CSTEP Request for Proposals
2015 - 2020
Questions and Responses

Prequalification Process
Prequalification for all non-for-profit organizations must be completed by the due date of the grant application. The prequalification process may take up to a few weeks to complete, so interested organizations are encouraged to begin this process immediately upon RFP announcement. The process is described in the RFP. If you have any questions about prequalification registration, please go to the Grants Reform website (http://www.grantsreform.ny.gov/Grantees). If you intend to submit an application and have a question about your institution's status, contact NYSED at prequal@nysed.gov.

1. **Question: Given that eligible applicants must be colleges, what is the role of the Research Foundation?**

Response: Under § 6455 of the Education Law and reiterated in 8 CRR-NY 145-6.6, the eligible applicant must be a "degree-granting postsecondary institution, or a consortium of such institutions, which offers an approved undergraduate program of study and/or an approved graduate level program of study…" In order for any proposal to receive consideration, the applicant for your CSTEP RFP application must be the degree-granting institution. The Application Cover Page should list the degree-granting institution as the applicant. Although SUNY and CUNY colleges may use their respective "Research Foundation" as their fiscal agent if they receive a CSTEP award, the Research Foundation is not a degree-granting institution and therefore cannot itself be the applicant.

In the event a SUNY or CUNY College wins an award and that college has chosen to use the Research Foundation as their fiscal agent, the standard process is that a grant contract is written for 'RF <SUNY/CUNY> on behalf of <specific SUNY/CUNY college>.' Ultimately, the college bears responsibility for program operations and for fiscal, and performance reports.

2. **No template provided for Priorities A and B, do we create our own charts?**

Response: That is correct. No template was provided for Priorities A and B. Feel free to create your own chart, table or simply use text to demonstrate how you will address these issues through your respective project.

3. **Priority A: Are allied health fields (e.g. speech-language pathology) considered shortage areas?**

Response: Each project must determine what careers are deemed shortage areas in their region and/or across the state. In proposal narrative section C.1, the institution should identify the methodology used to indicate which regional or statewide shortage areas they are prioritizing and

how you plan to increase participant pursuit of such careers through CSTEP services and activities.

4. **On the list for licensed professions Law is not listed. Is Law still considered a CSTEP profession?**

Response: Yes, law is still considered a licensed profession for CSTEP participants and services.

5. **Can the CSTEP be affiliated with outside programs that work with the FEDs? Is there a cap on students using funds from CSTEP to fund their trips to STEM conferences that will benefit their goals? [For example,] it is my goal, if selected in this RFP, to give all of my CSTEP students the opportunities that are not solely in NYS. Organizations such as The Black Engineer of the Year, Women of Technology conference, NSBE, SHPE, just to name a few. Many of the mentioned organizations are willing to partner with CSTEP. I have worked with these and others over the last few years.**

Response: CSTEP activities are allowed to take place outside of NYS, but all out-of-state travel requires prior approval by the project's respective NYSED liaison and such requests should be made at least one month prior to the proposed out-of-state travel. As stated in RFP section X.B. Allowable Expenses, supplemental financial assistance may include stipends, nominal travel assistance, and CSTEP student conference related expenses.

CSTEP projects may partner with other programs that support the mission and goals stated in the CSTEP RFP.

While there is no pre-set funding cap for any particular, allowable CSTEP activity or service, all allocation of funds should be reasonable, practical, and prudent in terms of the respective project's overall objectives, budget, and the number of students being served by any single activity or service. It is important to understand that NYS funds cannot be used to support the operations of other entities, organizations, or associations. The maximum request for any CSTEP project will be $400,000 per year.

6. **Under XVI. Narrative Format, section A. Institutional Expertise: "Describe the institution's expertise and commitment in providing services to similar populations regarding science,…"; Populations similar to what?**

Response: The "populations" mentioned in the question are populations similar to the target audience for the CSTEP project and its eligible participants.

Eligible Student: To be eligible for undergraduate Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program support, a student must be a resident of New York who is **either** economically disadvantaged **or** from a minority group historically underrepresented in the scientific, technical, health and health-related professions, and who demonstrates interest in and a potential for a

professional career if provided special services. Eligible students must be in good academic standing, enrolled full time in an approved program of study.

