

Interoperable and Interconnected Student Data Systems Study

Request for Proposals

September 15, 2022

NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY DUE: 5:00pm EDT, September 22, 2022

PROPOSALS DUE: 1:00pm EDT, September 30, 2022

Send (notice and) proposal to: Gina Zhang (gina@myfuturenc.org)

In response to Section 7.11 of Session Law 2022-74 of the General Assembly of North Carolina (“Interoperable and Interconnected Student Data Systems Study”), myFutureNC is seeking to award a consulting contract to assist in completion of a study of requirements necessary to create an interconnected and interoperable real-time data system. Such a system would facilitate communication, collection, and transition of student data among public school units, community colleges, and universities and provide students access to their own data, including after the student leaves the institution. The goal of such a system would be to share data more efficiently among educational institutions using existing student information management systems, to assist students in earning postsecondary credentials that could assist the student in finding employment, and to eliminate redundant efforts and expenses among the institutions. This Request for Proposals (RFP) is for project management, technical expertise, creation, and completion of a report for myFutureNC that will be submitted to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Fiscal Research Division no later than March 15, 2023. myFutureNC will allocate funds via a single contract for an amount and term to be determined.

Components of this project will include local and state-level stakeholder engagement; identification and prioritization of system use cases; mapping of North Carolina’s existing student data systems and an analysis of gaps; a national scan of promising practices related to data sharing between educational institutions; identification of required legal, governance and technological steps; a market review of available and suitable technological solutions—to include products as well as services; and recommendations regarding appropriate architectural framework to effectively connect existing systems and enhance the functionality of those systems, as well as any potential future replacement systems implemented by our education sectors.

The contract resulting from this RFP process will begin on or about October 10, 2022, and will end on or about March 31, 2023, with final deliverables to include a potential presentation of findings and recommendations to the North Carolina General Assembly, as scheduled.

Citation of Law

INTEROPERABLE AND INTERCONNECTED STUDENT DATA SYSTEMS STUDY

SECTION 7.11. myFutureNC, Inc., in consultation with the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority, the Department of Public Instruction, the Community College System Office, and The University of North Carolina System Office, in partnership with their respective public school units, community colleges, and universities, shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Fiscal Research Division no later than March 15, 2023, on requirements necessary to create an interconnected and interoperable real-time data system to facilitate communication, collection, and transition of student data between public school units, community colleges, and universities and to provide students access to their own data, including after the student leaves the institution. The goal of such a system would be to share data more efficiently among educational institutions using existing student information management systems, to assist students in earning postsecondary credentials that

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could assist the student in finding employment, and to eliminate redundant efforts and expenses among the institutions. The report shall include at least the following:

- (1) Current instances of best practices regarding data warehouses, school district-community partnerships, and relationship management systems.
- (2) Technology necessary to create such an interconnected and interoperable system and to create a working prototype.
- (3) Legal considerations for sharing data across institutional systems that would conform with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), specifically focusing on student support services.
- (4) Human capital and machine capabilities, such as artificial intelligence, needed to develop data and analytical capacity across institutions.
- (5) Any issues that may arise with cultural views on data as an individually owned resource, as opposed to a collaborative tool.
- (6) As applicable, the potential role of existing State longitudinal data systems.

Clarification of Purpose

For the purposes of this RFP, “interconnected and interoperable real-time data system” refers to the exchange of student and other administrative data between/among institutions, in order to support operational and/or academic decision making by students and/or educators in real time or near-real time, with the data made available on a time scale that is aligned with the processes the data support. As an illustrative example, data supporting a “digital transcript” of the student’s

K20+ journey across multiple institutions and levels might be updated daily and available to students and relevant institutions for advising, admissions, and other uses. The system would leverage and not replace existing student data systems like PowerSchool, Banner and Colleague. The system would serve to connect systems that would share existing data, and in some cases eliminate existing duplication of data entry required by currently siloed systems.

