SPECIAL NOTE: This Request for Proposal (RFP) does not obligate Panola College (PC) or its Board of Trustees to award a contract or complete the proposed project and each reserves the right to cancel this RFP if it is considered to be in its best interest. Proposals must be clear and concise. Proposals that are difficult to follow or that do not conform to the RFP format or binding specifications may be rejected. Responding vendors must include the required information called for in this RFP. Panola College reserves the right to reject a proposal if required information is not provided or is not organized as directed. Panola College reserves the right to change the evaluation criteria or any other provision in this RFP by posting notice of the change(s) on the Panola College website www.panola.edu. For this RFP, posting on the captioned web site above constitutes written notification to each vendor. Vendors should check the site daily and are expected to review information on the site carefully before submitting a final proposal.

Nature of RFP
Panola College and its partners are requesting proposals to assist in designing and executing a rigorous evaluation of the proposed project, as required in SGA/DFA PY-13-10. This RFP is undertaken by Panola College pursuant to the authority contained in provisions of Texas Government Code, 2155, Texas Administrative Code 20.31.C and the Texas Education Code 44.031 and other applicable laws. Final contract with vendor is contingent upon grant award. All expenses incurred by respondents are solely the responsibility of the respondent.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL or the Department) announces the availability of approximately $450 million in grant funds to be awarded under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant program. This solicitation announces a fourth round of funding under the TAACCCT grant program. The TAACCCT grant program provides eligible institutions of higher education, as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002), with funds to expand and improve their ability to deliver education and career training programs that can be completed in two years or less, and are suited for workers who are eligible for training under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Workers Program (“TAA-eligible workers”) of chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974, 19 U.S.C. 2271-2323, as well as other adults. Eligible institutions may be located in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico or the U.S. territories; however, the competitiveness of institutions in the U.S. territories for this Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) may be impacted by their limited opportunity to serve TAA-eligible workers. The primary intent of the TAACCCT program is to meet the educational or career training needs of workers who have lost their jobs or are threatened with job loss as a result of foreign trade by funding the expansion and improvement of education and career training programs that are suited for these individuals; however, the Department expects that a wide range of individuals will benefit from the TAACCCT program once education and training programs are developed and implemented.
The DOL intends to fund four-year grants to eligible institutions to develop new undergraduate education and career training program strategies or to replicate existing designs, program development methods, and/or delivery strategies that have established evidence of successful implementation. As a result of this SGA, the Department will help ensure that our nation’s higher education institutions are able to help TAA eligible workers and other adults acquire the skills, degrees, and credentials needed for high-wage, high skill employment while also meeting the needs of employers for skilled workers.

In accordance with requirements of the TAACCCT program, the Department intends to award at least 0.5 percent of the total amount of available funds to eligible institutions in each State, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The eligible applicants for this SGA are institutions of higher education, as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002), and consortia of three or more of those eligible institutions. The Department intends to fund grants ranging from $2,260,000 to $2.5 million to single institution applicants, totaling up to $150 million across 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Under this SGA, DOL intends to make approximately 15 to 25 grant awards to consortia of eligible institutions, up to a total of approximately $300 million in grant awards to consortium applications. The Department will provide two tiers of funding for consortium grant awards, based on the number of institutions in the consortium.

- **Tier 1**: These are small consortia comprised of three to 10 consortium members. The awards for consortia of this size will be capped at $10 million.

- **Tier 2**: These are medium to large consortia comprised of 11 or more consortium members. The award for consortia of this size will be capped at $15 million.

- **A key feature of the Round 4 Solicitation** is the pre-conditions for all applicants to demonstrate employer engagement, use labor market information to focus training on local economic needs and improve programs, and evaluate their programs. In addition, Single-State Consortium applicants are required to develop employment results scorecards that track outcomes for students by program, and Multi-State Consortium applicants are required to develop employment results scorecard continuous improvement plans. In addition to asking all applicants to demonstrate employer engagement, the evaluation criteria includes scoring criteria for training models that include work-based training opportunities, such as apprenticeships and paid and for-credit internships, and include partnerships with community-based organizations and other nonprofits focused on providing services to workers. For more information and updates about the TAACCCT grant program, please visit: [www.doleta.gov/TAACCCT](http://www.doleta.gov/TAACCCT).

- Accordingly, Panola College shall select the vendor(s) whose proposal and oral presentation if requested, demonstrate in Panola College’s sole opinion, the clear
capability to best fulfill the purposes of this RFP in a cost effective manner. Panola College reserves the right to accept or reject proposals, in whole or in part, and to negotiate separately as necessary in order to serve the best interests of Panola College.

- This RFP shall not obligate Panola College to award a contract or complete the proposed project and it reserves the right to cancel this RFP if it is considered to be in its best interest. However, the intent of this RFP is to competitively preselect the vendor in the event the collaborative is successful in winning the grant award.

