

New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision
RFI 2023-03 – Computer Coding Instructional Program
Questions and Answers Posted 3/3/2023
All responses are incorporated into RFI 2023-03.

	Type of Question	Question	Answer
1	Correctional Institution	Where are the NYS DOCCS facilities that would serve as hosts to this initiative located?	To be determined.
2	Correctional Institution	What security levels are the facilities being considered?	Medium and Maximum facilities are being considered.
3	Correctional Institution	Are the facilities mens, womens, or both? If they are both, what is the distribution of womens vs mens facilities?	Both men's and women's facilities are being considered. There are currently 41 men's and 3 women's facilities.
4	Correctional Institution	Will the selected organization have influence in selecting the institutions where the programs are located, or are these selected by NYSDOCCS?	NYSDOCCS will select facilities.
5	Correctional Institution	If the organization will have influence in selecting, will the selection be limited to certain facilities, and if so, which facilities?	See response to question #4 above.
6	Participant	What approval policies/protocols from DOCSS will influence/determine the selection of participants?	Criminal history and disciplinary/custodial adjustment.
7	Participant	Will potential participants be restricted to the institutions in which the programming is taking place or will transfers from other institutions be considered?	Participants will be restricted to facility with the programming.
8	Participant	Once accepted into these course(s), can participants be put on "educational hold", to prevent them being transferred to other facilities where this course(s) is not offered?	Transfer hold while enrolled in program may be possible.
9	Post-release	Once released, will participants be provided with supportive housing?	Yes.
10	Post-release	Are there partnerships in place for supportive housing?	Yes.
11	Employment Outcomes	Will funding be provided for stipends during any portion of participants paid on the job training post-release?	DOCCS will not provide any kind of funding for post-release employment training.
12	Post-release	What is envisioned by NYSDOCCS in terms of access to computers when participants are released? Ideal if they continue to have access to a laptop with their e-materials they worked on while incarcerated.	To be determined based on nature of crime and other parole conditions.
13	Employment Outcomes	What is the expected number of hours that participants will spend in mentorship and further programming post-release?	Provide minimum of six months paid, full-time, on-the-job training that includes employment mentoring and technical support for completing students in the computer coding field.

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14	Participant	Will participants only be considered for the program that are within a pre-specified amount of time pre-release?	Only participants that are able to complete the program prior to their earliest release date will be considered.
15	Participant	If participants will only be considered that are nearing release, how far in advance of release will they be considered?	Participants should be able to complete the program prior to their earliest release date.
16	Participant	Can this course(s) be made available to the whole prison pop, not just those who elect to do a college or vocational program track? (Preference for everyone to have opportunity to apply)	All incarcerated will have the opportunity to apply for the program.
17	Overall Scope	Must this program be launched at four institutions simultaneously, or can it be piloted at one facility (testing, validation) in order to scale more effectively at other facilities?	Program will be launched at four facilities simultaneously.
18	Overall Scope	What is the likely time frame for this program eg RFP, and then for launch? What will be the likely length of this contract?	DOCCS is unable to predict as the time frame is dependent on multiple factors.
19	Overall Scope	How many hours per week will participants be expected to spend in the program?	Thirty hours of live instruction per week is required.
20	Participant	If the expectation is for participants to be enrolled full-time, will they be compensated in lieu of institutional employment?	Participants would be compensated.
21	Specifications	Can DOCCS provide the minimum technical, equipment, software, internet, and infrastructure requirements outlined in section 4.1 of the RFI document?	DOCCS will provide basic infrastructure. Vendor will provide rest of requirements to run the program.
22	Specifications	Is there a requirement for the number of live instruction hours per week?	See response to question #19 above.
23	Timeline	What is the anticipated timeline for approval once technical and curriculum details that meet DOCCS requirements are submitted?	See response to question #18 above.
24	Technical Curriculum	Will DOCCS provide basic computer skills training to students first or is that something we should anticipate providing? What computer skills are already taught?	DOCCS offers basic computer skills in General Business, Computer Information Technology Support, and Computer Operator programs at various facilities. Screening may need to be done to identify suitable candidates.

