



May 23, 2001

Dr. Lennox L. McLendon
Executive Director
National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium, Inc.
444 N. Capitol Street, Suite 422
Washington D.C. 20001

Dear Dr. McLendon:

The Kentucky Virtual University is issuing this letter to determine the level of interest of yourself, or your organization, in an innovative educational process that is being initiated by the Kentucky Virtual University (KYVU), in partnership with the Kentucky Department for Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL). The project is to create an online reading course for adults in the beginning stages of reading. The KYVU will be seeking a Subject Matter Expert (SME) and a firm to serve as Instructional Designer with high-tech software technology. Both selections will be made by a Request for Proposal process.

In Kentucky, we are focused on the particular needs for any adult literacy program to expand its services quickly and efficiently. In 1995 a study of literacy rates in Kentucky found that more than 40% of Kentucky's working-age population -- nearly one million people -- could not read beyond an eighth-grade level, and that only about 5% of that population was participating in adult education programs. Last year, Jane Jensen headed a team of researchers at the University of Kentucky's College of Education, that prepared a report for the DAEL entitled "Reasonable Choices: Understanding why Under-Educated Individuals Choose Not to Participate in Adult Education." This report pointed out myriad reasons why Kentucky's literacy rates are the lowest in the nation. The Governor's Task Force on Adult Education then crafted a report (available online at <www.lrc.state.ky.us/ijcomm/educate/publications.htm>) that spurred the legislature to fund a far-seeing statewide Adult Education Initiative.

The Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD), located in Lexington, Ky., is a multi-institutional consortium of university faculty, adult education providers, and administrators. This Center has been charged by the Kentucky legislature to help in this endeavor. The candidates who answer this call will be reviewed and selected by the CCLD in conjunction with the KYVU and the DAEL.

The task is to create an online reading course for adults in the beginning stages of reading. In Kentucky, the typical student already enrolled in adult education programs is an employed white female between the ages of 25-44, residing in a rural area, and who functions at an adult high school level. However, our highest needs at this time are in those population groups who choose not to enroll in adult education programs -- or enroll and quickly drop out. Most of these individuals are male and/or of color. By putting a low literacy module online via the Kentucky Virtual University (access to KYVU.org is available to our citizens in all public centers with Internet connection, such as libraries and National Guard armories), Kentucky's employers, social agencies, and educators can begin to touch those most elusive portions of our citizenry and bring them in to a more comprehensive literacy program. Men who have hidden their inability to read will be able to, in a private and engaging way, take the first steps in their education.

The Subject Matter Expert selected for this project will not have to be technologically literate since the KYVU will, at the same time, search for a qualified educational software developer. However, a familiarity with technologies in reading education, adult education, or special education is highly desirable.

If you, or your organization, are interested in receiving the Request for Proposal for either phase of the project, Subject Matter Expert or Instructional Designer, contact:

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It is anticipated that the RFP's will be issued within 30 days of this letter.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Susman
CEO

C: Cheryl King, Commissioner, DAEL
Nawanna Privett, Director, CCLD
Cindy Read, Director, KIFL
Ted Hasselbring, Endowed Chair, UK