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Action

Fiscal Policy and Planning Committee

Approval of Agreement Awards Over \$150,000 for Fiscal Year 2010-11

Executive Summary: Section 610 of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing Policy Manual (Contract Authority) requires that agreements or contracts of \$150,000 or more be approved by the Commission. This item presents an agreement that requires approval.

Recommended Action: Staff seeks approval for the Executive Director to execute the agreement as presented in this agenda item.

Presenter: Crista Hill, Director, Administrative Services Division - Fiscal and Business Services Section, Darren Addington, Data Processing Manager, Enterprise Technology and Support Services Section, and Yvonne Novelli, Consultant, Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal: 6

Maximize the effectiveness of the agency and its staff through the optimal use of technology, ongoing staff development and maintenance of a positive work environment

- Use technologies to support both ongoing operations and innovations designed to increase efficiency
- Communicate effectively to share information and increase productivity

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Introduction

Section 610 of the Commission on Teacher Credential (Commission) Policy Manual (Contract Authority)^{1/} requires that agreements or contracts of \$150,000 or more be approved by the Commission. While the examination contract being considered has no dollar value, the Commission reserved the right to approve contacts for examinations. This agenda item seeks approval for the Executive Director to execute the following agreements as presented in this agenda item.

- 1) Information Technology - with Vital Check a Lexus Nexus Company (Vital Check) as the integration vendor for the Credentialing Web Interface Project (CWIP).
- 2) Examinations - the contract for the administration and further development of the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST), the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET), the California Teacher of English Learners (CTEL) Examination, and the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) examinations. The contract, valid from 2010 until October 31, 2016, will cover the testing years 2011-12 through 2015-16. The recommended proposal will be determined based on the proposal that earned, on average, the highest total number of points by the review team in conjunction with the points awarded based on the cost price criteria.

It is important to note that the contractor being recommended for the contract award cannot be formally announced until five (5) working days prior to the award at the Commission meeting. Formal notification will be available on the Commission's website at www.ctc.ca.gov or at the Commission Office at 1900 Capitol Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95811-4213 at the appropriate time. As a result of this requirement and because the Commission staff was in the process of reviewing the submitted materials at the time this agenda item was written, an agenda insert for this item will be provided at the August 5, 2010 meeting.

Background

1) Information Technology – Vital Check a Lexus Nexus Company – Credential Web Interface Project

Background for this Specific Agreement

It is requested that the Commission approve an agreement with Vital Check as the system integrator for the CWIP. Vital Check was selected via a Master Services Agreement competitively bid by the Department of General Services. The costs of the agreement are still being negotiated and will be presented as an infolder item. Target implementation of this project is June 2011.

The CWIP project was approved by the Commission and the Administration as part of the 2009-10 budget development and enactment cycle, the details of which were presented at the August 2008 Commission meeting. The CWIP project proposes to retire the current contracted services and host the credentialing web interface in-house. This will allow a unified system with data sharing and reuse of the Commission's existing Credentialing Automation System Enterprise (CASE) business logic, and web user views based on existing in-house views. Centralizing data in-house increases the Commission's efficiency to provide all functionality the contractor is currently providing, while also providing the public and stakeholders availability to current up-to-the-minute credential data in real time with a user friendly web interface that is fully integrated into the Commission's existing enterprise-wide credentialing automation system, allowing direct control over changes, updates, enhancements, and security by the Commission.

The project funding for CWIP is from a combination of existing and one-time resources. The approval of this agreement is necessary for the Commission to continue to offer the highly successful web-based components of the Teacher Credentialing Service Improvement Project (current credentialing system).

2) Examinations – Administration and further development of the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST), the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET), the California Teacher of English Learners (CTEL) Examination, and the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) examinations.

Background Specific to this Agreement

The Commission issues various types of teaching and services credentials, many of which require, or make optional, examinations to meet specific certification requirements. As part of its charge, the Commission is required by the California Education Code to offer these examinations to potential credential candidates in a secure, equitable, and continual manner. The current contract to administer four (4) of these examination programs, the CBEST, CSET, CTET, and RICA, expires at the end of the 2010-11 testing year. At the December 2009 meeting, the Commission authorized the development and release of a request for proposal (RFP) for the administration and further development of these examination programs. This agenda item is located at <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2009-12/2009-12-3B.pdf>. Additionally, to further its objective to use technological innovation to improve access to services, the Commission directed staff to include in the RFP a requirement to continue computer-based testing for the CBEST and expand computer-based testing to the CSET: Multiple Subjects, CSET: Writing Skills, and RICA Written Examinations. In order to support the needs of computer-based testing, the RFP also included work related to item development for these four (4) examinations. The action to be taken by the Commission at the August 2010 meeting will ensure the continued administration of these four (4) examination programs through 2015-16.

