

**2011-2015
CSTEP Request for Proposals
Questions and Responses**

1. Question - For Priority C (page 3) - only pre-freshman/transfer summer programs are listed. - summer research programs are not included. Research is one of the most critical aspects in getting STEM students and those pursuing the licensed professions engaged successfully within their majors and prepared for professional or graduate school. This is evidenced by research and student testimonials. In addition, the display of student research is a major component of the CSTEP Conference.

Is this a typo? Or are summer research programs deliberately not included as a priority for CSTEP as we prepare students for STEM fields and the licensed profession?

Response – Summer research programs for matriculated students can be addressed as a service or activity under CSTEP Priority A or CSTEP Priority B.

2. Question - There seems to be an inconsistency for Priority B. In the guidelines for CSTEP Programs on page 3 Section V. Priority B states programs, services, and activities designed to improve the recruitment and retention of Black or African American and Hispanic/Latino MALES and American Indian or Alaska Native Students in CSTEP targeted fields and the licensed professional at all class levels. The matrix (Table/Priority 2) does not match these directions. In addition, MALES is also not included in the CSTEP Reviewer's Criteria on page 26.

In other words, in the matrix on page 9, the specification of MALES in Priority 2 is missing. Which one is correct?

Response – The Priority B wording in Section V of the Guidelines on page 3 is correct in designating Black or African American and Hispanic/Latino MALES and American Indian or Alaska Native students as a CSTEP priority. The matrix on Page 9 should have also specified males.

3. Question - Under the Program Requirements Section VI Page, 4 Letter I states that Day of Service Guidelines can be found in the field manual located on the website. In the field manual under B - Day of Service Guidelines specified that All DOS activities should occur between February 1st and May 31st. However, in the Matrix under Requirement #5 Levels 2 & 3 state that Day of Service Activities should take place between the months of October and May. Which dates are correct?

Response – The matrix is correct; Day of Service activity period is between October and May. The information is now consistent in the updated CSTEP Field Manual.

4. Question - For the matrix addressing priorities and requirements - are years 1,2,3,4 referring to class level - (Freshman (1), sophomore (2), junior (3), senior (4)) or the upcoming 2011-2015 grant cycle years 1, 2, 3, and 4?

Response – The years 1, 2, 3, and 4 refer to the respective program years of the grant cycle, not the class level year.

5. Question - Please note, the point system on page 17 (program requirements = 36 points) does not match the point system for the CSTEP Reviewer's criteria in Attachment IV pages 28 –32, which = 35 points at 7 points each.

Response –

The page 17 point total for C-1 Program Priorities should be 15, with 6 points for Activities and services supporting priorities and requirements, and 9 points for Measures of positive performance.

The page 17 point total for C-2 Program Requirements should be 35, with 15 points for Activities and services supporting priorities and requirements, and 20 points for Measures of positive performance.

These revised points for page 17 agree with the point totals shown in Attachment IV.

7. Question - Is there a preferred or typical size of a CSTEP annual cohort of students? Would 15-20 students annually be acceptable?

Response – There is no prescribed size for an annual cohort.

8. Question - Are students participating in the CSTEP program required to be accepted and/or matriculated students at the applicant college?

Response – Participants in CSTEP must be enrolled full-time at the college where the program is located.

9. Question - Page 14 of the RFP (top of the page, question #B,5) – discusses “statewide and regional network committees” – and asks the applicant to locate the operations manual on the higher ed website. There is no document titled “operations manual” on the website and the CSTEP field manual, which is on the website, makes no mention of the statewide and regional network committees.

Can you please clarify or provide access to this document?

Response – The operations manual referred to is the CSTEP Field Manual. The CSTEP Field Manual has been updated to identify statewide and regional network committees.

10. Question - We were curious if we could receive clarification on the definition of “unduplicated student,” specifically if a student who participated in previous years should be included in the “unduplicated” count.

Response – An unduplicated count of students is a count of all students enrolled in a specific program year counted only once per year even if they participate during more than one semester.

11. Question - This question is in regard to the bonus points. Bonus points are based on a number of things, among them the number of CSTEP students who go on to STEM or licensed professions, etc. Is this number based on the number of students who graduated 2009-2010 or since the program has been in existence?