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25	Specifications	Can incarcerated students be issued with laptops for use outside of class hours, or laptops be used and stored in a classroom space? Or are only desktop computers allowed? If the latter, what arrangements need to be made to provide students with access eg to complete homework task in between classes?	Student issued laptops have not been approved at this time. Program should incorporate all learning activities in the class time.
26	Technical Curriculum	What level of math proficiency can be assumed? What other math programs are being taught currently in facilities? Should we plan to provide math courses/tutoring?	Students will have obtained at least high school level math. DOCCS is interested in hearing about all options presented by vendors thru this RFI.
27	Timeline	Will there be an opportunity/enough time in this RFP process to connect with other potential partners who respond to this RFI?	DOCCS follows NYS procurement policies.
28	Prof. Dev. Curriculum	Are we able to provide incarcerated learners with access to asynchronous course content that is not connected to the internet e.g. wikipedia for schools, Khan Academy, NY Public Library course materials for adult learners	DOCCS is interested in hearing about all options presented by vendors thru this RFI.
29	Correctional Institution	What size classroom spaces will be provided? Will wiring/electrical/temperature control fit out be required in those rooms for computer equipment, and will those costs be covered by DOCCS? Is Webex capability already/capable of being installed? Where would server/storage space go? Can office/storage space be provided for program staff?	DOCCS can provide classroom, storage, and staff space adequate for the program. Class sizes may vary. Webex may be possible. Wiring, etc. to be determined after classroom location review in coordination with Facilities Planning. DOCCS is interested in hearing about all options presented by vendors thru this RFI.
30	Technical Curriculum	What types of restrictions exist on updating software on machines/servers? What is the typical timeframe for review of content?	Updates would have to meet DOCCS security requirements. Time to complete review of content depends on the extent of the update and current workload of IT.
31	Correctional Institution	Can NYSDOCCS provide sample specs of computer labs and type of software content (and version) that has been approved by existing programs in facilities?	DOCCS computer labs are connected through the Secure Offender Network (SON).
32	Records/Tracking	Can the NYS Dept of Parole provide us with tracking information for participants post-release? What status/benefits/incentives can be provided for these participants who continue on with their learning with our Justice Through Code and REAP programs?	DOCCS currently tracks individuals' post-release. DOCCS supports continuing education upon release.

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33	Correctional Institution	What restrictions exist for instructors and program staff working with incarcerated students vs post-release? What are the additional issues / approval processes for program staff who may be justice involved?	Program staff will be reviewed/approved by DOCCS. Justice involved individuals will be reviewed/approved if appropriate.
34	Specifications	What forms of communication (written, email) will be permitted between program staff and incarcerated students? Coding assignments require e-files	With DOCCS approval, secure messaging can be permitted between instructor and students.
35	Specifications	What type of graduation ceremony might be allowed in each facility to recognize students who complete course(s)?	A graduation ceremony for students may be considered.
36	Specifications	For in person teaching/facility access, would we be able to work with one central volunteer approval contact or is this going to be facility by facility?	Each facility will have its own contact for volunteer approval, but the process can be coordinated through DOCCS Central Office.
37	Correctional Institution	What flexibility is there for the timetable in completing coursework when there are unexpected issues that affect access to facilities and computer labs?	DOCCS may be able to accommodate changes to course completion dates due to unforeseen circumstances.
38	Specifications	Is RACHEL being used in any other facility in NY State?	RACHEL is not being used at this time.
39	Specifications	What other technical or software specs by any other program have been approved in NY State?	See answer to question #31 above.
40	Funding	Is there a budget allocation that NYSDOCCS has set aside for this project? We would be happy to outline what can be provided for a given budget.	A budget allocation has not been determined at this time.
41	Specifications	What type of qualification would be done to determine if the participants in the training program have the requisite baseline level of skill to ensure a reasonable chance of successful outcomes	Vendor should conduct an assessment of potential students for program.
42	Specifications	Would a blended approach, combining self-paced learning with regular contact with a live instructor be considered	The preferred method is a cohort group with a live instructor, however DOCCS is interested in hearing about all options presented by vendors thru this RFI.
43	Specifications	Would students have access to e-mail to be able to dialog with instructors when no in a live class	See response to question # 34 above.

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44	Specifications	Workforce Training providers are generally different from employers hiring trainees. Are you looking for training providers to partner with an employer/multiple employers, or do you envision all those bullets being covered by a single entity Generally, employer partners do not commit to hiring a set number of employees: instead they agree to interviews. Is interviewing something you are interested in with this proposal, or are you only interested in guaranteed employment with a specific employer partnership;	DOCCS is interested in hearing about all options presented by vendors thru this RFI as long as releasee is placed in an IT position.