**General Selection Criteria**

General criteria upon which proposals will be evaluated include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Design and execute a rigorous evaluation for the consortium project
2. Oversee design of:
   - the evaluation plan,
   - the implementation of the evaluation impact/outcomes analysis,
   - the implementation analysis,
   - the data collection, and
   - the analysis of data - Include 5 page Summary and Evaluation Budget Narrative (no page limit)
3. Reporting:
   - Timeline for Providing Reports
   - Interim Evaluation Report
   - Final Evaluation Report

Proposal Summary: (Not to exceed 5 Pages per SGA)
4. Participant impact/outcome assessment:
   - Description of study methodology; must be rigorous*
     - Random assignment method
     - Comparison group/non-experimental method
   - Data collection methods - Data sources
     - How was curriculum selected/used/created
     - How programs and program design were improved/expanded; what are delivery methods; what was program administrative structure; what support services were used *Please refer to SGA for specificity.
     - Was an applicant assessment completed; what were the assessment tools and process; how were the results used; was career guidance provided and by what method
     - What contribution did each of the partners make in program design, curriculum development, recruitment, training, placement, program
management, leveraging of resources, commitment to program, sustainability; what factors contributed to partners involvement; which factors were most critical/less impact
  o Sample size

5. Program implementation assessment:
   • Analyze steps taken to create and operate training program
   • Assess the operational strengths/weaknesses of project after implementation
   • Suggest implementation improvements in timely fashion so as not to interfere with impact/outcomes analysis

Note: Randomized control trials recommended; non-experimental design allowed if meet evidence standards (Quasi-experimental designs) See Appendix O (SGA page 113)

6. Include vendor ability to transmit participant Personally Identifiable data (SS#, DOB, Name) between consortia partners and evaluator

Budget Narrative:

   • Include Evaluation budget amount on SF424 form http://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/SF-424A.pdf using section B only.
   • Include cost for Evaluator to attend at least one conference in Washington D.C. during grant period of performance
   • Cost for Evaluation must not exceed 5% of the total proposed budget for the grant

Proposal Contents
Proposals should demonstrate the vendor’s understanding of the nature and scope of the project and should include the following:
  1. Proposal Summary (Not to exceed 5 pages).
  2. Evaluation Budget Narrative.
  3. Description of reporting process.
  4. Current resumes of the people who will work on the project.
  5. Responsibilities of each person assigned to the project.
  6. No change in personnel will be permitted without the approval of the institutional project director/manager. Indicate whether team members are employees or contracted under some other arrangement.
     In addition to completing the SF-424A as stated, please provide a detailed cost structure based on work plan and time line including all cost categories, such as salaries, fringe, indirect, supplies, contractual, travel, etc. The budget should commence on 10/01/2014 and conclude 9/30/2018.
  7. Responder’s name and contact information.
  8. Please summarize years of relevant experience with similar projects.
9. Submit three (3) professional references (include contact names, address, email address and phone numbers).
10. Please delineate how services and expenses will be billed.

Submit 5 (five) copies of proposal. Proposals are to be sealed in mailing envelopes or packages with responding vendor’s name and address clearly written on the outside. Each copy of the proposal must be signed in blue or black ink by an authorized member of the company. Proof of authority of the person signing shall be furnished upon request.

Selection Process
The selection process includes Panola College's Vice President of Instruction, Vice President of Fiscal Services, Dean of Professional & Technical Programs, Director of Human Resources, Director of Grants, Director of Special Projects, Consortium partners, yet to be determined. This group will evaluate the proposals and make the final decision. Panola College reserves the right to add or remove membership to the selection committee based upon availability to meet proposed deadlines.

Selection and Implementation Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, June 22, 2014</td>
<td>Publish RFP notice in local newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, June 29, 2014</td>
<td>Publish RFP notice in local newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, July 11, 2014, 10:00 a.m. CT</td>
<td>Deadline for RFP proposal submissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday-Friday, July 14-18, 2014</td>
<td>Review RFP submitted proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete selection process, notify respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday-Friday, July 28-August 8, 2014</td>
<td>Selected firm will participate in proposal development and submission process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contract Term
Contingent upon receiving TAACCCT round 4 award, Panola College desires to enter into a contract with the successful vendor(s) effective upon notification of award of Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant program. The length of such contract(s) shall be 48 months from October 1, 2014. If Panola College and the vendor are unable to negotiate and sign a contract by January, 2015, then Panola College reserves the right to seek an alternative vendor(s).
Parties to the Contract
Parties to this contract shall be Panola College and the successful vendor(s).