Response – Applicants will receive points based on the average of the annual percentages, during the last funding cycle, 2006 through 2010, of the number of CSTEP students accepted into advanced study, apply for professional licensure or are employed in CSTEP related fields in comparison to the number of CSTEP students that graduated from the college in that time period.

12. Question - What will be viewed as a reasonable cost per student ratio?

Response - The cost per student method for scoring budgets will be used to provide a way to measure the best use of CSTEP funds. Although the RFP does not limit what is viewed as a reasonable cost, as stated in Section XV, the method of scoring the budget will award points based pursuant to a formula which awards the highest score of twenty (20) points to the budget that reflects the lowest cost per student. The remaining budgets will be awarded points based on a calculation that computes the relative difference of each proposal against the lowest cost per student submitted.

13. Question - Will the budget reviewers be different from the narrative reviewers?

Response – Yes, the budget reviewers are different than the narrative reviewers. Budget sections are reviewed by staff from the NYSED Contract Administration Unit.

14. Question - What is the Budget Rubric used by Contracts Administration Unit?

Response – As described in Section XV, the cost per student method for scoring budgets will be used to provide a way to measure the best use of CSTEP funds. It is calculated by dividing the total amount of CSTEP funds requested from NYSED by the number of students proposed to be served by the applicant (unduplicated number of students). The submitted budgets will be awarded points pursuant to a formula which awards the highest score of twenty (20) points to the budget that reflects the lowest cost per student. The remaining budgets will be awarded points based on a calculation that computes the relative difference of each proposal against the lowest cost per student submitted.

15. Question - Are full or partial social security numbers required for students to participate in the programs? If not, should we still collect them?

Response - Social Security numbers are no longer required.

16. Question -Are there any travel restrictions?

Response – Staff and student professional development travel is first prioritized with preference to CSTEP-designated activities. In addition, any out of state travel requires prior approval by the NYSED liaison.

17. Question - What is the economic eligibility criteria for 2011-2015?

**Response - See the chart below. The economic eligibility chart beyond 2011 has not yet been determined. Once it is determined it will be made available in the CSTEP Operations Manual at:
www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/cstep**

**STEP/CSTEP
Income Eligibility Criteria
2008-09 through 2010-11**

Number of Members in Household	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
1	\$15,140	\$15,590	\$16,060
2	\$20,390	\$21,000	\$21,630
3	\$25,650	\$26,420	\$27,210
4	\$30,900	\$31,830	\$32,790
5	\$36,150	\$37,240	\$38,360
6	\$41,410	\$42,650	\$43,960

7	\$46,660 ¹	\$48,060 ²	\$49,500 ³
This add-on allowance cannot be combined with the add-on amount shown below	Add \$5,250 for two workers or for one worker as sole support of a one-parent family*	Add \$5,410 for two workers or for one worker as sole support of a one-parent family*	Add \$5,570 for two workers or for one worker as sole support of a one-parent family*
This add-on allowance cannot be combined with the add-on amount shown above	Add \$2,630 for a household supported by one member working two or more jobs at the same time.	Add \$2,710 for a household supported by one member working two or more jobs at the same time.	Add \$2,790 for a household supported by one member working two or more jobs at the same time.

¹ Add \$5,250 for each family member in excess of 7.

² Add \$5,410 for each family member in excess of 7.

³ Add \$5,570 for each family member in excess of 7.

* The amount shown for this add-on allowance includes a circumstance where one parent is working one or more jobs.

18. Question - Are the severe shortage areas noted on Attachment I, page 8 (nursing, allied health fields, engineering, and math/science education), exclusive areas, or are all CSTEP targeted fields considered severe shortage areas as well? If so, will traditional liberal arts colleges that do not offer these programs be at a disadvantage when being evaluated and scored?

Response – The shortage areas identified as priorities on Attachment I, page 8, are those areas that will be given additional consideration beyond the other CSTEP targeted fields.

19. Question - There is a discrepancy in scoring points between what is on the RFP online and what was presented on the Webinar for C-1 (Program Priorities) and C2 (Program Requirements). (See Page 17) Please clarify.

Response - The page 17 point total for C-1 Program Priorities should be 15, with 6 points for Activities and services supporting priorities and requirements, and 9 points for Measures of positive performance.

