Questions and Answers

For the Request for Proposals (RFP)

for Evaluation and Technical Assistance Services

All questions must be submitted by 5:00 pm CST on November 14, 2022. All questions and answers will be posted by 7:00 p.m. CST on November 16, 2022.

Updated November 16, 2022, 4:15pm CST

1. **The RFP indicates that Persevere would like to pursue an evidence based practice register, so we'd like to understand how well defined the direct service program is. Is there currently a standardized program with set activities and duration that will be replicated across the state?**

Yes. The Persevere program includes 12 months of technology instruction, career readiness instruction, wraparound case management, and job placement, followed by 12 months of follow-up support, which includes case management and career mentoring and support. However, there is some variation based on the location of implementation (see below).

2. **Will the program implementation vary across the locations? If so, in what ways?**

There is variation between the program delivered through correctional institutions and that delivered in the community. Direct instruction is delivered six hours per day, five days per week, in most correctional institutions. In the community, direct instruction is provided 2-3 hours per day with an expectation of 2-3 hours of independent study per day. Implementation in the first participating county jail will include a combination of pre- and post-release instruction. Instruction in MLTC also includes a blend of institutional and community-based instruction.

There are no other planned location-based variations.

3. **What program documentation has already been developed, such as logic model, staffing structure, curriculum, client workflow?**

There is some form of documentation for all of these, but they have not yet been updated for implementation. We are in the process of completing the implementation plan which should be complete by December 31, 2022. Further revision may be necessary to provide detail required by the evaluation plan that is not required by the EDA.

4. **What evidence based registries or clearing houses would you prefer to submit to? We will research their requirements and scope the evaluation to meet them.**

We have not made any decisions in this area. However, the National Institute of Justice's CrimeSolutions is one option.

5. **In Persevere's grant narrative submitted to the funder, Trevecca is named as the program evaluator. Will Trevecca be involved? What is the role of the evaluation team from Trevecca and the evaluation team awarded through this RFP?**

At the direction of the EDA, all of the service providers named in the grant application will be replaced by providers selected through an RFP process in compliance with federal procurement guidelines and Persevere's procurement policy.

It is unknown if Trevecca will be submitting a response to this RFP for evaluation services. Should Trevecca submit a proposal, it will be evaluated using the same standards used to evaluate all other proposals and will receive no preference in the process.

If Trevecca does not submit a proposal or if it is not selected, involvement will be limited to its position as a member of the Tech Alliance partnership.

6. **Is building and deploying a client database part of the scope intended for technical assistance?**

No. However, some technical assistance will be required to ensure that the system includes data necessary for the evaluation. Technical assistance related to appropriate data collection would also be appreciated.

7. **Or is there already a client database in place? If so, can you share the software used?**

We currently use a variety of data tools, including Google Sheets and Vant4gePoint. We are currently investigating several case management and data management systems. Our tentative plan includes selection/contract by December 21, 2022 and implementation by March 1, 2023.

8. **Will the technical assistance provider be responsible for modifying the client database to incorporate evaluation materials, or are there other database contracts to do that work? If so, will the evaluation team be able to work with the database contractors?**

We currently expect that the database contractor or Persevere staff will be responsible for this, but some technical assistance may be required. It is possible that the evaluation provider will be able to work directly with the contractor, but that cannot be definitively known at this time as a contractor has not yet been selected.

9. **In Persevere's grant narrative submitted to the funder, Vantage is named as the technical assistance provider and I believe would create the database. Will Vantage be involved? What is the role of Vantage and the technical assistance team awarded through this RFP?**

Due to a conflict of interest, Vant4ge will not be included as a contractor for any goods or services, including data management system. However, Vant4ge remains a key employer partner and member of the Tech Alliance Leadership Team. Should Vant4ge provide any services, they would be provided as an in-kind donation.

