

**Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC)
Request For Proposals (RFP)
OregonBuys: S-52500-00016224**

**HECC RFP# 25-208 Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC)
Process Improvement, Change Management and Analysis**

Date: March 10, 2026
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Questions & Answers 1

- 1. Could you confirm whether a budget range has been established?**

The budget is to stay under \$250K.

- 2. The example Statement of Work in Exhibit A does not show a lot of engagement with those closest to the work in Tasks 2 & 3. We are wondering if the HECC would be open to a slightly different approach to the data collection and analysis activities in Tasks 2 & 3 with the same overall deliverables?**
- a. Would HECC be open to the consultant facilitating conversations with the staff closest to the work to co-create improvement opportunities and a future state process?**

HECC is open to the consultant working closely with the staff to identify opportunities for improvement in process.

- 3. Is the HECC looking for an external expert in financial analysis to make recommendations on fund management, or is the HECC open to a consultant that would work in partnership with internal staff to build internal capabilities and systems to support ongoing fund management practices?**

HECC wants the recommendations to be based on what is possible within our fund requirements and IT structures, so internal consultation does feel important.

- 4. Is there a Q&A deadline?**

All questions should be submitted before 3PM PT on Thursday, March 19, 2026

- 5. Is there an incumbent or preferred contractor? If so, who is it?**

No

- 6. Is this a follow-on to an existing contract or a re-bid/re-write of a previous contract? If so, who had the existing/previous contract?**

No

- 7. If a previous contractor existed, is there any reason for you to believe that this contractor would not be bidding this RFP?**

N/A

- 8. If a previous contract existed, what was the value of that contract?**

N/A

- 9. Did you have a third party help with the preparation of this bid? If so, please identify them and their role, and indicate if they will be allowed to bid?**

N/A

- 10. How many teams currently operate with OSAC, and what are their functional responsibilities?**

Within OSAC, the bodies of work that we want process documentation for are the following:

- a. Public Grant Programs have similar processes with some minor difference within each grant program
 - i. Oregon Opportunity Grant
 - ii. Oregon Tribal Student Grant
 - iii. Oregon Promise
 - iv. Oregon Teacher Scholars Program
 - v. Chafee/ Childcare
 - vi. Deceased or Disabled Public Safety Officers
 - vii. Barber/Hairdressers
- b. Private Scholarships (portfolio of 620+ scholarships, similar administration)
- c. ASPIRE- a college and career access program

*Additionally, each of these bodies of work interacts with HECC's offices of procurement, IT, and fiscal operations as well as with colleges and universities in the administration of their programs. The IT system that all staff use to administer their work is the Financial Aid Management Information System- which is a HECC-built platform that is in the process of modernization.

- 11. How many OSAC processes do you know or estimate that will need to be documented?**

HECC is unclear how to answer this question. We will likely need three sets of process documentation- one for each of the distinct teams listed above. Each team has some minor differences that will also need to be captured along sub-program boundaries. These programs engage in a significant number of processes as they administer their bodies of work, and some of these processes interface with external institutions while others interface with internal operational units. Examples are: Developing biennial budget

projections, navigating application portal needs with IT, making term awards, working with fiscal to distribute funds to schools, reconciling financial records by student and by school at the end of each quarter.

12. Please provide existing documentation that is available for OSAC processes (e.g., SOP's, process maps, desk guides, training manuals).

Most of the teams have very little documentation at this time aside from the ASPIRE team, our college and career access program. Documents that we have will be made available to the successful vendor.

13. How many points of intersection between OSAC and HECC do you know or estimate will be part of this consulting effort?

As referenced above, we interact heavily with Fiscal, IT, and procurement in the administration of our programs.

14. What primary information systems or platforms currently support OSAC program administration and financial aid processing?

OSAC has a HECC-built platform called the Financial Aid Management Information System (FAMIS) that we use as the IT platform to host our student facing applications as well as to certify awards and manage reconciliation with schools.

15. Approximately how many financial aid programs or funding sources are included in the current fund management and projection processes?

See the response to question 10 above.

16. Please provide your current documented fund management practices, including staffing, number of funds, number of awards, number and type of reporting, and other information pertinent to formulating a bid for this consulting work.

