



# Request for Proposal (RFP)

## Free Community College Planning

### **Proposal Submission**

Proposals should be sent by email to Nate Mackinnon, executive director of the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges, [mackinnonn@macc.mass.edu](mailto:mackinnonn@macc.mass.edu). Proposals that are either faxed, hand-delivered, mailed out, or sent by any medium other than the information provided above will not be accepted as a proposal delivery. One Proposer will be awarded the single free community college planning contract.

### **Deadline for submission**

Proposals will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 02, 2023.

## **Free Community College Planning – Scope of Work**

The following scope of work outlines the tasks, responsibilities, and deliverables of a consultant responsible for evaluating the feasibility and strategies for implementing a free community college program in Massachusetts. The consultant will be responsible for delivering a recommendation that addresses various aspects of a program, including financial implications, logistical considerations, potential benefits, and anticipated challenges.

The consultant's primary objectives are as follows:

- Assess the current public higher education landscape in Massachusetts and nationally to determine the potential impact of implementing free community college on access to higher education, workforce development, and economic growth.
- Identify potential design and financial models to create and sustain a free community college program in Massachusetts.
- Evaluate the administrative and logistical requirements for successful implementation.
- Provide a range of recommendations on the design and execution of a free community college initiative, focusing on cost, associated policy and regulatory changes, and outcomes/impacts.

### **Tasks and Responsibilities**

#### **Research and Analysis**

- Review existing research on free community college programs implemented in other states, exploring financial models and their potential applicability to Massachusetts.
- Use data from other free community college programs to develop a reliable forecast of changes in enrollment should community college become free in Massachusetts, including practices and policies that led to increased student success.
- Analyze the current state of higher education in Massachusetts including current and projected state costs, enrollment rates, student demographics, and existing financial aid programs as they relate to providing community college for free.
- Identify potential challenges, including faculty and staff needs, physical resource needs, other capacity issues, administrative hurdles, and potential unintended consequences, including impacts on other higher education segments.

#### **Financial Analysis**

- Estimate the costs associated with implementing and maintaining a free community college program under various design models, including tuition, fees, textbooks, support for student living expenses (housing, transportation and others), administrative expenses, and student support services.
- Explore various funding mechanisms and recommend a sustainable financial model that considers short-term and long-term funding needs.

- Consider faculty and staff compensation adjustments necessary to ensure Massachusetts Community Colleges remain competitive in attracting, hiring, and retaining top talent to continue providing a high-quality educational experience.

### **Logistics and Implementation**

- Assess the capacity of the community colleges to accommodate increased enrollment and estimate possible additional needs by college, including facilities, faculty, staff, technology, and processes.
- Recommend strategies for streamlining application, enrollment, and registration procedures.
- Recommend proven communication strategies for free community college programs.
- Present regularly to, and seek input from, the working group established by MACC comprised of various stakeholders.
- The consultant should be prepared to meet individually with various stakeholders and groups to help inform a comprehensive understanding of the current climate with respect to implementing free community college. This may include a trip to another state with key Massachusetts leaders to learn from other states that have successfully implemented models of free community college.

### **Reporting and Recommendations**

- Prepare a comprehensive report detailing the findings of the objectives set forth above.
- Provide a clear and actionable menu of recommendations for the implementation of a free community college program with cost projections for various options.
- Present to key stakeholders, including government officials, education leaders, and community members.

### **Timeline**

The consultant's engagement will span 10 months, with specific milestones and deadlines to be determined in collaboration with the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges and additional stakeholders. The first draft of the report is due 12/15/2023, with a final draft due 4/30/24 with follow-up presentations and meetings with relevant stakeholders.

### **Budget**

The budget for this project will cover the consultant's compensation, research expenses, travel costs (if applicable), and any other necessary expenditures related to the evaluation and report production.

---

**Interested bidders must submit:**

- Proposed methodology, process, and timeline to deliver.
- Experience and qualifications to do this work.
- References who can speak to experience and qualifications.
- Budget/cost for delivering the services.

**Rule for Award**

A contract is awarded to a responsive and responsible proposer offering **the best value**, evaluated through specifications and requirements included in this RFP. Only the procurement committee of this RFP can decide the best value proposal and can recommend the most advantageous proposal for the contract.