Proposal Review Process

Potential bidders for this contract were instructed to respond to the requirements stated in the advertised RFP, *Request for Proposals for the 2011-16 Administration and Further Development of the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST), the California Subject*

Examinations for Teachers (CSET), the California Teacher of English Learners (CTEL) Examination and the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA). This RFP was released on February 26, 2010, and can be viewed on the Commission's website at <http://www.etc.ca.gov/pdf/RFP-Exam-Admin-2011-2016.pdf>. Two (2) bids were received by the May 25, 2010 due date and, as required in the RFP, both parties agreed that all contractor costs relating to work done under the new contract will be funded through the fees paid by examinees.

The following outlines the procedures used to evaluate these bids. These procedures adhere to the State Contracting Manual ^{2/} and Commission policies, and are also the same procedures as noted in the RFP.

Stages of Review and Evaluation

There were two (2) stages to the proposal review and evaluation process. The first was to determine if each proposal met the criteria specified in the *Evaluation Criteria Part I: Compliance with Proposal Eligibility Requirements*, as listed on pages 51 and 52 of the RFP. These criteria include such items as submission of the 14 numbered copies of the bid by the established deadline, inclusion of a table of contents, and coverage of all required criteria. Three (3) members of the Examinations and Research Unit of the Professional Services Division performed this initial evaluation on May 25, 2010, and found that both proposals contained the needed information.

The second stage of the evaluation process was to review the bids against the *Evaluation Criteria Part II: Compliance with Proposal Program Requirements*, found on pages 53 and 54 of the RFP. The review panel consisted of individuals on the Commission staff, representing the Division of Professional Practices, the Office of Governmental Relations, the Certification, Assignments, and Waivers Division, and the Professional Services Division. This group reflects extensive experience in standardized testing, examinee needs, test security, and managerial skills.

The panel initially met on June 25, 2010, for an orientation session. The session covered the content described in the RFP, including the scorable criteria: the tasks common to all examinations (e.g., test administration and scoring processes), tasks needed to move to computer-based test administrations (i.e., computer-based test development/ administration and related item development), corporate capability, management/staffing plan, cost detail/financial arrangements, and overall presentation. Also discussed were the scoring rubrics and the Proposal Review Documentation Form that reviewers could use for notes about the bid and for recording their initial scores. During the orientation, it was stressed that each bid should be judged based on its response to the criteria listed in the RFP and not in comparison with the other bid. It was also stressed that the reviewers must act independently and could not discuss the merits of the bids until they met for the review session.

At the June 25th orientation, the reviewers made plans to reconvene on July 19, 2010, to review their findings for each proposal. At the time of the writing of this agenda item, this review session had not occurred. During the review session, the individuals' initial scores for each area will be listed and briefly reviewed for the first proposal. Then the panel will

discuss the overall character of the proposal, noting trends, highlights, and concerns. This will be followed by an in-depth discussion of each criterion and, based on this discussion, the reviewers may revise their initial criteria scores. The reviewers will also note any issue that they feel the bidder needs to clarify prior to the possible awarding of the contract. This same process will then be repeated for the second proposal.

If there are any clarification questions generated by the review panel at the July 19th meeting, the bidders will then be asked to respond to the questions. The reviewers will consider the bidders' responses to determine any changes to their scores. The reviewers' final scores will then be totaled, and the mean calculated. Following this process, the score points for the cost price criteria will be applied according to the published score point process. A final score for each bid will then be established. Staff will recommend that the bidder with the highest score be awarded the contract.

Recommendation

Commission staff seeks the approval for the Executive Director to execute the agreements as presented in the agenda item and the in-folder item.

^{1/} CTC Policy Manual: <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/pdf/CTCC-Policy-Manual.pdf>

^{2/} State Contracting Manual: <http://www.ols.dgs.ca.gov/Contract%20Manual/default.htm>