At this time, we don't have process documentation for the administration of these funds. I have described some of the bodies of work that each of our grant and scholarship programs engages in as they administer this work. For staffing, we have 10 staff who administer our public program grants, we have 6 staff who administer our private scholarships, and we have 8 staff who administer our ASPIRE college and career access program. For reporting, some of our grant programs have legislatively mandated reporting, but all of our grant programs engage in fiscal projections and reconciliations quarterly and then again annually. During legislative session, many of our grant programs are called upon to provide fiscal projections that explore hypothetical modifications to our program structures.

17. How many staff members will participate in process improvement trainings?

All OSAC staff including the program teams, managers (3), and Executive Support Specialist- so a total of 28.

18. Please identify which project meetings and workshops can be delivered virtually, and which require our consultant to be on-site.

Any and all meetings can be hosted either in person or virtually. We are open to the proposed approach from the vendor. The OSAC team is comfortable working virtually, hybrid, and in person.

19. Section 1 of the RFP mentions consulting support across three essential components, but we only see two listed. Could you clarify whether there is a third component that should be included, or if the two listed components represent the full scope?

In section one, the reference to three components is a typo. There in fact are only the two listed in that section.

20. Can you provide a list of systems in scope for this effort?

Within OSAC, the bodies of work that we want process documentation for are the following:

- a. Public Grant Programs have similar processes with some minor difference within each grant program
 - i. Oregon Opportunity Grant
 - ii. Oregon Tribal Student Grant
 - iii. Oregon Promise
 - iv. Oregon Teacher Scholars Program
 - v. Chafee/ Childcare
 - vi. Deceased or Disabled Public Safety Officers
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- b. Private Scholarships (portfolio of 620+ scholarships, similar administration)
- c. ASPIRE- a college and career access program

*Additionally, each of these bodies of work interacts with HECC's offices of procurement, IT, and fiscal operations as well as with colleges and universities in the administration of their programs. The IT system that all staff use to administer their work is the Financial Aid Management Information System- which is a HECC-built platform that is in the process of modernization.

Questions & Answers 2

21. From the Q&A: Q. 3. Is the HECC looking for an external expert in financial analysis to make recommendations on fund management, or is the HECC open to a consultant that would work in partnership with internal staff to build internal capabilities and systems to support ongoing fund management practices?

A. HECC wants the recommendations to be based on what is possible within our fund requirements and IT structures, so internal consultation does feel important.

These funds are both grants and scholarships that are administered either directly to students or directly to schools in support of students education achievement. We are not seeking higher education expertise necessarily, but we certainly do want the fiscal guidance to be based on the awards that we administer, and they are awards for students pursuing education and training in higher education environments. This means that we budget for a biennium, our projects are based on the rates of student acceptance, and we make either

checks or disbursements that align with the academic terms. We also reconcile based on how students change their attendance during the term/year, so fiscal guidance will need to be thoughtful of these patterns.

- 22. From the RFP and addendum: 8.2.5. Contractor shall disclose to HECC any Products and/or Services that it currently employs that utilize artificial intelligence (“AI”) and shall not employ any Products and/or Services that utilize AI in providing the Products and/or Services under this Agreement without prior written authorization from HECC and applicable safeguards. Changes to Contractor’s use of AI will require an amendment to this Agreement. Contractor shall not use any Artificial Intelligence tools in performing services under this Contract, without HECC’s prior written approval. Question: What is the particular concern with the use of AI products or services such that prior written approval would be necessary? What is “use” specifically refer to? Would this include web searches that use AI?**

The Successful Proposer will be expected to take reasonable methods to ensure any use of generative AI tools do not create hallucinations. HECC's expectations are that any work product created under the resulting contract will be wholly the contractor's creation and not that of AI.

- 23. Hybrid Delivery Model, consulting team proposes a hybrid engagement approach consisting of quarterly onsite visits (2–3 days per visit) paired with weekly virtual stakeholder check ins throughout the project. Could OSAC please confirm that this delivery model aligns with your expectations, given that OSAC’s Q&A indicates comfort with in person, virtual, and hybrid formats?**

OSAC could accommodate quarterly in person meetings that span 2-3 days

- 24. Request for Deadline Extension - Due to the depth, complexity, and technical rigor required in this solicitation, would OSAC consider extending the proposal submission deadline by one week beyond March 26, 2026, to ensure we provide the most comprehensive and high quality proposal possible? (The current deadline is March 26, 2026, at 3:00 PM PT.).**

At this point HECC does not want to extend. Proposers should make it a priority to submit proposals by the deadline.

