



Request for Information

NDE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION NDERFI2111

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | P.O. Box 94987, Lincoln, NE 68509

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Nebraska Reading Improvement Act

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Nebraska Reading Improvement Act

Statement of Need:

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to solicit reading assessments for inclusion on the approved assessment list, pursuant to Section 79-2601 - 79-2607 of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act. The Nebraska Department of Education approved assessment list will be available to Nebraska schools and school districts via the Nebraska Department of Education's website: <https://www.education.ne.gov/nebraskareads/approved-assessments/>. Districts and schools shall voluntarily choose from the approved list. This RFI does not include a provision for expenditure of state funds to providers on the list, and there is no guarantee that providers will be selected by schools/districts. The Nebraska Department of Education may revise its criteria over time as needed.

The provider shall provide evidence that each reading assessment meets these fundamental requirements:

- Strongly aligned to [Nebraska's College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts 2021](#);
- Administered no less than three times each school year from Kindergarten through Grade 3;
- Provides performance "threshold levels" so as to determine if a student has a reading deficiency;
- Designed to measure changes in early reading ability across a school year and across grade-levels;
- Designed to assess key areas of foundational literacy: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension;
- Provides professional learning and instructional support in order for teachers to use the data to inform classroom instruction;
- Reviewed psychometrically by the vendor or outside evaluator.

Important Notice:

This is an RFI only and does not constitute a commitment, implied or otherwise, that the NDE will take procurement action on this request. This RFI is being used to gather information for the NDE to make decisions and does not reimburse the cost incurred in furnishing this information. Respondents are encouraged to provide information for any or all of the requested components listed in the Information Requested section below.

Organizational Context:

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) is tasked with supporting the implementation of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act (NRIA). Pursuant to Section 79-2601 - 79-2607, the [Nebraska Reading Improvement Act](#), requires each school district to administer an NDE approved reading assessment to students, three times a year, in grades Kindergarten through grade 3. During the 2018-2019 school year, the NDE identified a review criteria where the approved assessments were selected.

The NDE has since updated the review process to identify assessments that meet the minimum requirements, as well as provide feedback on the assessment's ability to accurately predict a reading deficiency via the reading assessment, and to frequently and reliably measure student improvement via progress monitoring.

The previous review, completed in Spring 2018, was based on initial review criteria; these prior assessment reviews and approvals will not be applicable after 2022. In order to be considered as an approved assessment, vendors must complete and submit an RFI.

Definitions:

Reading deficiency—a difficulty associated with reading and related processing skills that may include fluency and comprehension problems, accurate and fluent word recognition, phonological awareness, sound-symbol correspondence, and/or decoding and that preclude a child from demonstrating aptitude with reading and associated skills at the designated grade-level.

Approved reading assessment—an assessment of student reading that is administered three times during the school year to all students in grades kindergarten through grade three that measures progress toward proficiency in skills including but not limited to: fluency and comprehension, alphabetical and phonological awareness, sound-symbol correspondence, and decoding. Such assessments shall be: approved by qualified NDE personnel or its designees to be reliable and valid; align with appropriate academic content standards for reading adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to section 79-760.01; allow teachers to access results in a reasonable period of time, and shall be commercially available and comply with requirements established by the department.

Threshold level—the minimum score or level of performance on an approved reading assessment used to determine proficiency in skills associated with grade-level reading ability.

General Submission Requirements:

The format outlined below must be followed in order to assure consistent application of the evaluation criteria.

Appendix A: Company Information Form

Appendix B: K-3 Reading Assessment Evaluation Information

Appendix A Company Information Form

Name of Organization	
Address	
City, State, and Zip Code	
Phone	
Fax	
Email	
Name and Title of Authorized Contact	
Address (if different from above)	
City, State and Zip Code	
Phone	
Fax	
Email (REQUIRED)	
Name and Title of Secondary Contact	
Address (if different from above)	
City, State and Zip Code	
Phone	
Fax	
Email (REQUIRED)	

Applicant Eligibility		
The Organization is (Please indicate by clicking on the appropriate boxes below)		
For-Profit Corporation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> or <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Corp.
Non-Profit Corporation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> or <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Corp.
Limited Liability Company (LLC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> or <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Corp.
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please Specify:
Has this vendor ever been approved as a vendor of assessments for any purpose in Nebraska or another state or nationally?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, please list		
Has this vendor ever been denied approval as a vendor of assessment services in Nebraska or another state?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, please explain		
Please provide an overview of the company's history as it pertains to prior experience in the delivery of large-scale assessments. Include a description of the organizational structure that supports the company in this work.		
Reference #1		
Reference #2		
Reference #3		
Please provide an overview of services available to support assessment administration (training/professional development, call center, reporting, etc.).		

Appendix B: K-3 Reading Assessment Evaluation Information

Providers must submit a detailed description outlining how the assessment meets the referenced criteria/indicators. The written submission of the proposal will be reviewed by a team of readers with experience in the area of reading assessments.

To be considered on the list of *Nebraska Reading Improvement Act List of Approved Assessments*, providers must have reading assessments that first meet the minimum threshold criteria identified in Appendix B: Part A of the general submission requirements, followed by the criteria in Part B below.