7. **Under XVI. Narrative Format, section B4. Cooperative Relationships: "Describe the program's planned involvement in the Statewide and Regional collaborations related to education in the licensed professions…"; Is there a list of recognized Statewide/Regional collaborations? Or are these informal?**

Response: There is no list of recognized or approved Statewide/Regional collaborations. However, some examples could include involvement with the Association of Program Administrators for CSTEP and STEP (APACS), NYS Regional Economic Development Council, NYS associations related to specific professions or fields (http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/national.htm) or the institution's regional CSTEP working group. Partnerships and collaborations (formal and/or informal) are viewed more favorably if they take place regularly and have potential for a measurable impact on CSTEP related goals and objectives.

8. **Under XVI. Narrative Format, section C1. Program Priorities: "The institution should identify the methodology used to indicate which regional or statewide shortage areas…"; Where can I find a list of the regional/statewide shortage areas?**

Response: There is no centralized listing of regional or statewide scientific and technical career shortage areas. The applicant will identify, through its collaboration and involvement with statewide/regional collaborators, the areas of statewide/regional need in the scientific and/or technical fields or licensed professions. In proposal narrative section C.1, the institution should explain their process for making these determinations and how its CSTEP will engage students in those areas. Not all activities need to be focused upon the shortage areas, however since these areas represent clear possibilities for career growth for CSTEP students, a focus should be displayed.

9. **Can funds be used for food for student conference/workshop?**

Response: Funds may be used for food if its presence is deemed critical to facilitate the CSTEP goal(s) or objective(s) connected to the given activity or service. Use of funds for food should be reasonable, practical, and prudent in terms of the respective project's budget and the number of students being served by the particular activity or service.

10. **I cannot find the Priority tables in the RFP. Is it missing? I only see the reviewer's criteria for the priority tables.**

Response: Please see response for Question #2.

11. **I just made a hard copy of the CSTEP RFP, and noticed that somehow page 48 is missing or is non-existent. Just wanted you to be aware of it.**

Response: Thank you for bringing that to our attention. We verified that this is a typo and that no content (i.e., text or forms) is missing from the actual RFP.

12. **Please clarify whether the 30-page limit for the CSTEP proposal narrative includes or excludes the max. 12-pg. Budget Narrative. In other words, does the 30-pg. limit apply to sections A-F, or to sections A-G of the proposal?**

Response: The 30 page limit does not include the 12 pages allowed for the Budget Narrative. The budget narrative provides an explanation and justifies all proposed expenditures of state CSTEP funds and matching funds where required, which must include details clarifying their nature, and the method of the calculation for each cost. The budget narrative should be organized in the order of the categories on the FS-10.

Also, any narrative associated with the priorities and/or requirements in proposal section C. counts towards the maximum length of the proposal narrative of 30 pages.

However, the tables of the performance matrix are considered attachments and do not count towards the 30 page maximum. As mentioned in Question #2, there are no attachment tables for the Priorities.

13. **Should the text within the Performance Matrix addressing Program Requirements (section C-2) also be 1.5 line-spaced, or can it be single-spaced?**

Response: The text in the Performance Matrix and tables can be single-spaced.

14. **The only instructions we located for the abstract were "Provide a brief, precise statement below of the purpose and mission for the program." Do you have any formatting requirements or preferences within regard to maximum word count and/or line spacing?**

Response: There are no specific formatting requirements for the proposal's abstract. It should not exceed one (1) page in length.

15. **Some documents contained in the RFP ask for a "project code" but a new applicant will receive a project code only if their proposal is approved, correct?**

Response: That is correct, so a new applicant should leave the "project code" blank. Once funding decisions are made CSTEP-SED will assign project codes.

16. Who should our program directors address the letter of support to? They addressed it to James Donsbach in the past, but I don't see that name in the grant documents.

Response: You can have the letter(s) of support made out to an official at your institution or to:

Stanley S. Hansen, Jr. Executive Director
New York State Education Department
Office of Postsecondary Access, Support and Success
State Education Building, Room 5W
Albany, New York 12234

Any letters of support should be submitted with the application and not mailed separately.