- 25. Section 1 — Scope Clarification & Staffing - Could you clarify all OSAC and HECC departments, units, and cross functional partners expected to participate in the process of redesigning and documentation effort?**

Within OSAC, the bodies of work that we want process documentation for are the following:

- d. Public Grant Programs have similar processes with some minor difference within each grant program
 - i. Oregon Opportunity Grant
 - ii. Oregon Tribal Student Grant
 - iii. Oregon Promise
 - iv. Oregon Teacher Scholars Program
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 - vi. Deceased or Disabled Public Safety Officers

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 - f. ASPIRE- a college and career access program
- *Additionally, each of these bodies of work interacts with HECC's offices of procurement, IT, and fiscal operations as well as with colleges and universities in the administration of their programs. The IT system that all staff use to administer their work is the Financial Aid Management Information System- which is a HECC-built platform that is in the process of modernization.

26. Section 1 — Scope Clarification & Staffing - Can you confirm the total number of OSAC staff across all program areas who will participate in discovery, process mapping, and improvement activities, and whether we will have direct access to frontline staff or primarily team leadership?

All OSAC staff including the program teams, managers (3), and Executive Support Specialist- so a total of 28.

27. Section 1 — Scope Clarification & Staffing - Of the three OSAC program areas (Public Grants, Private Scholarships, ASPIRE), which should be prioritized first for process documentation, and what drives that prioritization?

It will depend on the date that we move into an executed contract. We will prioritize whichever team is the least busy to begin engagement with the work, which is likely ASPIRE. However, the two fiscal teams have the highest need for process documentation as they have the least existing documentation that governs their work processes.

28. Section 1 — Scope Clarification & Staffing - Are there time sensitive legislative, audit, compliance, or modernization initiatives the redesign must align with?

OSAC will be beginning a modernization effort in 2027, but there are not additional bodies of work or deadlines that govern the completion of this work.

29. Section 1 — Scope Clarification & Staffing - Are there "must fix" processes where inconsistency poses policy, financial accuracy, compliance, or equity/access risks?

Yes, there are bodies of work where staff have had ownership for many years and do things differently due to personal preference or style. We have a desire to identify the best processes for administering our fiscal bodies of work (grants and scholarships) as well as identification of fiscal management practices that mitigate risk related to the management of each of these grants or scholarship portfolios.

30. Section 2 — Technology Modernization & System Dependencies - Beyond FAMIS, are there any other systems, data tools, or shadow systems (e.g., Excel, Access, shared drives) that OSAC teams rely on for grant administration, scholarship processing, or financial reconciliation?

OSAC regularly manages their data through the use of Excel. Our HECC fiscal staff have alternative systems to manage our budgetary allocations as well as our fiscal distribution processes. However, we most regularly receive reports from HECC fiscal staff in excel as well.

31. Section 2 — Technology Modernization & System Dependencies - Could you describe the current state of the FAMIS modernization project and key constraints or dependencies we should be aware of?

The modernization project will kick off, likely in early 2027. The FAMIS system is built on very old infrastructure and our access to fiscal management tools, modeling tools, and reconciliation tools differs widely program to program.

32. Section 2 — Technology Modernization & System Dependencies – Are any system upgrades, retirements, or data migrations anticipated during the contract period that may affect the redesign?

We are working on a backlog of IT tickets that will hopefully be in development while process documentation is occurring. That is partially why we have asked vendors to be able to map processes given current system capacities, but also be able to identify areas where there is opportunity for improvement in process with updates to our IT systems.

33. Section 2 — Technology Modernization & System Dependencies - Do any teams use unofficial or workaround tools (manual checklists, personal spreadsheets, etc.) that should be documented and assessed?

Scholarships and grants do have some checklists and quite a few personal spreadsheets for current administration. ASPIRE also has a pretty thorough manual that describes their work with external partners. ASPIRE has less process documentation around how the program interacts with internal operational offices such as procurement, IT and fiscal.

34. Section 3 — Interdepartmental Collaboration - How do OSAC teams currently interface with Procurement, Fiscal, and IT, and where are the most common bottlenecks or delays?

Management engages in regular check in meetings with each team to identify and troubleshoot needs. Additionally, for IT, staff are able to submit IT tickets to identify needs. There is a SIGNIFICANT backlog in IT tickets due to the complexity of working in our outdated FAMIS system as well as due to IT capacity. Fiscal engages weekly with program staff to provide transaction reports and administer distribution processes. They are also working to provide a budget template for a grant administration team so that there are common fiscal processes.