The page 17 point total for C-2 Program Requirements should be 35, with 15 points for Activities and services supporting priorities and requirements, and 20 points for Measures of positive performance.

These revised points for page 17 agree with the point totals shown in Attachment IV.

20. Question - There is a discrepancy between the due dates provided for the mid-year assessments and final reports that are on the RFP online and what was presented on the Webinar. Please clarify (Please refer to page 11).

Response – Since some institutions have both a STEP and CSTEP project, we have decided to stagger some of the due dates. The CSTEP Midyear Assessment will be due on February 15. The CSTEP Final Report will be due on August 31.

21. Question - I was wondering what kind of flexibility there is regarding the formatting of The Priorities and Requirements tables. I have two assumptions but want to confirm them. I'm assuming that each table can be more than one page. Additionally, I'm assuming we have control over the width of each column on these tables. Please confirm this information or provide alternative solutions that will allow us to effectively complete the charts with all our information.

Response – Each table can be more than one page. You also can modify the width of the columns on these pages.

22. Question - Can you please tell me how many new programs you will be funding?

Response – No, all applications must achieve a minimum technical (narrative) score of 48 points to be eligible for an award and will be ranked based on a combination of their technical score and budget score plus bonus points if any. All applicants will be funded in rank order until the funds are exhausted.

23. **Question** - Are the tables in the attachment, the ones that list the priorities and requirements with timeline, staff, etc., are these to be completed by new projects also? so are they an anticipation of what we expect to happen over each of the years?

Response – The tables in the attachment are to be completed by both existing projects and new projects. The tables request information for project activities and services for each year of anticipated operation.

24. Question - The RFP suggests on p. 11 that the budget narrative is separate from the Narrative, Part C. But on page 13, and following, the text says that the budget narrative is part of the Narrative. As the Narrative section is limited in length, this is not unimportant.

Response – The budget narrative is separate from the program narrative. The budget narrative should be included with the FS-10 and the composite budget and placed in a separate envelope marked “Cost Proposal” as stated in section XIII of the RFP.

25. Question - Some formatting questions: Does it matter where the required tables for Priorities and Requirements go in the Narrative section? Should they all be placed at the beginning of the narrative, or at the end, or can they be interspersed with text if there is some logical connection between the text and the various tables? It is correct that we may include our own tables in the Narrative section in a format similar to those in the required tables (i.e, not double spaced in the cells). We do not see any required fonts or margins, so assume that while legibility is important, we may use smaller fonts in tables than in the text, without violating the rules.

Response – All proposal responses should follow the requested format as outlined in section XIII. It should not be assumed that reviewers will be able to find responses to requested information if the information does not follow the prescribed format. There is flexibility allowed in terms of the width of columns, the font, font size, etc.

26. Question - In the Priorities and Requirements tables, do you mean that the FTE's should be for those specific tasks described in each table, or if a given set of activities is being done by a full-time employee on the CSTEP project, is the FTE 1.0 for that person across all the tables? It gets pretty difficult to break down the total time that people spend on the many things they do across the year on the project into do many components. Also, is the intent that for each person in these tables, there will be an FTE figure? For example, if the head of our undergraduate admissions helps us with recruitment of pre-freshmen in high schools, does she get named with a tiny fraction of time? Most proposals ask for one composite FTE figure for all the activities on the project, not FTE's associated with many multiple different activities. We'll do it that way if you want it that way, but it will be somewhat speculative.

Response – When indicating the FTE, we are seeking information that helps us to determine a particular person's expected level of involvement with the project. Calculate the FTE to indicate the amount of time a person is expected to be involved in each project.

27. Question - A question on budget: We current have a total grant (direct and indirect costs) of \$153,894 which includes \$9,918 in indirect costs. We assume under the rules in the PA, we may ask for a new program that has total costs, including ID costs of up to this amount, and that indirect costs are limited to no more than 8% of the this total (that is direct plus indirect costs). But I am having trouble understand the 4th bullet in section C 1 which says that ID costs may not be charged on “the amount exceeding \$25,000 of an individual contract”. Does “an individual contract” mean the CSTEP contract itself, or does this refer to a subcontract? If it’s subcontract, then I understand it. If it means the whole CSTEP contract itself, then I don’t. Can you please clarify what this bullet refers to?

