



Questions and Answers

Related to the RFP for a Strategic Plan for Alaska’s Mixed Delivery System of Early Childhood Care and Education • 8/26/19

The following questions were asked by interested vendors.

What is the timeline for the needs assessment?

The needs assessment is underway and will continue while the strategic planning process moves forward with timeline dates slightly ahead of the strategic plan dates. We will post the anticipated needs assessment timeline on our website (see below). It is expected the strategic plan work will begin with stakeholder engagement, one of the main stakeholders being the EC Joint Task Force which will be having an all-day strategic planning meeting on Oct. 2 in Anchorage. The selected vendor will be working closely with the JTF leadership team throughout the process but especially in the beginning and will be expected to attend most weekly JTF leadership team meetings.

Anticipated Needs Assessment Tasks and Timeline as of 8-26-19

July-mid August, 2019	Meetings and project planning with AASB & JTF; outline and definitions finalization; data compilation and analysis; identification of stakeholders; data gap analysis; outreach to stakeholders.
August 26	Present update for AECCC for gap analysis feedback on identification of needs.
Mid-end of August	Analysis of ECE systems; outreach to JTF and other stakeholders on systems analysis.
Early-mid September	Meet with strategic plan contractor. Data synthesis and development of draft report; outreach to JTF and others on recommendations.
September 25	First draft of needs assessment report and executive summary submitted.
Late Sept.-early Oct.	Present needs assessment update to JTF Phase 1 planning meeting for the PDG strategic plan.
October 9	Present needs assessment update during Early Care and Learning Economic Impact Summit mid-day in Anchorage.
Early-mid October	Review process for draft with AASB and JTF leadership. Collaborate with strategic plan contractor.
October 15	Final draft of needs assessment report submitted
Mid-end of October	Continued review process for draft; collaboration with graphic designer for final report. Collaborate with strategic plan contractor.
October 30	Final version of needs assessment report with graphics submitted.
Early-mid November	Draft presentation materials developed; data dashboard developed. Collaborate with strategic plan contractor.
November 15	Draft presentation materials and dashboard submitted.
Mid-end of November	Review process with AASB and JTF leadership; refinement of deliverables; presentation of deliverables to JTF and other stakeholders
December 30	Final needs assessment and associated deliverables submitted.

We are aware that the needs assessment and data work are happening concurrently. Is there any information, maybe a project schedule, that could be used to coordinate a proposed schedule and activities so those projects inform the strategic plan?

See answer above.

You mentioned that the strategic plan should contain performance measures. Would you specify what is needed? For example, one performance measure for each goal/each activity? Will baseline or other data, and timelines need to be identified and included or is that a separate project?

At this point, at least one performance measure for each goal/activity is expected, but some of this will be determined collaboratively in the planning process which will involve the EC Joint Task Force with input from the needs assessment contractor, when appropriate, and others. Yes, baseline data and timelines need to be identified and included. This is not a separate project. Most baseline data will be coming from the needs assessment augmented by additional stakeholder and community input that will be gathered by the contractor during the strategic planning process.

In regards to the PDG RFP, can proprietary work samples be kept confidential?

Yes. Each member of the review team signs a confidentiality statement and is asked to destroy proposal materials when our review is complete.

In the webinar it was discussed that it might be possible to extend the final date of deliverable. Because of the essential nature of the needs assessment being utilized for the strategic plan, could the project timeline extend so the final needs assessment is available during the bulk of the strategic planning work?

Not really. The timeline for both the needs assessment and strategic plan was always quite compressed and we always expected work on the strategic plan would start, and as much as possible would be accomplished, before the needs assessment was completely finalized. Even if the state is granted an extension, it is likely to be quite short, but we can't count on that. So, right now we must proceed on the timeline we have. The timeline can be negotiated if an extension is granted.

Will the strategic plan vendor have the opportunity to work alongside the McDowell Group while they assess the needs of the stakeholders?

While who assesses the needs of stakeholders? Collaboration with the needs assessment contractor is absolutely expected and was noted in the RFP. You will see collaboration noted also in the anticipated needs assessment timeline above. However, it is also expected the strategic plan contractor will collaboratively plan for and engage with stakeholders, in a variety of forms, as part of the planning process which also will illuminate "needs" to be included in the strategic plan.

Has there been a timeline set for how long the strategic plan will last? For example, is it a 3-year plan?

Not yet. The EC Joint Task Force will be meeting Oct. 2 in a day-long strategic planning meeting when that length of time, as well as a sketch of the vision, goals, tasks, deadlines will be determined. The strategic plan contractor is expected to attend that meeting in Anchorage.