Project Scope

Proposals must describe strategies and activities to achieve each of the following project objectives:

- Prioritized interoperable data system use cases such as, but not limited to, a “unified digital transcript” or similar form of individualized electronic educational record available to students and educational institutions, with substantive exploration of the role of data interoperability among institutions and/or education systems and of the time scale of data needs for that use case, unified digital transcript, the process could include the reverse transfer of college course credit to K-12 institutions.
- Strategies for leveraging existing data system partnerships and promising practices to meet the challenge of multi-institutional interoperability in North Carolina.
- Legal considerations for sharing student data across institutional data systems that would conform with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other applicable federal and North Carolina law, specifically focusing on student support services.
- As applicable, address the potential role and/or opportunity to leverage existing state longitudinal data systems, or data systems in place that connect across education sectors such as the NC State Education Assistance Authority | College Foundation of North Carolina.
- Technology necessary and requirements to create an interconnected and interoperable system, including how the existing unique-identifier (UID) and other data tools or systems currently in place might be leveraged for matching of student records. Note that the intent to leverage existing data systems does not preclude the use of technologies that bridge those data systems, such as a shared data repository.
- Recommended approaches to interoperable data system governance and measures to address cybersecurity risks.
- Identify human capital and machine capabilities, such as artificial intelligence, needed to develop data and analytical capacity across institutions.
- Recommended approaches to addressing legal, cultural, practical, political, security, privacy, data quality, data governance, technical, and any other identified barriers to development and implementation of the recommended solution.
- Estimates or range of estimates of the cost of various options, maintenance requirements, improvements in security, and human capital needs to implement and maintain, etc.
- Identify vendors with products available that would address priority use cases identified through the study, along with resource requirements and cost estimates for initial

implementation and recurring maintenance. Include a list of contacts for potential vendors and entities with successful implementations in place, along with a high-level return on investment analysis for best use cases identified.

- Collaboration and coordination with myFutureNC staff and consultants serving as state and local subject matter experts, particularly with regard to stakeholder engagement, use cases and existing data systems insights.

Additional Scope Notes

- This report and the system it recommends is seen as complementary to the ongoing statewide longitudinal data system (LDS) work but distinct from that work in that the LDS is primarily focused on the research and policy applications of a retrospective data system rather than providing real-time or near-real-time interoperability for current operational and academic decision making.
- Anticipated parameters for any recommended solutions in this report include:
 - Integration with existing institutional data systems - e.g., Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Student Information System (SIS), etc. - and flexibility to accommodate future changes in those institutional data systems.
 - Approaches to technologies and processes that minimize or eliminate human “touches” in data management.
- Although not necessary for satisfaction of this Project Scope, a proposal may include the development and presentation of a simple prototype technology for demonstration purposes.

Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Demonstrated capacity and experience in developing, publishing, and presenting reports and accompanying analyses for state or federal policymakers.
- Demonstrated capacity and experience in engaging diverse stakeholder sets.
- Extensive expertise in state- and institution-level education data systems, including system infrastructure and protocols.
- Extensive understanding, knowledge and experience working in and with the education industry, including an understanding of the use of education and student data.
- Knowledge of federal and state law relating to student privacy.
- A wide network of education partners and understanding of data systems and connectivity through a national lens.
- Knowledge of modern data management and analytics technologies and processes, including interoperability and interconnectivity of data systems.
- Extensive knowledge of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) law regarding sharing of student data. Access to legal resources to ensure study recommendations are in compliance with FERPA and HIPAA regulations.
- Commitment to maintaining a work environment free of discrimination.

- Commitment to equity as a priority in identifying/implementing policy goals.

Proposal Requirements

Applicants must submit a **notice of intent to apply** no later than September 22, 2022.

The notice of intent can be a brief statement of intent in the body of an email. For the subject line, please use “Organization Name Intent – Interoperable and Interconnected Student Data Systems Study”.

Applicants should also submit any **questions** regarding the RFP with their notice of intent to apply, also no later than September 22, 2022.