17. Can we provide the low-income guidelines for 2015-16?

Please find the latest Income Guidelines below as well as on the following link: http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/colldev/CollegiateScienceandTechnologyEntryProgram.htm

New York State Opportunity Programs
Income Eligibility Criteria
2012-13 through 2015-16

Number in Household Dependent on Income	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
1	$20,665	$21,257	$21,590	$21,755
2	$27,991	$28,694	$29,101	$29,471
3	$35,317	$36,131	$36,612	$37,167
4	$42,643	$43,568	$44,123	$44,863
5	$49,969	$51,005	$51,634	$52,559
6	$57,295	$58,442	$59,145	$60,255
7	$64,621[1]	$65,879[2]	$66,656[3]	$67,951[4]

[1] Add $7,326 for each family member in excess of 7.
[2] Add $7,437 for each family member in excess of 7.
[3] Add $7,511 for each family member in excess of 7.
[4] Add $7,696 for each family member in excess of 7.

18. If we reduce our total student count for the CSTEP RFP, will our funding be reduced as well?

Response: The maximum amount of funding that may be requested in any one application will be determined by the minimum number of student participants (headcount) the project commits to serve contractually on an annual basis. The maximum amount of funding which may be requested is directly linked to the number of students served.

The project may propose a budget that reflects a lower funding amount if the project deems it suitable for the scope of their services or to correspond with their ability to meet the required 25% match.

Please see the Funding Limitation section of the RFP (IX) for additional information. Please also refer to the tables provided on slide 20 and 21 of the Webinar PowerPoint found at http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/colldev/CollegiateScienceandTechnologyEntryProgram.htm. These tables are also found below this question. These tables can be used to determine how your contracted annual headcount corresponds with your maximum award request. The maximum request for any CSTEP project will be $400,000 per year.

Contracted Headcount	Max. Budget	Contracted Headcount	Max. Budget	Contracted Headcount	Max. Budget	Contracted Headcount	Max. Budget	Contracted Headcount	Max. Budget
30	$60,000	59	$118,000	88	$176,000	117	$225,000	146	$268,500
31	$62,000	60	$120,000	89	$178,000	118	$226,500	147	$270,000
32	$64,000	61	$122,000	90	$180,000	119	$228,000	148	$271,500
33	$66,000	62	$124,000	91	$182,000	120	$229,500	149	$273,000
34	$68,000	63	$126,000	92	$184,000	121	$231,000	150	$274,500
35	$70,000	64	$128,000	93	$186,000	122	$232,500	151	$276,000
36	$72,000	65	$130,000	94	$188,000	123	$234,000	152	$277,500
37	$74,000	66	$132,000	95	$190,000	124	$235,500	153	$279,000
38	$76,000	67	$134,000	96	$192,000	125	$237,000	154	$280,500
39	$78,000	68	$136,000	97	$194,000	126	$238,500	155	$282,000
40	$80,000	69	$138,000	98	$196,000	127	$240,000	156	$283,500
41	$82,000	70	$140,000	99	$198,000	128	$241,500	157	$285,000
42	$84,000	71	$142,000	100	$199,500	129	$243,000	158	$286,500
43	$86,000	72	$144,000	101	$201,000	130	$244,500	159	$288,000
44	$88,000	73	$146,000	102	$202,500	131	$246,000	160	$289,500
45	$90,000	74	$148,000	103	$204,000	132	$247,500	161	$291,000
46	$92,000	75	$150,000	104	$205,500	133	$249,000	162	$292,500
47	$94,000	76	$152,000	105	$207,000	134	$250,500	163	$294,000
48	$96,000	77	$154,000	106	$208,500	135	$252,000	164	$295,500
49	$98,000	78	$156,000	107	$210,000	136	$253,500	165	$297,000
50	$100,000	79	$158,000	108	$211,500	137	$255,000	166	$298,500
51	$102,000	80	$160,000	109	$213,000	138	$256,500	167	$300,000
52	$104,000	81	$162,000	110	$214,500	139	$258,000	168	$301,500
53	$106,000	82	$164,000	111	$216,000	140	$259,500	169	$303,000
54	$108,000	83	$166,000	112	$217,500	141	$261,000	170	$304,500
55	$110,000	84	$168,000	113	$219,000	142	$262,500	171	$306,000
56	$112,000	85	$170,000	114	$220,500	143	$264,000	172	$307,500
57	$114,000	86	$172,000	115	$222,000	144	$265,500	173	$309,000
58	$116,000	87	$174,000	116	$223,500	145	$267,000	174	$310,500

