

Request For Proposal

**Kentucky Department for
Adult Education and Literacy**

**Subject Matter Expert for
Development of Online Reading
Course
for Adults
at the Lowest Level of Reading Skills**

**Prepared by the
Kentucky Virtual University**

October 11, 2001

Section 1 Project Scope

- 1.1 The Council on Postsecondary Education, in partnership with the Kentucky Department for Adult Education (DAEL), is initiating an innovative educational process. The project is to create an online reading course for adult non-readers. The Kentucky Virtual University (KYVU) is seeking a Subject Matter Expert (SME) and a firm to serve as Instructional Designer with high-tech software technology. This Request for Proposals is issued to locate and contract with the Subject Matter Expert. The contractor will be required to develop course objectives and basic design, including assessment criteria to highlight future research potential. By putting a low literacy module online via the Kentucky Virtual University, 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. Individuals who have hidden their inability to read will be able to, in a private and engaging way, take the first steps in their education. Access to KYVU.org is available to our citizens in all public centers with Internet connection, such as libraries and National Guard armories.

Section 2 Background

- 2.1 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. 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, 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.
- 2.2 The University of Kentucky's College of Education prepared a report for the Kentucky Department for Adult Education and Literacy (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., has been charged by the Kentucky legislature to help in this endeavor.

2.3 *The Collaborative Center for Literacy Development: Early Childhood through Adulthood (CCLD)*

2.3.1 The CCLD (www.kentuckyliteracy.org) is a multi-institutional consortium of university faculty, adult education providers, and administrators created by the Kentucky legislature in 1998. The CCLD is a partnership among each of the eight state universities and the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), in cooperation with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), the Department of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL), and others interested in literacy development.

2.4 *The Council on Postsecondary Education, Kentucky Virtual University (KYVU)*

2.4.1 The Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) is the coordinating agency for higher education in Kentucky. The CPE is responsible for general planning and oversight of a system that includes eight universities and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. The Kentucky Virtual University (KYVU) is a unit within the CPE, and the current Chief Executive Officer of the KYVU is also the CPE Vice-President for Economic Initiatives.

2.4.2 The KYVU (www.kyvuu.org) was formed by the Kentucky legislature in 1997 to provide a one-stop service through the Internet for learners seeking convenient, accessible, and affordable higher education credit curriculum, professional development, and training anywhere, anytime. It is a complex infrastructure that includes large capacity databases for course and records management, customized websites, a call center, 24/7 technical help for all users, virtual library resources (KY Virtual Library is at www.kyvl.org), online bookstore, interactive catalogues, search engines, interactive courseware, self-tutorials and self-assessments, one-on-one 24/7 tutorial services, and the KYVU WritePlace which offers the services of writing consultants.

2.4 *The Kentucky Department for Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL)*

2.4.1 The DAEL (<http://adulthood.state.ky.us>) was formed in 1993 out of the merger of the KY Commission on Literacy and the Office of Adult Education and placed within the Cabinet for Workforce Development, a state agency. Under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and the Adult Education Initiative Act of 2000, the department is committed to ensure equitable and direct access to the basic educational opportunities that many of Kentucky's adults need. This is part of a larger vision, the Kentucky Unified Plan, put in place under Governor Paul Patton's administration to achieve the goal of increasing the economic opportunity and raising the standard of living in Kentucky above the national average in 20 years.

2.5 The KYVU, in partnership with the DAEL, is working with the CCLD in order to create the online reading course for adult non-readers. This web-based course would address the needs of an adult who has been determined eligible for adult basic education (ABE) and whose reading scores are at the very lowest levels.

The ABE instructor would refer this product to the adult who otherwise would need to wait for the program to bring in a reading specialist. By offering a web-based, self-paced alternative, the ABE instructor could more quickly begin the ABE Learner Plan – and more likely retain this most needy adult learner in a program.

