



Short Description and Benefits of ASG Services

The Assessment Solutions Group (ASG) provides a suite of professional services to states and others. Over the past 6 ½ years we have worked with a number of states, CCSSO, most of the assessment consortia, and others assisting them with procurements, test designs, cost analyses, RFP preparation, research, technical reviews/advice/support, and other assessment-related matters. States have benefitted greatly from ASG's services. A brief description of them is provided below.

Pre-Release RFP Cost Analysis – ASG can indicate to a state the anticipated amount it will cost for new assessment designs prior to writing the assessment RFP and soliciting vendor proposals. ASG uses the state's actual assessment design and its *Assessment Cost Model* to determine the appropriate price for the program.

Pre-RFP Cost Analysis is very valuable in a) securing legislative funding for a new assessment program, b) gaining an understanding of what a new assessment will cost prior to issuing an RFP (and adjusting scope if needed before RFP release), c) avoiding having to re-issue an RFP or engage in extended contract negotiations as a result of higher than affordable vendor price proposals and d) structuring an assessment design to get the maximum value for your assessment dollar, prior to going out to bid.

Pre-RFP Assessment Design Consulting – ASG's technical assessment consultants can help a state determine the best assessment design given its priorities. Our expertise in this area can help a state understand different assessment design features and how they impact assessment quality, fidelity, and cost.

Pre-RFP Assessment Design Consulting allows the client to understand different assessment features and functions, their impact on the quality and fidelity of the assessment itself and allows a state to make the proper trade-offs between different assessment features and functions. Combined with Pre-RFP Cost Analysis, **these services allow a state to design the optimal assessment program given its priorities and budget.**

Assessment RFP Drafting Services – ASG will draft the RFP for assessment services, no matter how large or small the program. ASG is knowledgeable of industry best practices in administering the different facets of assessment programs and will include these best practices in the RFP. ASG will clearly spell out the detailed requirements of the assessment program so vendors understand the state's needs and priorities related to the assessment and can provide accurate technical and price proposals in response to the RFP. ASG will also create the **technical proposal scoring rubric** should the state so desire.

This service allow a state to

- a) Issue an RFP with minimal usage of valuable SEA staff,
- b) Obtain assessment proposals that reflect a clear understanding of state needs,
- c) Receive cost proposals that have a fraction of the variance (typically 10-15%) between the high and low bids typically seen in industry proposals, and
- d) Select the best vendor for the assessment program

ASG RFP Cost Analytics Services (Cost Sheets) – ASG will include its custom *Cost Sheets* in the RFP for assessment services. ASG's *Cost Sheets* not only include the price information states need to evaluate and score the vendor cost proposals but also include critical unit data that allows ASG to determine if each vendor is bidding the appropriate prices for each portion of the assessment.

These services allow ASG and the customer to determine the answers to three critical questions:

- Does each vendor understand the assessment program?
- Are the vendors bidding an “apples to apples” program vs. each other?
- Is each vendor bidding an appropriate price to administer the assessment program?

States receive the most value when using both ASG *Cost Sheets* Analytics along with ASG's vendor RFP cost proposal analysis (see below).

RFP Proposal Technical Review – ASG's technical assessment experts will evaluate the vendor technical proposals in response to an RFP. ASG technical assessment experts have many decades of experience in the industry and have reviewed hundreds of vendor technical proposals in response to RFPs. ASG will score the technical proposals according to the defined criteria/rubric developed for the RFP.



This service is valuable in obtaining an independent and objective expert review of vendor technical proposals. If ASG has developed the RFP and/or performed other services related to a new state assessment program, it will be intimately familiar with state assessment requirements and will be in an excellent position to determine how well a vendor has addressed the state's needs in its proposal.

RFP Proposal Cost Analysis – ASG will use its *Assessment Cost Model* and *Cost Sheets* to evaluate the vendor cost proposals in response to the RFP. ASG analyzes costs on a function by function and sub-function basis. Analyzing assessment costs in this manner allows ASG to explain to states, and vendors, where costs are too high. States can use this information to negotiate the final assessment price with the selected vendor. Alternatively, states can contract with **ASG to analyze and/or negotiate the final price for assessment services** with the selected vendor.

ASG determines the answers to the three questions noted two sections above by using its *Assessment Cost Model* to analyze vendor RFP cost proposals. ASG has worked with numerous states and assessment consortia to help them understand and negotiate assessment costs. Over the last five years, **ASG has saved states and assessment consortia over \$100 million** when they are negotiating the final price for their desired assessment services.

Assessment Quality and/or Cost Audit – ASG will evaluate any existing program to make sure vendor and state quality assurance and quality control processes are sufficient to avoid errors in the delivery of the assessment program. Additionally, ASG can evaluate the design of a current assessment program and determine if a state is paying an appropriate amount for the administration of the program.

Vendor errors are costly, problematic politically, and wreak havoc on public confidence in the assessment program. ASG assessment quality audit services will ensure both the vendor and state are implementing best practices in delivering the assessment. ASG will also help a state understand if it is paying the right price for the assessment services it is receiving and help it re-design and re-price its assessment program.

Transition Services when Changing Assessment Vendors – Changing assessment vendors when implementing an assessment program can be a scary proposition. ASG will help a state manage the transition from the old assessment vendor to the new contractor. ASG will use its detailed assessment transition functional lists and hands-on contractor transition experience to ensure the transition process runs as smoothly as possible.

States can free up valuable resources when using ASG to help transition an assessment program to a new vendor. ASG will minimize the finger pointing between vendors during the transition phase and make sure the process proceeds as smoothly as possible.

Manage Standard Setting, Item Review, Data Review, or Program Review Functions – ASG can manage the standard setting, item/bias/sensitivity and data reviews for a state as well as any of the several program review functions. ASG will train staff in the item review processes and lead the state through the various reviews required to maintain a high quality assessment program.

Standard setting and item review are critical functions that must be professionally managed in order for a state to maintain a high quality assessment program. ASG can facilitate these various activities and ensure a state maintains a high quality assessment program.

Assessment Program Technical and Cost Options Review – Many states are re-evaluating their assessment program options either as a result of an internal assessment department review or at the behest of the legislature. ASG can provide a neutral third party analysis of the various assessment options along with the pros and cons of each option, as well as the costs related to each option.

ASG evaluates the quality of different assessment program options based on best practice standards (AERA/APA/NCME Standards, CCSSO/ATP Operational Best Practices, CCSSO criteria for high quality assessments, etc.) and will detail the pros and cons of each alternative. ASG uses its *Assessment Cost Model* to detail the costs related to each assessment options. A state may want to consider the benefits of having a neutral third party complete a review of the different assessment program options.

If you have any questions, or want a more complete description of ASG's services, visit our website www.assessmentgroup.org, give us a call at 210.859.9920 or email me directly at btopol@assessmentgroup.org