Notices along with any questions should be submitted to Gina Zhang (gina@myfuturenc.org).

Narrative

The proposal narrative must describe project goals, strategies, and activities, and how success will be measured. In addition, the narrative should address the following factors:

- A detailed timeline from project kick-off, stakeholder engagement and gap analysis through national best practices scan, technology market evaluation, and architectural framework design to development of the final report document and associated presentations.
 - The selected vendor will be collaborating with North Carolina consulting partners who have deep expertise in state and local education policy and data system landscape, along with myFutureNC project team members. North Carolina consulting partners will be available to conduct stakeholder interviews and focus groups, provide input on use cases, gap analysis and North Carolina specific barriers and needs. The proposal narrative should address expectations for that collaboration and describe the vendor’s capability and experience in that regard.
- Communication needs and an outline of the applicant’s approach to communication with myFutureNC and other engaged parties.
- Project management capabilities and approach to this project.
- Any other proposed objectives.
- Names and bios of key personnel who will support this contract.

Applicants who have past experience with similar projects are encouraged to provide an overview of outcomes from any such projects, along with-sample reports and presentations.

Proposals will be scored according to responsiveness to the Project Scope outlined above; therefore, proposal narratives should address each of the elements in the Project Scope. Please be succinct.

The page limit for the proposal narrative - exclusive of the cover page, personnel bios, and sample reports - is five (5) pages.

Project Budget

The project budget must:

- Indicate the amount of funds requested to complete the project, in an amount not to exceed \$250,000 (Please note that myFutureNC has the discretion to decide the contract amount).
- Include at least the following budget categories (other categories are also permissible). Include enough detail to allow myFutureNC to determine that the work plan will be adequately funded:
 - Personnel
 - Travel
 - Materials

Other Project Requirements

In addition to the narrative and budget, proposals must include:

- A cover page that shows:
 - Name of the applicant organization
 - Applicant's EIN
 - Name and contact information for the person responsible for executing a resulting contract
 - Name and contact information, if different, for the person who will receive the contract-related communication

Technical Requirements

All electronic files submitted as part of this proposal should be labeled as follows:

- Narrative (including cover page / bios): File name - "<Organization Name> Narrative"
- Project Budget: File name - "<Organization Name> Project Budget"
- Past two consecutive years of financial statements or returns, audited preferred: File names "<Organization Name> Financial Information 20XX"

If additional files are included, they should be labeled accordingly. Files should be submitted as PDF documents.

All proposal materials should be submitted together as attachments to the same email. For the subject of the email, please use "<Organization Name> Proposal – Interoperable and Interconnected Student Data Systems Study". ***Emails should be submitted to Gina Zhang (gina@myfuturenc.org).***

Determination of Award

Proposals will be reviewed to verify that applicants are eligible and that proposals include the required elements. A team led by myFutureNC will make a determination as to the proposal that is most advantageous to myFutureNC as well as to the stated goals of the North Carolina General Assembly while also taking into account which proposal offers the best value with regards to project cost weighed against expected outcomes.

After an award determination has been made, both successful and unsuccessful applicants will receive notice.

Project Timeline

Notice of Intent to Apply due 9/22/22

- *Include any questions with the Notice of Intent on 9/22/22; mFNC to respond to applicant questions by COB on 9/26/22*

Complete RFP Response due 9/30/22

mFNC Review Period, including follow-up questions to vendors 9/26/22-10/5/22

Notice of Intent to Enter into Contract 10/5/22

Project execution

- *Project starts on the week of 10/10/22*
- *A detailed plan with a timeline due 10/21/22*
- *Stakeholder engagement and research efforts Oct.2022 - Jan.2023*

Final Study Findings/Recommendations Draft

- *Presentation to mFNC CEO- 1/16/23-1/27/23*
- *Presentation to mFNC Board of Directors - 2/6/23*

Final Report due 3/1/23

- *Final report presentation March 2023, specific date TBD*
- *Post-report follow-up presentations and Q&A*