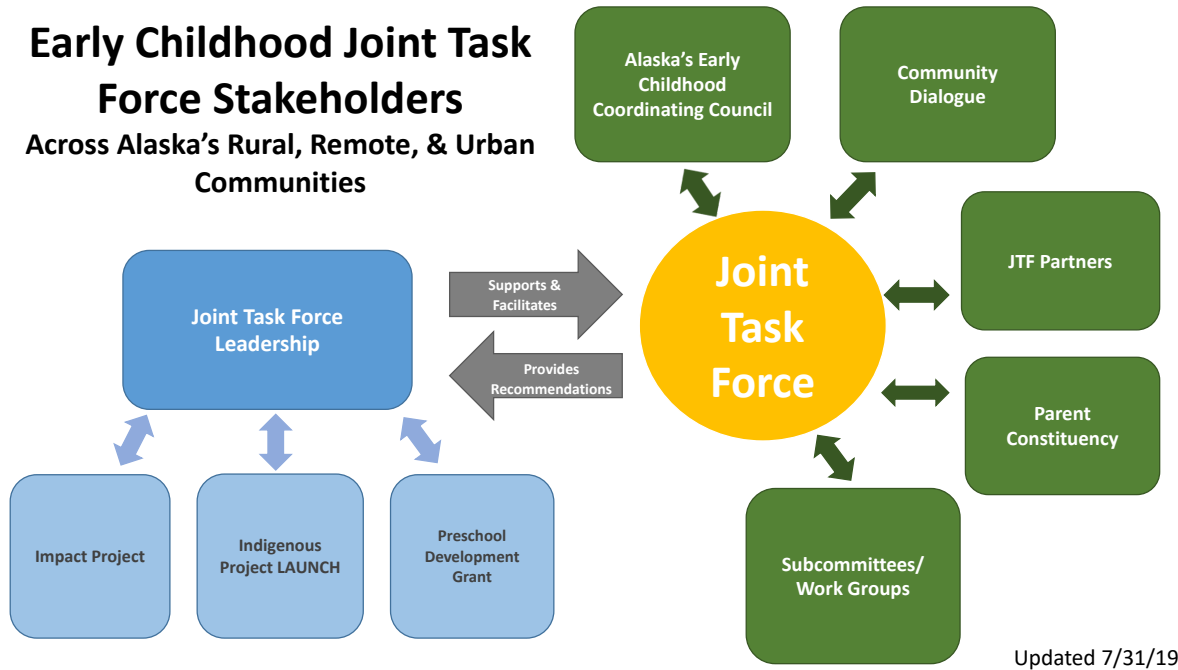
Is it imagined that the budget will include the cost of stakeholders or joint task force travel to a face-to-face meeting, such as a two-day meeting in Anchorage?

If you are referring to the next face-to-face meeting of the Joint Task Force on October 2, no. Travel for members of the Joint Task Force is taken care of and does not need to be included in a vendor's budget. However, it is expected that the strategic plan vendor's budget will include costs for the vendor's travel

to that meeting and to other stakeholder/community/parent engagement meetings the vendor will be attending and/or conducting. Some of those will need to take place in rural Alaska.

Is there an existing process in place to work the stakeholders? For example, does the task force have a current schedule of regular contact with stakeholders?

Yes and no. The leadership team of the Joint Task Force is in regular contact with the 40+ members of the full Joint Task Force, but there is not an existing process in place to work with stakeholders beyond that group. However, members of the full Joint Task Force are prepared to be conduits for reaching a wide variety of stakeholders. Please see below for a graphic illustrating the structure of stakeholders invested in the work of all three grants being coordinated by the Joint Task Force leadership team.



Can the vendor budget include a system for follow up on the strategic plan, such as online management of tasks?

A system such as you describe was not particularly anticipated, but yes. If a vendor would like to propose an online system for managing follow-up tasks for the strategic plan, or any other method for measuring progress, we would definitely welcome those ideas along with the budget required.

Who is the audience for the final strategic plan document?

Mainly the many private, non-profit and state providers, educators and program directors around the state who are longing to work together and unify behind a shared, comprehensive, actionable plan that will enable them to improve early childhood care and education across systems. They want to come to consensus on a strategy with action steps that will assign appropriate roles and responsibilities so they can better collaborate and coordinate their efforts. And, they want to use the plan to advocate for changes and necessary funding to improve the system with local, state and federal decision-makers. Secondly, the audience will be family support systems, community groups, tribal entities, schools and school districts who realize investments and improvements in early childhood care and education are essential to the success of the work for families around the state.

Should the vendor budget include the cost of publications to be dispersed?

Yes, but only for a limited printing, not mass distribution.