Response – The amount exceeding \$25,000 of an individual contract refers specifically to subcontracts.

28. Question - Should we follow the ‘2011-2015 Proposal Application Checklist’ on page 1 of 1, attachment III, as oppose to the one listed under the ‘Guidelines For CSTEP Programs’?

Response - The Proposal Application Checklist provides the order for the submission of materials. Please keep in mind that Section XIII. G. specifies how the various parts of the proposal are to be mailed.

29. Question - Per attachment III, “Proposal Application Checklist”, (pg. 21), it appears everything should be sent in together, however on pg 12, it indicates the Narrative/ Application and Budget/ Budget Narrative should be sent in separately. If they are to be sent in separately, what should go into what packet?

Response - See response #28, above.

30. Question - Regarding Proposal Narrative:
-Does page 7, “Instructions for Addressing Priorities/ Requirements and Measures of Positive Performance Matrix” need to be included in the grant?

Response - The instructions do not need to be included in the grant.

-Is there a specific font size, font or margin size required?

Response - There is no specific font size, font or margin size required.

-Are there formatting requirements for the charts and can the levels be omitted from the top of the charts for the Priority and Requirement charts?

Response - The information requested in the charts must be provided in the format supplied. You can expand or shrink columns as needed. The levels at the tops of the charts can be omitted.

31. Question - Please provide more clarification on how NYSED will determine the points awarded for budgets?

Response – As described in Section XV, the cost per student method for scoring budgets will be used to provide a way to measure the best use of CSTEP funds. It is calculated by dividing the total amount of CSTEP funds requested from NYSED by the number of students proposed to be served by the applicant (unduplicated number of students). This calculation will be computed by the Contract Administration Unit upon completion of the narrative scoring by the CSTEP proposal review panel. The submitted budgets will be awarded points pursuant to a formula which awards the highest score of twenty (20) points to the budget that reflects the lowest cost per student. The remaining budgets will be awarded points based on a calculation that computes the relative difference of each proposal against the lowest cost per student submitted. The resulting percentage is then applied to the maximum point value of twenty (20) points.

32. Question - What information can be included as backup or as the appendix? i.e. profile of CSTEP graduates, details regarding summer program, resources plan to use, CSTEP application, brochures- is there a limit for the appendix; etc.

Response - There is no limiting requirement to supporting documents as long as they support the application.

33. Question - Are we required to double space the text for “priorities” and “requirements”?

Response - You are not required to double space the text for priorities and requirements. -

34. Question - Given that summer program costs are directly correlated with institutional room and board fees, which can be very expensive, are we allowed to meet the three-week minimum summer program requirement through a combination of campus housing and creative ways including satellite connections like blackboard, internet, etc..?

Response - You can meet the three week requirement for summer program using creative delivery methods of instruction and support services.

35. Question - Is it possible to submit supports letters after the grant proposal due date, given when the RFP was released? Many schools and colleges start late January, leaving only 2-3 weeks to retrieve letters from institutional faculty (and staff) members?

Response - All materials including support material must be submitted by the due date.

36. Question - What is the format for the Budget Narrative and Abstract; i.e. font, font size and margins?

Response - There is no format for the budget narrative and abstract in terms of font, font size and margins.

37. Question - Proposal Ratings don't match for Program Priorities and Program Requirements; on page 17 and 36; which one is correct?

Response – The rating totals on Page 36 are correct.

38. Question - When completing the Priorities/Requirements and Measures of Positive Performance Matrix should we only present FTE for CSTEP staff or institutional data?

Response – To the extent that staff time from non-CSTEP staff is used to account for any portion of the required 25% match, that FTE must be provided.

39. Question - Is it permissible to reformat the tables?

Response – There is no specific font size, font or margin size required. The information requested in the charts must be provided in the format supplied.

40. Question - Are the charts for the three priority areas and five required areas included in the 20 page limit for the narrative or are they submitted as attachments?

Response – The charts are not part of the twenty page limit.

41. Question - For the bonus points, who computes the statistics? Do the individual proposal applicants do it or does State Ed do it?

Response – The State Education Department will compute the statistics based on Final Reports submitted during the previous funding cycle.