Contracted Headcount	Max. Budget	Contracted Headcount	Max. Budget	Contracted Headcount	Max. Budget
175	$312,000	204	$353,000	233	$382,000
176	$313,500	205	$354,000	234	$383,000
177	$315,000	206	$355,000	235	$384,000
178	$316,500	207	$356,000	236	$385,000
179	$318,000	208	$357,000	237	$386,000
180	$319,500	209	$358,000	238	$387,000
181	$321,000	210	$359,000	239	$388,000
182	$322,500	211	$360,000	240	$389,000
183	$324,000	212	$361,000	241	$390,000
184	$325,500	213	$362,000	242	$391,000
185	$327,000	214	$363,000	243	$392,000
186	$328,500	215	$364,000	244	$393,000
187	$330,000	216	$365,000	245	$394,000
188	$331,500	217	$366,000	246	$395,000
189	$333,000	218	$367,000	247	$396,000
190	$334,500	219	$368,000	248	$397,000
191	$336,000	220	$369,000	249	$398,000
192	$337,500	221	$370,000	250	$399,000
193	$339,000	222	$371,000	251	$400,000
194	$340,500	223	$372,000	252**	$400,000**
195	$342,000	224	$373,000		
196	$343,500	225	$374,000		
197	$345,000	226	$375,000		
198	$346,500	227	$376,000		
199	$348,000	228	$377,000		
200	$349,000	229	$378,000		
201	$350,000	230	$379,000		
202	$351,000	231	$380,000		
203	$352,000	232	$381,000		

**** Headcounts of 251 and above may request a maximum of $400,000. While projects that provide services to higher numbers of students will not receive additional funds per student, serving higher numbers of proposed participants will be viewed favorably by reviewers in the priorities rubric: "activities and services to increase access to the number of historically under-represented students that support program requirements."**

19. Are letters of support with electronic signatures acceptable? Some colleagues have sent letters of support via email with electronic signatures because it is more efficient and economical than through the mail.

Response: Yes, electronic signatures are acceptable for letters of support.

20. Clarification on Priority B (increase the students that are in most need at our institution). Is there any additional context you might offer of how we might/can articulate/differentiate our assessment of those in most need at our institution vs. those that are eligible at our institution? We are assuming that is what you are looking for us to define in our grant proposal but wanted to double check.

Response: The project should identify the students who are CSTEP eligible on your campus who are also most in need of recruitment, support, and services to realize your CSTEP goals and objectives. In proposal narrative section C.2, please discuss the methodology you use to determine which students are most in need and their level of need, as well as the activities you will implement to address them.

21. **Please provide Clarification on Priority A (increase recruitment, retention and placement of eligible students in severe shortage areas).**

Response: The project should identify which CSTEP related careers are in need in your project's region or in need across New York State. In narrative section C.1, please discuss the methodology you use to determine these areas of need as well as the activities you will implement to address these shortage areas. In other words, indicate how you will encourage and support your CSTEP participants to pursue and enter the CSTEP related careers you identify as most in need in your region and/or across the state. Also, please see response for Question #37.

22. **In the webinar, we heard in the budgeting section that grant funds cannot be used for cultural enrichment or social activities. Can you provide more clarity on what NYSED would define as a social activity?**

Response: Cultural and social activities are ones in which there are no direct relationship to the CSTEP academic mission. Allowable expenses include services and programming for tutoring, academic counseling, remedial and special summer courses, supplemental financial assistance, recruitment, academic enrichment, career planning, review for licensing examinations, and program administration.

Allowable services and activities are directly related to goals and objectives germane to those of CSTEP and its mission. Descriptions of allowable services and activities should include how they support and advance the project's goals and CSTEP mission. Use of funds should be reasonable, practical, and prudent in terms of the respective project's budget and the number of students being served by the particular activity or service.

23. **The staffing has changed significantly and none of us were aware of how our last grant proposal was scored and what areas we might need to improve upon. Is there any way at this time to receive that feedback prior to writing this grant proposal?**

Response: No.

24. **In the Positive Performance Matrix, if a school is newly applying to CSTEP, how do they rate a proficiency level for a new activity under the grant? For example, if the school has never participated in a Day-of-Service, but has designed a comprehensive Day-of-Service for the grant that includes all of the proficiency 3 characteristics, can we self-score a 3?**

Response: Yes, you may rate yourself as you see appropriate using the criteria in the "proficiency level" boxes, providing explanations on institutional participation and success in similar activities. You may include efforts to discuss how you will further develop your offerings in subsequent years and/or how you plan to respond to internal evaluations, student feedback, and fluctuations in the field or student needs.

