budget and Budget Justification (20 pts.)

Applicants shall submit a budget and a budget justification that identifies costs associated with conducting the assessment and developing the im-

provement plans. The budget needs to be competitive, as there are various components that will be addressed by multiple vendors.

#### 6. Tentative Time Schedule

RFA published ..... June 25, 2004

Letters of intent due (advisory only) ..... July 5, 2004  
(Fax acceptable)

Applications due ..... 5 p.m., July 12, 2004\*  
\*FCMAT reserves the right to accept applications after the deadline.

Applications read ..... July 13, 2004

Successful bidders announced ..... On or before July 14, 2004

Providers' Conference (Sacramento) ..... July 15, 2004

Projects Begin ..... Upon Approval  
(subject to coordination with other applications)

Assessment and Recovery Plan Due to FCMAT ..... Oct. 4, 2004

Six-month progress reports due to FCMAT on the following dates:

March 30, 2005  
September 30, 2005  
March 30, 2006

#### 7. Letter of Intent

An individual or agency that intends to submit an application in response to this RFA should submit a letter of intent by July 5, 2004. This is necessary to ensure each interested applicant's receipt of any RFA changes or pertinent correspondence. Failure to submit a letter of intent by the deadline date will not disqualify the applicant.

The letter of intent shall be submitted on letterhead and state:

- a. The name of the individual or agency that will provide services.
- b. The name, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address of the individual or agency contact person.

The letter of intent must be mailed to:

Thomas E. Henry, CEO  
Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team  
1300 17th Street - City Centre  
Bakersfield, CA 93301-4533

The letter of intent may also be faxed to (661) 636-4647.

8. Submission of the Application

- a. One (1) signed original application, marked "original," and four (4) copies must be received in the FCMAT office by 5 p.m. on July 12, 2004. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. Applicants are advised to use express, certified or registered mail, or to hand deliver applications. Transmission by electronic mail (modem) or facsimile (fax) is not acceptable. Send completed applications to:

Thomas E. Henry, CEO  
Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team  
1300 17th Street - City Centre  
Bakersfield, CA 93301-4533

- b. Separate applications should be submitted for each of the five specified study areas or sub-areas.
- c. FCMAT reserves the right to reject any or all applications and may waive any immaterial deviation in any application. FCMAT's waiver of any immaterial defect shall not excuse the contractor from full compliance with the contract terms, if a contract is awarded.

9. Withdrawal of the Application

An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the "RFA submitted" deadline date/time specified above, provided that a request in writing is submitted by the applicant or his/her duly authorized representative for withdrawal of such application. The withdrawal letter shall be delivered to FCMAT prior to the scheduled closing time for receipt of applications.

10. Cost of Preparing an Application

The costs of preparing and delivering the application shall be the sole responsibility of the applicant. FCMAT shall not provide reimbursement for such costs.



11. Clarification of the RFA

Any prospective applicant needing clarification on this RFA should contact:  
Thomas E. Henry, CEO, (707) 775-2851;  
Joel Montero, (707)775-2852, or Roberta Mayor, (661) 636-4386, Administrators, Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

12. Contract Award Process

The award of a contract will be based upon a review and selection process. A Notice of Intent to Award identifying the proposed contractors will be posted on the FCMAT Web page. The successful applicants will also be notified by telephone and mail.

13. Application Evaluation Criteria

- a. Executive Summary (15 pts)
- b. Assessment/improvement plan/progress report proposal (20 pts.)
- c. Applicant's capability/project staffing (25 pts.)
- d. Scope of work/projected time line (20 pts.)
- e. Budget/budget justification (20 pts.)



## **V. Appendices**

- A. Scaled Score Definitions
  
- B. Legal and Professional Standards
  - Community Relations and Governance
  - Personnel Management
  - Pupil Achievement
  - Facilities Management
  - Financial Management
  
- C. Senate Bill 1190