35. Section 3 — Interdepartmental Collaboration - level of standardization is desired across teams—full alignment, partial alignment, or alignment only at key checkpoints?

For all teams, partial alignment as there are distinct differences to requirements across distinct grants and distinct scholarships. But I would like to see much more alignment around common processes, templates used, and I would like to see timelines that govern tasks throughout the year that reflect external school needs, internal program needs, and our operational partners timelines (examples are term start/end dates, fiscal year end processes, fund reconciliation deadlines, etc.)

36. Section 4 — Fund Management, Reconciliation & Forecasting - Are there known challenges or recurring issues in current fund reconciliation, forecasting, or projection workflows that OSAC would like prioritized?

Timing is always a challenge between when we can get the data from schools and when we need to give the data to our fiscal partners in operations. We would appreciate analysis around our schedules to identify opportunities for efficiencies in process or ways to rethink managing the work to better meet everyone's timeline needs. Staff unanimously need additional guidance and tools for forecasting and projection of workflows.

37. Section 4 — Fund Management, Reconciliation & Forecasting - What are the primary drivers of variability in fund projections, and are there historical examples of inaccurate forecasting impacting operations or budgets?

Yes, each of our programs has robust examples of what fund projections look like. Each program has access to different data, and access to different IT tools for projections. There are also distinctly different rules across each grant and many of our scholarships that inform the budget modeling in practice for each fund.

38. Section 4 — Fund Management, Reconciliation & Forecasting - How do teams currently model different award scenarios? Are standardized templates used, or is this decentralized?

This has largely been decentralized historically. We are currently working with HECC fiscal staff to draft templates for grant administrators to use a common format across all programs. We have received one training thus far and are in the process of refining the tool fiscal has provided to us.

39. Section 4 — Fund Management, Reconciliation & Forecasting - Are there statutory or rule based constraints we should consider when developing alternative fund management options?

Yes. We will provide all of those rules when we share our current budget management tools.

40. Section 5 — Change Management & Staff Readiness - How would OSAC describe staff readiness for change, given the staff turnover referenced in the RFP?

Staff are very eager for clear documentation around how to execute work. There will be some bumps I anticipate encountering as folks work with our contractor to align on a common approach to doing the work, but staff also recognize the high value in engaging in this work.

41. Section 5 — Change Management & Staff Readiness - Are there anticipated concerns or resistance that we should be prepared to address through training or implementation planning?

We do anticipate some resistance within the scholarships team as we have experienced resistance working with that group historically. There is a wider range in how work is completed based on preference and work style.

42. Section 5 — Change Management & Staff Readiness - What change management frameworks (e.g., Prosci, Lean, ADKAR) has OSAC used previously, and were they effective?

We have one HECC staff member who supports the modernization efforts who has offered some OCM support. The successful contractor will be able to meet with them to connect and identify an approach to OCM for this work.

43. Section 6 — Deliverables & Communication Preferences - Would OSAC prefer an iterative review process with continuous feedback or a milestone based delivery structure?

We would prefer an iterative review process with opportunities for feedback through the drafting process.

44. Section 6 — Deliverables & Communication Preferences - What format and level of detail does OSAC expect for SOPs, maps, and the implementation roadmap (BPMN, RACI, swimlanes, checklists, etc.)?

Timelines, checklists, process maps with screenshots where appropriate. Some form of swimlane or RACI – open to discuss based on task need- to identify when there are processes that require multiple staff to complete the body of work.

45. Section 6 — Deliverables & Communication Preferences - Are there specific accessibility, branding, or template standards required by HECC or the State for deliverables and training materials?

These materials will be for internal use only, so as long as the materials are ADA accessible, there aren't additional branding formats that need to be complied with.

46. Section 7 — Future State Vision, Strategy & Risk Mitigation - What is OSAC's long term vision for operational excellence, and how should success be measured across efficiency, accuracy, equity, and staff experience?

As the state's financial aid office OSAC has a high level of expectation related to the management of these state resources and providing smooth administration experiences for both the students/families, and institutions we serve.

47. TBD Section 7 — Future State Vision, Strategy & Risk Mitigation - How should the consultant balance quick wins with longer term modernization aligned transformation?