25. For a two-year school without junior and senior levels, are limited to a proficiency level of 1 in the Positive Performance Matric Requirement 1?

Response: A two-year school without junior or senior levels can select proficiency level 3 if it provides instructional support in "gateway courses," (i.e., small group tutorials or supplemental instruction in biology, chemistry, physics, calculus or pre-professional pre-requisite courses) at the freshman and sophomore levels **and** also provides such support for advanced courses needed for their students to successfully transfer and pursue their CSTEP related career or degree.

26. Do you have a sample proposal that could be shared?

Response: There is no generalizable CSTEP application or applicant. CSTEP provides the flexibility for the institution to examine its curricular offerings, its existing support services, its student body, and the statewide/regional needs in the scientific, technical and licensed professions to develop an approach for supporting its student's growth and success.

27. Can you expand the meaning of statewide and regional collaboration and give examples?

Response: Please see response for Question #7.

28. Can recruitment activities for the CSTEP program be covered by the grant?

Response: Yes. Allowable expenses include services and programming for tutoring, academic counseling, remedial and special summer courses, supplemental financial assistance, recruitment, academic enrichment, career planning, review for licensing examinations, and program administration.

29. As a municipal corporation (community college applying directly, not through a research foundation), I believe we are exempt from the pre-qualification process. Correct?

Response: Yes, community colleges that are not choosing to utilize a research foundation as a fiscal agent do not have to pre-qualify.

30. May funds be used to assist CSTEP students in the purchase of their textbooks?

Response: Allowable expenses include services for tutoring, remedial and special summer courses, review for licensing examinations, and supplemental financial assistance. Supplemental Financial Assistance includes stipends, which the student can choose to use on textbooks. Textbooks may also be purchased for use during tutoring or small study group sessions; textbooks purchased for those uses remain the property and responsibility of the CSTEP project.

31. Must students be matriculated in a major at time of entry into CSTEP?

Response: A CSTEP student must demonstrate interest in and a potential for a professional career in fields associated with CSTEP goals and objectives. The focus for CSTEP is on those students who are pursuing a scientific field, technical field, or licensed profession. Eligible students must be matriculated at the institution, in good academic standing, and enrolled full time in an approved program of study.

32. M/WB requirements – does this pertain to faculty and tutors or only to purchased services and contractors? Our institution uses a competitive bidding process to select vendors for office supplies, many instructional supplies, transportation, catering, etc. We are required to use the contractor selected through this process, which may or may not be a M/WB. Is this acceptable?

Response: All applicants are required to comply with NYSED's Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE) policy and are, therefore, responsible for identifying areas in their budget where an M/WBE can be utilized. M/WBE participation includes services, materials, or supplies purchased from minority and women-owned firms certified with the NYS Division of Minority and Women Business Development. The inclusion of M/WBE firms in your institutions competitive bidding process will increase your chance of reaching the 20% participation goal while demonstrating good faith efforts. See the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise, GOOD FAITH EFFORTS, section of the RFP for additional examples of good faith efforts that applicants may take to solicit NYS certified M/WBE firms as subcontractors and/or suppliers to achieve the goals for this grant.

33. Which technology majors are approved CSTEP majors?

Response: Each institution must identify the programs that are available on its campus that support CSTEP related goals and objectives (e.g., prepares students for employment in scientific, technical, health and health-related fields). The program must be designated by the Commissioner as licensure qualifying in the particular profession or must prepare students for employment in scientific, technical, health and health-related fields.

Technical fields are those fields in the applied sciences (i.e., medical support fields, engineering support fields, computer science, information science, etc.); not all majors with the word "technology" will necessarily satisfy the criteria.

Scientific fields are those fields in the natural sciences (i.e., physical sciences and life sciences), and those fields in the decision sciences (i.e., decision theory, logic, mathematics, statistics, systems theory, theoretical computer science).

34. **You state that funds may not be used for social or cultural activities. Please provide examples of these types of activities.**

Response: Please see response for Question #22. State CSTEP funds are not the source of funding for activities which do not directly support the academic support mission of CSTEP.