- 2.6 Since the intricacies of teaching literacy involves regular and personalized interaction between instructor and student, this proposed course would serve as a self-empowering tool for the least able adult who wants to pursue higher levels of literacy – any time, any place. It should rely on audio-visual stimuli and, being built on sound principles of reading pedagogy, could serve as a form of individual assessment of learning. Utilizing the high-touch, high-tech services of the Kentucky Virtual University, the learner can take advantage of the synchronous audio support systems (e.g., telephone or webTalk) that would be built around the instructional components. Incorporation of assistive technologies (such as voice-recognition software) can assure multiple avenues of communication for the adult learner at a distance and enable both a facilitator/learner interaction as well as learner-to-learner group experiences. Thus, the course could be offered in a regular ABE program as a supplement to customized instruction or it could be incorporated into a related adult-centered activity sponsored and facilitated by a non-DAEL provider such as a church or civic organization.
- 2.7 The success of the online reading course will rely on its high quality of design as well as implementation. With the support and guidance of the CCLD and the University of Kentucky's Endowed Chair in Special Education Technology, the development of the course could be assured of the highest standards in literacy pedagogy and research. In addition, with the collaboration of the Kentucky Institute for Family Literacy (KIFL), this course could be implemented in various literacy venues.

Section 3 Requirements

- 3.1 The Kentucky Virtual University, requires the services of a nationally renowned subject matter expert in Adult Literacy research to develop course objectives and basic design of the course.
- 3.2 The contractor will be required to perform the following services:
- Develop reading course objectives and basic instructional design to allow for research-based implementation and assessment.
 - Create a script of the content of the reading course to match the course objectives and overall goal of the project.
 - Serve as consultant to the technology vendor as the content is placed into a high-tech, online environment.
 - Work with the Assistant Director of the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development to identify, interact with, and analyze the results from the alpha and beta usability testing groups.

- Finalize the pedagogical standards for the product and create an instructor guide that outlines the particular strategies and implementation methods on which future research could hinge.

Section 4 Qualifications of the Offeror and Proposal Requirements

4.1 The party selected to engage in this project should be experienced in adult literacy research. As evidence of the offeror's capabilities, all parties responding to the Request for Proposals shall provide the information listed below:

1. Credentials – Provide information concerning the educational background, research experience in adult literacy, projects conducted, research papers published, and other information that would be helpful in establishing the offeror's experience and credentials to provide the expert advice and oversight required in this project.
2. References - Provide references on any projects of a similar nature. The list shall include names, addresses, telephone and FAX numbers and a short paragraph indicating the nature of the work.
3. Proposal Narrative – Respondents shall specifically address their ability to perform, and method for completing, the work specified herein. Provide a plan of approach to the project and a detailed time frame for completion of the project that coincides with the schedule contained herein.
4. Conflict of Interest – Identify any potential conflicts of interest to include, but not be limited to, professional or personal relationships with individuals or groups that are involved with or stand to gain from the work of the consultant.

Section 5 Cost

5.1 Provide an estimate of the fee and expenses that would be charged for participating in this project as the subject matter expert. The fee may be stated as a price per hour, with the estimated number of hours required, or as a lump sum amount. Estimate the types and costs of expenses that will be incurred in addition to the stated fee.

Section 6 Timetable

6.1 The KYVU would like for the project to begin immediately after of approval of the contract and be concluded after ninety (90) calendar days have been logged as on-task activities. Indicate in the proposal the date at which you will be able to begin work.

Section 7: Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria that have been assigned weighted values:

1. Credentials	40%
2. References	5%
3. Proposal Narrative	15%
4. Cost	40%

Section 8: Selection of Contractor

A committee of KYVU and CCLD staff will select the firm with which to enter into a standard Commonwealth of Kentucky Personal Service Contract.

Section 9: General Information

The Council on Postsecondary Education reserves the right to cancel this Request for Proposals at any time for any reason.

Section 10: Response

All questions regarding the solicitation should be in writing, via e-mail, and directed to:

Milton Skeen
Kentucky Virtual University
1024 Capital Center Drive
Suite 320
Frankfort Ky. 40601
Milton.Skeen@kyvu.org
Phone: 502-573-1555

Prospective firms will submit three (3) copies of their proposal. The proposals shall be delivered to the above address no later than 4:30 P.M. on November 9, 2001.