PART A:

Indicator 1.1 Assessment Construction:

- Demonstrates to what degree the instrument measures what it claims to measure
- Shows the extent to which inferences, conclusions, and decisions are made based on test scores and that scores are appropriate and meaningful to show validity
- Uses criteria, or measures, to classify students (including cut scores) that are valid and clearly described
- Reports results of reliability studies for each grade assessment and provides evidence for adequate reliability, including test-retest reliability and internal reliability

PART B:

Indicator 1.2 Content & Equity:

- Reading passages align to grade-level text complexity as identified by quantitative and qualitative measures
- Demonstrates alignment to [Nebraska's 2021 College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts](#) (foundations of reading, reading, and vocabulary strands)
- Content of test materials is culturally diverse and/or results of bias studies indicate assessment is accessible to all learners
- Studies that provide evidence for reliability include representative samples and include important subgroups, such as ELs, non-ELs, students with and without reading difficulties

Indicator 2.1 Knowledge & Skills:

- Assesses proficiency in key areas of foundational literacy: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension
- Requires students to read out loud to assess proficiency with oral reading fluency (all grades)
- *By the end of the year*, provides data on the following priorities for Kindergarten: phonological awareness, including phoneme segmentation and blending; letter naming fluency; letter-sound association; vocabulary

- *By the end of the year*, provides data on the following priorities for 1st Grade: phoneme manipulation, segmentation, and blending; letter naming fluency; letter-sound association; word recognition fluency; vocabulary
- *By the end of the year*, provides data on the following priorities for 2nd Grade: word identification, including real and nonsense words; vocabulary; reading comprehension
- *By the end of the year*, provides data on the following priorities for 3rd Grade: word identification; vocabulary; reading comprehension
- *(Desirable but not required)* Screens or predicts students for risk of dyslexia using appropriate indicators such as Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN)

Indicator 2.2 Progress Monitoring:

- Provides clear guidance for teachers and students to monitor progress between BOY, MOY, and EOY administrations that is aligned to the initial assessment
- Yields meaningful information to guide teachers' planning for instruction and differentiation, such as recommended groupings for small-group instruction
- Provides guidance and resources *(desirable but not required)* on how to leverage different research-based strategies to respond to student data
- Instructional reports are sufficiently detailed to deepen support teachers and administrators with more deeply understanding the impact of foundational skills development on reading comprehension
- *(Desirable but not required)* Provide guidance for administrators to support teachers with analyzing and responding to data

Indicator 3.1 Standardization & Efficiency:

- Administration guidance for benchmark and progress monitoring assessments is clear and accessible (easy to interpret and implement); may be fully scripted
- Provides clear logistical guidance, including required technology and staff
- Vendor provides or makes available initial training to staff and provides ongoing support
- Assessment can also be administered without technology; guidance for paper administration is provided
- Scoring procedures are clear and accessible
- Estimated time required for administration and scoring is reasonable and balanced; administration time is developmentally appropriate

Indicator 3.2 Usability:

- Assessment reports are easy to read and include a clear description of how to interpret results
- Provides a variety of reports and data views, including district-, school-, and classroom-level data, by student groups/sub-pops, and parent/family-facing
- Data on each of the components of foundational literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension) is presented in an actionable way
- Results from screener/inventory are available immediately
- Data is presented in multiple forms (numerical as well as visual – ex. charts/graphs)
- *(Desirable but not required)* Provides access to raw data file(s) for internal use (ex. to add to data warehouse)

Indicator 4.1 Accommodations:

- Provides research-based guidance for assessment accommodations for students with disabilities, special needs, and English Learners
- Provides Spanish versions of assessments
- Post-assessment instructional guidance includes recommended accommodations for students with disabilities and English Learners
- Includes resources to engage families that are available in English, Spanish and other languages, such as letter templates explaining the assessment & results and/or activities caregivers can implement with students at home

Experience and Credibility (required):

Please provide relevant examples, in which you generated additional value for your customers in any way. Upon request, the expectation is to provide up to three customer references.

Special Considerations (optional):

Please provide insights to potential dependencies, risks, security measures and anything else to be considered.

RFI Timeline:

Activity	Date
Creation of RFI	October 12, 2021
Release of RFI	October 15, 2021
Due date for submissions	November 5, 2021 (by 3 pm CDT)
Evaluation committee review	Between November 5 & 20, 2021
Notification of clarifying questions, demos, contract negotiations, and/or validation of responses.	On or after November 20, 2021
Notification to vendors after selection	December 1, 2021

Submission Method:

Providers will submit their response to the NDE in a single Microsoft word document (.doc) or portable document format (.pdf) containing all the materials/supplemental attachments to the nde.nria@nebraska.gov email address with "RFI Submission NDERFI2111" in the Subject line.

Responses & materials received after the due date/time will not be accepted unless requested by the NDE.

All questions related to this RFI should be directed to nde.nria@nebraska.gov with "RFI Inquiry NDERFI2111" in the subject line.

Disclaimer:

NOTICE REGARDING PROPRIETARY INFORMATION CLAIMS AND PUBLIC RECORDS

RFI submissions are a public record in Nebraska. The NDE may withhold from public records requests responses proprietary information contained in this RFI if a submitting vendor can demonstrate to NDE that such records would be allowed to be withheld in accordance with applicable provisions of the Nebraska public records laws. Information identified by a respondent as Proprietary or confidential must be clearly and conspicuously labeled as such in an RFI order for NDE to consider the issue of withholding it in the event of public records request.