35. **I would like clarification on the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises. If we cannot provide documentation with submission, do we note that somewhere on the RFP? It says, "the applicant will have thirty days from the date of notice of award to submit the necessary documents..." I don't see space on the form in the RFP to note the documentation will be submitted at a later date.**

Response: Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit complete M/WBE documentation, as missing or incomplete information may result in a delay of approval. If some information is unavailable, applicants should then submit documentation indicating their level of participation and identify how they are planning to meet their participation goal. TBD (to be determined) may be used as a place hold for unavailable information (i.e. price quotes), with the expectation that missing information will be provided as soon as possible, or within thirty days from the date of notice of award.

36. **The RFP says the [MWBE] "participation goal is 20% of each applicant's total discretionary non-personal service budget over the entire term". Are we penalized if we can't meet the 20% since participation may change each year? Is there some required process if vendors change after awarded?**

Response: The 20% M/WBE participation goal applies to the total budget for the five year grant period. The M/WBE participation can be different from year to year as long as the 20% participation goal is met by the end of the grant.

37. **Is there a list/link where one can refer to with regard to "…severe regional or statewide scientific and technical career shortage areas?"**

Response: As an example, please see the following link, which provides information about areas of New York State designated by the New York State Board of Regents as having a shortage of physicians (http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/scholarships/rplfap.htm). You may also choose to contact your local economic development agency to research which areas related to CSTEP careers are most in need regionally and/or statewide. This is not a comprehensive example and each applicant must develop its own methodology to determine these areas of need as well as describe the activities they will implement to address these shortage areas. Also, please see response for Question #21.

38. **Question: What are those "severe regional or statewide scientific and technical career shortage areas?" I would think STEM fields, but can more specificity be provided?**

Response: Please see response for Question #21 and #37.

39. **Is the CSTEP program only for newly recruited and soon-to-be enrolled students? Or can the program support an already matriculating body of students?**

Response: CSTEP participants may be any year so long as they meet eligibility requirements and demonstrate an interest in and a potential for a professional career in fields associated with CSTEP goals and objectives. Eligible students must be matriculated at the institution, in good academic standing, and enrolled full time in an approved program of study. The focus for CSTEP is on those students who are pursuing a scientific field, technical field, or licensed profession.

40. **How can an institution discriminate related to categories served under this grant for students who may need CSTEP-related supports to bridge STEM academics. Example: Math gateway course are offered for new students wanting to get into an AA program for Architectural Design. They are enrolled, but only the special classes of students as named in the grant can utilize the grant monies- is that right?**

Response: CSTEP funds are to be used only for CSTEP participants. For example, you may provide remedial, special summer courses, tutoring, and academic support as described in the RFP for a math gateway course; however, the services would only be available to eligible and enrolled CSTEP participants at your institution.

41. **In defining participation for CSTEP for students in applied science studies who are at the baccalaureate level, can a request be submitted for consideration if the curriculum does not include two semesters of calculus or statistics?**

Response: The CSTEP definition of "technical fields" are those fields in the applied sciences <u>OR</u> in which the academic program at the baccalaureate level requires at least two semesters of calculus or statistics, and both a full year introductory science course and science courses at above the introductory level. Not all majors with the word "technology" in the name will qualify as a technical field.

If your student is pursuing an applied science or declared in an applied science major, then there is no need to satisfy the two semesters of calculus or statistics stipulation.

42. **Could a request and grant dollars be used to focus efforts on supports that would provide gateway courses in math and science both online and traditional classroom at the AA level to prepare students for advancement in STEM fields.**

Response: CSTEP funds may only be used to provide for-credit instruction through the "special summer course" provision, regardless of whether this is offered traditionally or on-line. All other academic supports as detailed in the allowable expenses are made available to all participating CSTEP students. Allowable expenses include services and programming for tutoring, academic counseling, remedial and special summer courses, supplemental financial assistance, recruitment, academic enrichment, career planning, review for licensing examinations, and program administration.

CSTEP funds used for academic services must be related to the CSTEP purpose/goal and may only be utilized by enrolled CSTEP participants at your institution.