Bring it all! This team is in need of opportunities to celebrate successes- both big and small. They are working on rebuilding team culture and mapping their bodies of work, and these are hard tasks to engage in. HECC would love to hear what ways you could celebrate the wins we obtain in the process.

48. Section 7 — Future State Vision, Strategy & Risk Mitigation - Which risks (operational, compliance, financial, reputational, legislative) are most important to mitigate?

Operational, financial, legislative, compliance, then reputational- I ranked in order of importance. At this time, there is very little documentation and we are aware that there are both skill gaps as well as process gaps- so just getting to operational transparency and efficiency will set us on a better footing for all other areas of risk.

49. Section 7 — Future State Vision, Strategy & Risk Mitigation - How does OSAC currently monitor equity impacts, and should equity analysis be incorporated into the process redesign?

OSAC and the HECC have an equity lens that governs all the work that we engage in, and we do want equity analysis incorporated into the process redesign. Especially where there are administrative practices where staff weigh in on financial award decisions.

50. How does HECC currently track fund projections?

OSAC regularly manages their data through the use of Excel. Our HECC fiscal staff have alternative systems to manage our budgetary allocations as well as our fiscal distribution processes. However, we most regularly receive reports from HECC fiscal staff in excel as well.

51. What tools does HECC currently use over fund management?

Our FAMIS system as well as excel for any data manipulation.

52. What prompted the need to evaluate the fund management process?

OSAC has had a bit of staff turnover and there is a lack of documentation in how funds are administered, from how best to do projections, disbursements, reconciliations, and how to be responsive to budget modeling requests from the legislature that ask us to consider different constraints to our grants and be able to model those alternate constraints.

53. What are the specific outcomes you want (e.g. better projections, timely reconciliations, documented Standard Operating Procedures)?

All of the above, with the highest priority on standard operating procedures.

54. Should the analysis cover end-to-end fund flow, or focus more on projections and reconciliations?

End to end fund flow that follows a legislative, biennial budget cycle and reflects university academic timelines as well as accounting year timeline needs.

55. Are there any pending audit exceptions or compliance recommendations that will be addressed in this review and documented trainings?

No. This is a proactive request to create good process documentation and fiscal management practices.

56. What is the total fund budget?

This is listed in the RFP. NTE \$250,000

57. Have the IT and accounting systems been reconciled this past quarter?

We do some reconciliation term-to-term with a final IT and fiscal reconciliation at the end of each academic year.

58. Were there delays in fully reconciling the fund within the last three years?

For our grant programs we have been able to fully reconcile funds. For our scholarship programs, we have additional complexity that has caused delays in our ability to reconcile in a timely manner.

59. Are legacy system policies and procedures available for review, or will this be entirely new?

There are some isolated process documents for the grants and scholarships teams, but largely their process documentation will be new. For ASPIRE there are process manuals that cover the external work, but need process documentation developed for internal work with FISCAL, IT and procurement.

60. Can you provide a rating between 1 and 10 regarding the staff's buy-in for this process?

There is certainly a range, but I would say 6-9 depending on the staff member.

61. Could you please clarify the intended focus of the training component described in the scope? Specifically, is the expectation that the Contractor will train HECC staff on process improvement methodologies (e.g., how to independently conduct process improvement work), or is the training primarily focused on equipping staff to implement the specific process improvements and recommendations outlined in the Final Report?

The latter. We want the contractor to share any of the fiscal management practices identified and be able to equip staff to implement these process improvements.

62. Could you please clarify the current state of process documentation for the teams in scope? Specifically, has documentation of existing ("as-is") workflows already been completed, or is the Contractor expected to develop this documentation as part of the engagement? Additionally, has the agency already identified desired changes to current processes or established a set of priority processes for review?

As indicated above, this is largely creating new process documentation. Both sets of teams are working to identify pinch points in process, timeline, or operational support from the HECC, so there is work being done to prep for the contractor's work with each team.

63. Could you please provide additional context on the primary drivers for initiating this work at this time? For example, are there specific operational challenges, strategic priorities, policy changes, or external factors prompting this effort that the Contractor should be aware of in shaping the approach?

I am a new director to this team and upon getting to know the teams needs, strengths, and opportunities- the teams identify that there is a strong need for better process alignment and documentation. Additionally, there are opportunities for us to identify better fund management practices that will better meet the needs of students/families as well as the schools we serve.