Contract Termination
Panola College, may cancel the contract(s) upon 30 days written notice, with or without cause. The vendor(s) may cancel the contract(s) upon 181 days written notice, with or without cause.

Applicable Law
A contract entered into as a result of this RFP shall be governed and interpreted under the laws of the State of Texas.

Contract Assignment
A contract or any part hereof entered into as a result of this RFP shall not be assigned, sublet, or transferred directly or indirectly without prior written consent of the president of Panola College.

Entire Agreement
A written contract and any modifications or addenda thereto, executed in writing by both parties constitutes the entire agreement of the parties to the contract. All previous communications between the parties, whether oral or written, with reference to the subject matter of this contract are void and superseded. The resulting contract may be amended at a future date in writing by mutual agreement of the parties.

Deviations and Exceptions
Deviations from and exceptions to terms, conditions, specifications or the manner of this RFP shall be described fully on the vendor’s letterhead stationery, signed and attached to the proposal submittal page(s) where relevant. In the absence of such statement the vendor shall be deemed to have accepted all such terms, conditions, specifications and the manner of the RFP. A vendor’s failure to raise an issue related to the terms, conditions, specifications or manner of this RFP prior to the proposal submission deadline in the manner described shall constitute a full and final waiver of that vendor’s right to raise the issue later in any action or proceeding relating to this RFP.

Duration of Offer
All proposal responses must indicate they are valid for a minimum of one hundred eighty (180) calendar days from the date of the proposal opening unless extended by mutual written agreement between Panola College and the vendor.

Authorized Signature
The proposal must be completed and signed in the firm's name or corporate name of the vendor, and must be fully and properly executed and signed in blue or black ink by an authorized representative of the vendor. Proof of authority of the person signing must accompany the response.
Proposal Rejection and Waiver of Informalities
This RFP does not obligate Panola College or its Board of Trustees to award a contract or complete the proposed project and each reserves the right to cancel this RFP if it is considered to be in its best interest. Panola College also reserves the right to waive minor informalities and, not withstanding anything to the contrary, reserves the right to:

- reject any and all proposals received in response to this RFP;
- select a proposal for contract negotiation other than the one with the lowest cost;
- negotiate any aspect of the proposal with any vendor;
- terminate negotiations and select the next most responsive vendor for contract negotiations;
- terminate negotiations and prepare and release a new RFP;
- terminate negotiations and take such action as deemed appropriate.

Section II. Parties to the RFP
Panola College

Section III. Vendor Requirements
The vendor will provide written response and documentation to support the following RFP requirements:

- Experience in evaluation of large-scale, multi-institution project(s) with multiple stakeholders, preferably with project(s) concerning workforce training initiatives and/or project(s) that are federally funded.
- Experience and demonstrated skills in research design, data management, and process and outcome measure analyses, both quantitative and qualitative.
- Experience developing easily administered evaluation tools.
- Evidence of timely submission of all federal and/or consortium reports in past projects.
- Evidence of established relationships with regional, state and/or federal agencies to obtain data in a timely manner.
- Ability to execute regular and timely visits to Grant Consortium partner and stakeholder sites, as needed to perform the evaluation.
- List of three references. References must include Name, Organization, Address, Telephone Number and E-mail address.
Information Contact
Panola College’s agent for purposes of responding to inquiries about the RFP is:

Name: Dr. Joe Shannon
Title: Vice President of Instruction
Address: 1109 West Panola, Carthage, Texas 75633
Telephone: 903-693-2033
Fax: 903-693-1167
E-mail address: jshannon@panola.edu

Other persons are not authorized to discuss RFP requirements before the proposal submission deadline. Panola College shall not be bound by and responders may not rely on information regarding RFP requirements obtained from non-authorized persons. Questions must include the name of the questioner and his/her telephone number, fax number and/or e-mail address. Anonymous inquiries will not be answered.

Section IV. Response Evaluation
The following criteria and their identified weight will be used by the Grant Consortium to evaluate the responses:

- Expressed understanding of proposal objectives and expectations (30.0%);
- Work plan quality, including completeness, thoroughness, and detail of response as reflected by the proposal’s discussion and coverage of all required elements (30.0%);
- Cost effectiveness (20.0%);
- Qualifications, references, and timely response availability of the vendor and its personnel (personnel who are committed to work on the contract will be given greater weight than that of the company) (20.0%).

In some instances, an interview will also be part of the evaluation process. Panola College does not agree to reach a decision by any certain date although it is hoped the evaluation and selection will be completed by the date identified in the Selection and Implementation Timeline above.

A proposal may be rejected if it is determined that a vendor’s ability to work with the existing infrastructure will be too limited or difficult to manage. In some instances, an interview will also be part of the evaluation process.