43. **The RFP specifically states that communication charges cannot be charged to the grant. We do not pay a communication charge. We do pay a technology charge which includes the following: software, technology support, internet, secure servers, firewalls and other virus security, phone service and support, back-up and recovery services, and any technology CSTEP students or staff request. There are few additional technology charges outside of the ITS service contract. Technology support is important to CSTEP staff and represents a real cost to departments - without the director's position, this would not be a cost the department would need to pay. Is this technology charge allowable?**

Response: The non-allowable costs described in section X.C.1 of the RFP refers to those charges which are a part of an institution's shared costs (technology, communication, rent, etc.). Such costs are best defined as indirect and would therefore be covered within the institution's indirect cost rate. If the technology charges described in your question are directly attributable to the CSTEP office and staff, then these charges are direct costs and can be charged under program administration. The comment regarding the absence or presence of the director should not alter the campus' responsibility to provide basic office support, nor change the definition of a direct or indirect cost.

44. **If not, as it represent real cost to the CSTEP employees, can it be used as a cost share expense?**

Response: CSTEP employees are not expected to pay for the administration of the program at a higher education campus. If the campus covers the technology charges as part of its in-kind match, then this could be appropriate.

45. **Could you please provide some information on the grant review process and timeline. While we have a rubric, we do not have clear information on who (for example, 5 faculty will be selected from around the state to review all CSTEP grants for merit) will be reviewing. Is it planned that this cycle will be streamlined since CSTEP funds end on June 30,2015, but many institutions will expect program staff to begin looking for new employment by early May? NY State Unemployment law requires that we are provided with written notice, which would be generated about 6 weeks before the end of the grant (mid May).**

Response: The review process is outlined in the Method of Determining Award section (**XVIII)** of the RFP. The review will be conducted by Opportunity program staff of the State Education Department.

The State Education Department will carry out the proposal review process as quickly as possible; however, we cannot provide a firm date of final award notice, which requires approvals from requisite control agencies.

We hope to notify applicants of award decisions by April 30, 2015.

46. **For the Requirements Matrix (p 39 of the RFP) we are required to state the measure of positive performance of each activity. Is it possible to get a clearer description of what an appropriate response would be for this category? The example for the measure of positive performance in requirement 1 states " We do provide instructional support in "gateway courses," (i.e., small group tutorials or supplemental instruction in biology, chemistry, physics, calculus or pre-professional pre-requisite courses) at the freshman and sophomore levels and we also provide tutoring for higher level courses at the junior and senior levels." In the past RFPs we have showed the ways in which we would measure the positive performance. Is this an appropriate response?**

Response: You may use the descriptions found in the "Performance Matrix" tables to help determine your level of positive performance. The manner in which you measure or evaluate the performance that influences your decision making for future activities is what should be described section C.3 of the proposal narrative. Some examples may include measures of attendance, persistence rates, grades/outcomes of success, and/or student feedback, etc.

47. **"Cooperative Relationships" Subsection 1 and 3 (p.53): Because the narrative part of the grant may not exceed 30 pages, may we include, in an appendix, as requested in section B, the letters of support and MOU?**

Response: Yes, you may include those documents in an appendix so that they are not counted towards your 30 page limit. Letters of support as well as MOUs/MOAs must also be kept on file at the higher education institution and be made available upon request. Please see response for Question #19.

48. **"Cooperative Relationships" Subsection 4 (p.53): Please clarify where we can get this information as to what constitutes "the determination and remediation of regional and statewide shortages"… in the "licensed professions, scientific and technical fields."**

Response: Please see response for Question #21 and #37.

49. **C-1, Priority 1 (p.54): Who is defining the "severe shortage areas"? What are these areas or where can we find this information?**

Response: Please see response for Question #21 and #37.

50. **If information requested by SED is given in one section and is the same for another section (e.g., C-2, Req. 2 and C-2 Req. 3 (pgs. 57, 58)) should we repeat our response, or can we simply cite the earlier response?**

Response: C-2 requirement 2 on page 57 looks specifically at "services to enhance and increase students' involvement in research and/or internship opportunities…", while C-2 requirement 3 on page 58 specifically refers to "professional development opportunities: workshops, poster presentations, publications in professional/research that promote access to careers in math, science, technology, health-related fields, and the licensed professions…" While there may be some overlap in the activities which provide these opportunities, these two requirements should be addressed separately.

51. **"Cooperative Relationships" Subsection 4. C4 (p.53), please clarify and provide a list as to what the "Statewide and Regional collaborations related to education" may be.**

Response: Please see response for Question #7.