42. Question - Is Priority 2 in CSTEP for black and Hispanic males or black and Hispanic students? It is listed as males in the RFP and students on the priority chart.

Response – Priority 2 in CSTEP is intended to address the severe under representation of Black/African American and Latino/Hispanic males.

43. Question - For the charts, do you include the section that describes the different levels on each page or is this just a guideline to read and not include?

Response –The levels at the tops of the charts can be omitted.

44. Question - Does FTE refer to whether an employee is full or part time or works full or part time for the program? (we are assuming the first version).

Response – When indicating the FTE, we are seeking information that helps us to determine a particular person’s expected level of involvement with the project. Calculate the FTE to indicate the amount of time a person is expected to be involved in each project.

45. Question - Do you repeat activities each year if they are offered yearly?

Response – Yes.

46. Question - What should be included in the MOU (CSTEP) or MOA (STEP)?

Response – The MOU should contain a specific description of the relationship between the collaborating partners.

47. Question - Starting on page 8 of Attachment 1 of the CSTEP proposal, how should existing CSTEP programs interpret Activities/Services from First Year through Fourth Year? Should the First Year through Fourth Year describe the progress of the Institution’s execution of the Program responsibilities during this period or should it describe the Activities/Services of each year of students?

Response – The information requested is for years 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the project’s proposed operating cycle.

48. Question - Is it allowable for any activity/service to be listed for multiple priorities or requirements and therefore listed on multiple charts? For example, an activity that addresses priority #1 (recruitment in careers in needed areas) as well as priority #2 (recruitment of African American/Latino students)?

Response – Yes.

49. Question - On the charts for priorities and requirements, we are to provide a description of activities/services for a 4 year period & to show increasing measures each year. Can you provide clarification what is meant by first year, second year, third year, etc. or what is an example of an increasing measure? If an activity/service is provided every year, should it be listed in each year's column?

Response – It is possible, for example, to go from a beginning level to a proficient level over the course of the four years of a particular activity/service.

If an activity is provided every year, it should be listed in each year's column.

50. Question - Are the priority and requirement tables part of the 20 maximum narrative?

Response – No.

51. Question - Is there a font size or font style requirement?

Response – No.

52. Question - Do we have flexibility to alter the tables, i.e. stretch a box size/shrink a box size?

Response – Yes.

53. Question - In reference to bonus points, how do community colleges account for students who are successful but transfer to a four year institution before graduating and can not be recorded as having graduated?

Response – Applicants are not asked to provide any information regarding the awarding of bonus points. NYSED will calculate these points using information previously submitted on required program reports.

54. Question - In reference to bonus points, how do we account for students who have gone on to graduate school or employment in CSTEP fields who not been included in previous reports because they may not have been employed or gone on to graduate school immediately after graduation?

Response – Applicants are not asked to provide any information regarding the awarding of bonus points. NYSED will calculate these points using information previously submitted on required program reports.

55. Question - May we request extended funding above that from the previous funding period if restructuring to include a summer program not previously in place requires part of our budget? If new fields of study are available at our institutions so that we may be able to accept a larger population?

Response – No.

56. Question - Are you expecting a budget narrative in addition to the FS10 and composite as in the last proposal submission and will it be considered part of the 20 narrative pages?

Response – Yes, please provide a budget narrative in addition to the FS-10 and the composite budget. It will not be considered part of the 20 narrative pages and should be submitted in a separate sealed envelope as indicated in Section XIII.

57. Question - What is the expected date of notification of results for programs so that we can initiate planning, staffing and meeting other contracted obligations?

Response – Funding will be contingent on the 2011 NYS Budget and the appropriation included for CSTEP in the process.

58. Question - Is there a required font size/type and margin size for the 20-page narrative section?

Response – No.

59. Question - Does the 20-page narrative section include the tables for the program priorities and program requirements or are these included separately as part of Attachment I?

Response – No.

60. Question - Is a detailed budget narrative required in the 20-page narrative section as it was in the previous grant cycle or are only the FS10 and composite form required (Attachment II) for the budget?

Response – See response in question 56.