10. **In addition to any proprietary data the evaluation team deems critically important to collect and analyze, are there any key metrics or data that Persevere would like collected as part of the normal data collection process?**

At a minimum, we will be collecting data to document progress toward the achievement of project objectives (see Attachment A of the RFP) and data needed to complete EDA reporting requirements (see the EDA Workforce Development Reporting Instrument, http://www.m.omb.report/icr/202206-0610-001/doc/123680401). Many of the specifics have not yet been determined. We plan to collaborate with the evaluator on this. In addition, the EDA is planning on revealing details of data requirements for the national evaluation in December.

11. **We are considering adding the following pieces of training to include in our proposal. Are you open to this?**
Ethics Training (8 1-hour virtual workshops)
RCR Training/Research Misconduct training

We are open to such training; however, please limit all training to that which is essential for the successful implementation of the evaluation. Keep in mind that all Tech Alliance staff will be undergoing a significant amount of training on a variety of topics, particularly in the first year, so time for additional training is limited.

You might also want to differentiate the dosage (if not the content) based on data use and access and level of responsibility. For example, those with limited access to and use of data might receive less training, while those with extensive responsibility for gathering sensitive data, those accessing and processing it, and lead staff might receive more training.

12. **How many locations/sites across TN will be included within the project? Where will these locations/sites be?**

Our plan includes eight formal centers in the community and seven correctional facilities. Some of the centers in the community will provide a full range of services and some will serve as satellite centers providing a limited range of services. These numbers may change depending on enrollment and staffing.

The community center locations are being finalized; however, we have definite plans for centers in Erin, Nashville, Memphis, Murfreesboro, Knoxville, and Tazewell. The other locations are in negotiation. As for the correctional facilities, three are in West TN, two are in Middle TN, and two are in East TN.

13. Will certain locations/cities/sites require more emphasis than others?

We expect the greatest number of participants to be based in Memphis, Nashville, and Murfreesboro. However, many participants in the rural areas will access services at the others, and data collection requirements are the same for all participants, regardless of participant location. As for the correctional facilities, the program at the Claiborne County Jail (Tazewell) will be new and it will be the first county jail Persevere has served. This will likely require more focus during the first 6 months as data systems and processes are negotiated and implemented.

14. Is working with an IRB a requirement for this project evaluation?

This depends on the nature of the proposed evaluation. However, keep in mind that a significant portion or Tech Alliance participants will be members of vulnerable populations (e.g., incarcerated individuals, individuals with substance abuse and mental health disorders). It is highly likely that an IRB would be necessary to ensure the appropriate protection of these vulnerable populations. The proposal must explain how the evaluator will ensure the protection of all participants and justify its decisions related to an IRB.

Persevere has no preference for university IRBs over private IRBs, but any IRB-related costs should be included in the proposed budget. It is not necessary to identify a specific IRB in the proposal, but the selection process should be included in the timeline.

15. What are the specific EDA reporting requirements for the project?

Please refer to the response to question 10, above.

16. What does Persevere define as "generally accepted standards in evaluation?"

Please refer to the program evaluation standards and practices identified in OMB Memorandum M-20-12. https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/M-20-12.pdf

17. What specific requirements does Persevere expect to comply with the need "to be designated as an effective program in evidence-based registries and clearinghouses?"

It depends on the requirements of the registry. We have not made any decisions in this area and we are open to suggestions. Please include your plans for an evaluation that will determine if the Tech Alliance program is an evidence-based program and/or includes evidence-based

practices. Please refer to the National Institute of Justice CrimeSolutions.gov site for more information on evidence-based programs and practices: https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/crimesolutions-evidence-based-guide-justice-agencies-search-practices-and-programs

18. Does the evaluation design need to be "peer reviewed" prior to RFP submission or rather be sufficiently robust enough that it could be viewed favorably upon peer review (i.e., but has not been peer reviewed prior to submission of the RFP)?

No, the design does not need to be "peer reviewed" when it is submitted. The selected evaluator will have the opportunity to consult with The Good Jobs Challenge technical assistance provider, Jobs for the Future (JFF), in the development of the final evaluation plan, and Persevere will solicit JFF's input on the quality of the design and plan.