52. **In Attachment 1, Requirement 1 (Positive Performance Matrix), it asks for performance measures that include pre-freshman. In the definitions section, page 9, Pre-Freshman definition clearly states "CSTEP project services cannot be provided to pre-freshman". Is the matrix or definition a mistake?**

Response: Thank you for bringing that to our attention.

Pre-freshman: For purposes of this RFP, a pre-freshman is a high school student or a high school-graduate who is not accepted and/or enrolled as a freshman at an institution of higher education supporting a CSTEP project. CSTEP project services cannot be provided to Pre-freshmen.

"Pre-freshman" in the matrix is a typo and was meant to signify a "Freshman" student who has been accepted to an institution and is being provided services via a bridge/summer program or similar activity. Such students may be described and reported as freshmen. This has been corrected in the RFP posted online.

Please excuse any possible confusion.

53. **Is the M/WBE requirement 20% of any combination of contractors or are there specific % requirement for Women-Owned and for Minority-owned business (e.g., 10% and 10%)?**

Response: Yes, full M/WBE compliance can be achieved with any combination of WBE and MBE participation as long as the 20% requirement is met. The suggested target, although not required, is 12% MBE and 8% WBE.

54. **Is there a definition of what kind of activities that would qualify as a "research" opportunities as required in Section VI, H. page 13?**

Response: An example of a research opportunity would be working with faculty or an expert in a pertinent field of study to gain experience with the processes and activities associated with performing research. Research may involve documentation, discovery, interpretation, or the research and development (R&D) of methods and systems.

55. **Is SUNY Faculty salary allowable as cost-share?**

Response: Yes. The cost share effort (FTE) should be verifiable and represent the time spent working directly with CSTEP students outside of his or her regularly expected duties.

56. Are undergraduate programs of study that could lead to licensure but at the graduate level eligible for their students?

Response: Perhaps, it depends upon the student's undergraduate program and the scientific, technical field or the licensed profession they are pursuing. A CSTEP student must demonstrate interest in and a potential for a professional career in fields associated with CSTEP goals and objectives. The focus for CSTEP is on those students who are pursuing a scientific field, technical field, or licensed profession. Eligible students must be matriculated at the institution, in good academic standing, and enrolled full time in an approved program. Please see response for Question #6 for greater clarification on an eligible student.

57. Our institution includes two undergraduate colleges on two distinct campuses. We know that we can apply for two grants given that we have two distinct populations of students, but we have questioned if that will then put us in competition with each other. Is there a disadvantage for us to apply for two grants? Will we be in competition with each other? Is it a disadvantage for us to apply for just one grant given that we have two campuses and two populations of students?

Response: Each proposal is reviewed and scored individually. All proposals are competing for the same funds and awarded applicants will be funded in rank order until the funds are exhausted. Unlike the recent RFP regarding HEOP, the CSTEP RFP does not have a regional component to the funding process. Each institution must determine what is in its best interests.

58. If we apply for just one grant, is it permissible for us to request two program co-directors, one for each campus?

Response: It is permissible for the two separate programs to share a director as well as each program to have its own coordinator or co-coordinators. The proposal should clearly outline the roles and responsibilities for each position, as requested in proposal narrative section F, Project Staffing and Management.

59. Because we are a first time applicant, should we "ramp up" to full capacity or should we identify CSTEP eligible students from our current population so that we begin at full capacity?

Response: You are expected to enroll your full headcount in your first year, as CSTEP is not a cohort based program. New student participants to CSTEP can be from any class year as long as the student is matriculated at the institution, in good academic standing, and enrolled full time in an approved program. The focus for CSTEP is on those students who are pursuing a scientific field, technical field, or licensed profession.

60. Is it essential that awardees meet the full 20% option in order to receive funding?

Response: No.

61. Will partial waiver or full waiver be allowable?

Response: Yes, please refer to page 23, REQUEST FOR WAIVER, in the RFP.

62. Do stipends paid to students count as salary in the MBWE calculations?

Response: Stipends paid to students should be included in code 16, Salaries for non-professional personnel, and therefore deducted from the MWBE calculation.

63. If we are required to complete the full MWBE forms, they require that we get signatures from each MWBE we plan to use during the life of the grant. Is it reasonable to expect applicants to do so in the 6 week window provided? These are not vendors I can visit to get a signature from.

Response: M/WBE documentation does not need to be signed in person. Correspondence between the grantee and M/WBE vendor may be signed and scanned/faxed, or delivered through a postal service.