61. Question - Under Attachment III (Proposal Application Checklist) letter D

addresses the "Proposal Narrative" and identifies Attachment I, pg. 4-15. Does this mean that pages 4-15 in this attachment are part of the 20 page limit? This would include the form for List of C-STEP Collaborations, the form for the Scope of Proposed Project, the form for Professional Licensure, as well as the Priorities Matrix. This could take up all 20 pages and leave no space for responding to the narrative questions.

Response – Attachment I is not included in the 20 page limit. There is no page limit for attachments, as long as they are directly related to the application for funding.

62. Question - Is there a limit to the number of pages for attachments?

Response –No, as long as they are directly related to the application for funding.

63. Question - Can supplemental attachments other than those required in the RFP be included in the application?

Response –Yes, as long as they are directly related to the application for funding.

64. Question - Are institutions required to address bonus points in the application anywhere or will this be determined by NYSED?

Response – No information need be submitted regarding bonus points. The determination of bonus points is based on information that institutions previously reported to the Department.

65. Question - For 2-year colleges, how is credit for transfer of students from a community college to a 4-year institution calculated in the process for determining bonus points?

Response – This information will be calculated within the total placement data that an institution previously reported to the Department. It is reflected in the reported number placed in a 4-year college.

66. Question - Can a threshold for cost per student be provided so that institutions know what to strive for in preparing a program budget?

Response – There is no threshold for costs per student.

67. Question - Since (or if) our intent is to recruit students who have completed one or two years of science programs at community colleges into our BS

biotechnology program, will it matter if these students are former STEP students

Response – We would encourage all CSTEP applicants to seek out former STEP students for their programs.

68. Question - What are Statewide & Regional Committees?

Response – The list of Statewide and Regional committees can be found in the CSTEP Field manual.

69. Questions - What stipulations, conditions, and limitations are placed on stipends?

Response – As stated in the RFP Stipends are allowable costs for students participating in approved CSTEP-supervised research opportunities and internships (the maximum stipend must be consistent with the average for similar activities and services at the institution)

70. Question - Since the grant formally begins on July 1, 2011, and since expenses accrued before the official start date of the grant will not be reimbursed, what are the expectations placed on applicants regarding programs during the first summer of the grant? Is it expected, for instance, that the first summer will be devoted to the start-up and development of the CSTEP program (such as recruitment, assessment, and program development) and the second year will be the first year of practical application or is it expected that some practical program will run during the first summer?

Response –Where possible, it would be our intent to see activities during the first summer of the project's operation.

71. Question - I would like to confirm that the 20 page limit for the narrative section does not include the charts for the three priorities and nine program requirements.

Response – Correct, the 20 page limit does not include the charts.

72. Question - Can you also verify that the 20 page narrative section should also include some write up on the program priorities and program requirements, in addition to the aforementioned charts?

Response – The program priorities and requirements should be addressed primarily through the charts.

73. Question - Is there a minimum requirement for the amount of students needed to start a CSTEP program?

Response – There is no minimum requirement of students needed to start a CSTEP project.

74. Question - Is the amount of funding awarded contingent on the number of students, the type of programs administered, or a combination of both?

Response – The amount of funding is not contingent on either the number of students or the type of program; it is determined by the approved budget . The limitations of a proposed budget are specified in section XVI of the RFP.

75. Question - What are some examples of indirect expenses?

Response – Some examples of indirect expenses might include utility expenses, space expenses and other costs that contribute to the operation of the program but are not reflected explicitly in the budget request.

76. Question - Is there a minimum/maximum amount of expenditure allowed per student?

Response – No.

77. Question - For a CUNY school, which type of staff member is allowed to be the Principal Investigator?

Response – The Principal Investigator term is an example of a staff person that would meet the qualifications, as provided in F. 5. a. on page 15 of the RFP, to effectively manage the funded project within the organization. The Principal Investigator position is offered as a suggestion, not a requirement.

78. Question - Can a CUNY faculty member or non-adjunct faculty receive a salary through the grant, or will the individual's salary count towards matching funds?

Response – Either way is acceptable. A CUNY Faculty member or non-adjunct faculty can receive a salary through the grant. That individual's salary also can be used to count towards the required twenty five percent match.

79. Question - What are examples of resources that will satisfy the "matching requirement"?

Response – Institutional funds, funds from private foundations, funds from the federal government that support projects/programs that have a similar mission to the CSTEP project are all examples of matching funds.