Section V. Additional RFP Response and General Contract Requirements
Problem Resolution Process
A formal problem resolution process will be established in the contract to address issues raised by either Panola College or the vendor.

Affidavit of Non-Collusion
All responding vendors are required to complete Exhibit A, the Affidavit of Non-Collusion, and submit it with the response.
Insurance Requirements
A. The selected vendor will be required to submit an ACCORD Certificate of Insurance to Panola College’s authorized representative prior to execution of the contract. Each policy must contain a thirty (30) day notice of cancellation, non-renewal or material change to all named and additional insured. The insurance policies will be issued by a company or companies having an “A.M. Best Company” financial strength rating of A-(Excellent) or better prior to execution of the contract.

State Audit
The books, records, documents and accounting practices and procedures of the vendor relevant to the contract(s) must be available for audit purposes to Panola College and the Legislative Auditor’s Office for six (6) years after the termination/expiration of the contract.

Conflict of Interest
The vendor must provide a list of all entities with which it has relationships that create, or appear to create, a conflict of interest with the work that it is contemplated in this Request for Proposal. The list should indicate the names of the entity, the relationship, and a discussion of the conflict.

Organizational Conflicts of Interest
The responder warrants that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, and except as otherwise disclosed, there are no relevant facts or circumstances that could give rise to organizational conflicts of interest. An organizational conflict of interest exists when, because of existing or planned activities or because of relationships with other persons, a vendor is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice, or the vendor’s objectivity in performing the contract work is or might be otherwise impaired, or the vendor has an unfair competitive advantage. The responder agrees that, if after award, an organizational conflict of interest is discovered, an immediate and full disclosure in writing must be made to the Panola College Vice President of Fiscal Services that must include a description of the action which the vendor has taken or proposes to take to avoid or mitigate such conflicts. If an organizational conflict of interest is determined to exist, Panola College may, at its discretion, cancel the contract. In the event the responder was aware of an organizational conflict of interest prior to the award of the contract and did not disclose the conflict to the contracting officer, the school may terminate the contract for default. The provisions of this clause must be included in all subcontracts for work to be performed similar to the service provided by the prime contractor, and the terms “contract,” “contractor,” and “contracting officer” modified appropriately to preserve Panola College’s rights.
Section VI. RFP Responses
Submission
Sealed proposals must be received at the following address not later than 10:00 a.m. CT on Friday, July 11, 2014:

Institution: Panola College
Name: Dr. Joe Shannon
Title: Vice President of Instruction
Address: 1109 West Panola, Carthage, Texas 75633
Telephone: 903-693-2033
Fax: 903-693-1167
E-mail address: jshannon@panola.edu

The responder shall submit five (5) copies of its RFP response and a flash drive/USB with the RFP response in Microsoft Word format. Proposals are to be sealed in mailing envelopes or packages with the responder’s name and address clearly written on the outside. One copy of the proposal must be unbound and signed in blue or black ink by an authorized representative of the vendor. Proof of authority of the person signing must accompany the response.

The responder shall submit five (5) copies of its RFP response and a flash drive/USB with the RFP response in Microsoft Word format. Proposals are to be sealed in mailing envelopes or packages with the responder’s name and address clearly written on the outside. One copy of the proposal must be unbound and signed in blue or black ink by an authorized representative of the vendor. Proof of authority of the person signing must accompany the response.

Proposals received after this date and time will be returned to the responder unopened.

Fax and e-mail responses will not be considered.

Proposals made in pencil will be rejected. Alterations in cost figures used to determine the lowest priced proposal will be rejected unless initialed in ink by the person responsible for or authorized to make decisions as to price quoted. The use of “white out” is considered an alteration.
Exhibit A. Affidavit of Non-Collusion

AFFIDAVIT OF NON-COLLUSION

I swear (or affirm) under the penalty of perjury:

1. That I am the Responder (if the Responder is an individual), a partner in the company (if the Responder is a partnership), or an officer or employee of the responding corporation having authority to sign on its behalf (if the Responder is a corporation);

2. That the attached proposal submitted in response to the Request for Proposal has been arrived at by the Responder independently and has been submitted without collusion with and without any agreement, understanding or planned common course of action with, any other Responder of materials, supplies, equipment or services described in the Request for Proposal, designed to limit fair and open competition;

3. That the contents of the proposal have not been communicated by the Responder or its employees or agents to any person not an employee or agent of the Responder and will not be communicated to any such persons prior to the official opening of the proposals; and

4. That I am fully informed regarding the accuracy of the statements made in this affidavit.

By signing this statement the vendor certifies that the information provided is accurate.

Responder’s Firm Name: __________________________________________

Authorized Signature: _____________________________________________

Date: __________________

Subscribed and sworn to me this ________ day of ___________

Notary Public: _____________________________________________

My commission expires: ______ ____