



Indiana E-Learning Lab RFP May 14, 2020

Overview

The Indianapolis E-Learning Fund (in collaboration with the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation) seeks to launch a statewide e-Learning Lab that will address the needs of educators¹, students and parents² as they prepare for the possibility of continued school building closures and/or hybrid in-school and at-home learning experiences due to COVID-19 during the 2020-2021 school year. The Indianapolis E-Learning Fund is seeking a partner who can develop, launch and operate a dynamic, virtual hub that will provide educators and families access to high-quality e-learning resources and trainings, as well as opportunities for collaboration and sharing of e-learning best practices. The hope and expectation of the Indianapolis E-Learning Fund is that this statewide resource for all Indiana public and private schools will result in lower costs and a more efficient use of public and philanthropic funds than if each district or school sought solutions for their educators or families individually. This “Indiana E-Learning Lab RFP” requests proposals for the development, launch and ongoing operation of the Indiana E-Learning Lab.

Mission

The Indianapolis E-Learning Fund (in partnership with the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation) seeks to support educators at public and private schools statewide in developing and implementing longer-term distance learning solutions that meet the needs of their students, parents and schools.

Extended stay-at-home requirements and school building closures due to COVID-19 have required educators to rapidly implement plans for full-scale distance learning. What appeared to be a temporary, two-week measure has now been extended through the end of the current academic year and into the first part of the summer. Although precise plans for this coming fall are uncertain, it is probable that health officials will take a measured approach to allowing school buildings to reopen given the facts that a vaccine, widely available rapid testing and contact tracing, and effective treatments for COVID-19 are likely months or years away. Schools and families are preparing for a variety of scenarios for next year, including scenarios in which (1) schools pursue a staged re-opening plan, (2) schools implement a hybrid e-learning/in-school operating plan throughout the fall or perhaps for the entire 2020-21 school year, or (3) schools re-open in late summer and then have to close again in fall or winter if there is a spike in COVID-19 related infections and hospitalizations. In addition, the transition to e-Learning may result in new preferences for educators and families on how they engage in learning from home.

These challenges impact schools and families across the state and regardless of their school environment (e.g., public, private, rural, urban). There is a need for a new way to connect educators and families to engaging, interactive experiences to adapt to this new reality.

Our mission through this RFP is to support the launch of the Indiana e-Learning Lab to address the e-learning needs of educators, students and parents in a cost-effective, timely, and efficient manner. The Indiana e-Learning Lab will not duplicate existing websites with links to e-learning resources. Instead, the e-Learning Lab will be a dynamic, virtual hub, supporting cross-sector

¹ We define “**educator**” to mean: teachers, counselors, social workers, administrators, and other non-teaching staff who provide support to students in support of their educational experience.

² We define “**parents**” to mean: parents, guardians, and other caregivers in the home.

collaboration and providing a trusted place where schools and families can come for valuable tools and information.

The Indianapolis E-Learning Fund seeks a partner to launch the e-Learning Lab with the following activities:

1. **Resource and content curation:** Schools, districts, the state and other community organizations such as the public library system have already identified high-quality, standards-aligned, and enriching content for students. However, active and ongoing curation is needed to ensure that resources provided are high-quality and presented in formats that are helpful for educators and families. We anticipate that the solution will be a website with an associated chat and/or listserv function that is managed on a frequent basis. Additionally, the e-Learning Lab should provide accessible resources for supporting specific student populations, including, but not limited to, students with disabilities, students and families for whom English is a second language, and students who may require additional mental health and/or social emotional supports due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. **Accessible e-learning communities of practice:** Educators teach a wide variety of subject areas, grade configurations, and have students with a variety of needs. No single organization can provide effective e-learning professional development support for every grade, every content area and every student. We seek a partner to build a “communities of practice” structure that would allow educators from across the state to work with peers who have similar e-learning related challenges. We anticipate this solution to be an interactive forum which would include programmed, facilitated virtual learning and professional development sessions (e.g., webinars). Areas of importance include but are not limited to peer-to-peer troubleshooting and best practice sharing by content area, as well as a community of practice for educators providing mental health and/or social emotional learning supports to students during school building closures.
3. **Educator professional development for common, broadly applicable challenges:** Educators across the state in both public and private schools are facing the same or similar challenges. Rather than having each educator or school create their own solutions, and to avoid reinventing the wheel, the e-Learning Lab will create a forum where strategic and coordinated approaches to addressing common challenges can be undertaken and a place to promote cross-sharing of best practices. We seek a partner to support high-quality professional development and/or strategic planning focused on common challenges, such as:
 - a. *Professional development (PD) for educators less familiar with e-learning:* If we are to expect all educators to adopt e-learning practices, we must meet them where they are. Extended periods of e-learning were not contemplated by the vast majority of schools and districts in Indiana (or nationwide). While many educators have adapted well to school closures and e-learning, others would benefit from training and/or structured supports to help them deliver sustained virtual instruction. In addition, teachers may not have easy access to resources that allow them to explore and master the most effective e-learning tools and platforms. The e-Learning Lab will include PD of the e-learning basics, such as how to effectively use learning management systems and best practices around synchronous and asynchronous instructions that can evolve with the ever-changing technology landscape.
 - b. *PD for delivering effective social and emotional learning:* COVID-19 related stay-at-home orders and the related economic consequence have wrought havoc in the lives of students and educators everywhere. The e-Learning Lab will provide PD to support educators who seek to assist students with social-

emotional learning needs while they are at home, and when students transition back into school buildings in the fall or periodically throughout the 2020-21 school year and potentially longer.

- c. *Additional PD topics identified by school and district leaders:* The Indianapolis E-Learning Fund surveyed Marion County district superintendents, charter school leaders and private school leaders on their e-learning needs, including which PD opportunities would be valuable for teachers. The Fund has also issued a survey to teachers statewide to validate that the needs identified in Marion County are similar to needs in other parts of the state. Some of the identified topics we seek a partner to implement are:
- i. Providing differentiated instruction via e-learning
 - ii. Building classroom culture remotely
 - iii. Strategies for engaging students via e-learning

Organization

For the purposes of this RFP process, the Richard M Fairbanks Foundation is serving as the facilitator for the needs of the Indianapolis E-Learning Fund, overseeing the collection of proposals and distribution to the Indianapolis E-Learning Fund Advisory Committee. If you have any comments, concerns or questions about the RFQ information contained herein, please feel free to contact Kami Nielsen, Program Officer, Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, at nielsen@rmff.org and 317-663-4190. The following requirements should be considered and included in your proposals.

Indiana e-Learning Lab Guidance

Proposals should consider the following:

- o The e-Learning Lab will serve educators and families from across schools in Indiana, both public and private. The primary emphasis of the Lab will be on educator-student interactions, and the secondary emphasis will be on educator-parent, school-parent and parent-student interactions.
- o The e-Learning Lab must be fully operational by the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, although a phased-in approach of some communities of practice may be required. The “go live” date should be no later than June 30, 2020, to allow district and school leaders time to engage with the Lab during the summer break as needed and to be prepared to engage with the Lab once the new school year begins.
- o Proposals shall clearly state the lead-time for developing the e-Learning Lab, and associated roll-out timing (including any user-testing and associated revisions).
- o Proposals shall clearly state security, privacy and confidentiality requirements and/or parameters of the e-Learning Lab.
- o Proposals shall clearly explain how educators and families will be able to access the e-Learning Lab and any technological requirements to enable and facilitate this access.
- o Proposals shall clearly spell out: development and building costs, annual operation and maintenance costs (if applicable), bulk price breaks, contract requirements (if applicable) including length and severability, along with any other restrictions and/or stipulations.
- o Proposals shall include a plan for sustainability. While philanthropy may cover start-up expenses for the e-Learning Lab, proposals should detail potential sources of additional future revenue that can cover ongoing operations.
- o Proposals that support all three (3) core activities (resource and content curation, accessible e-learning communities of practice, and educator professional development) will be prioritized.

Proposed Solutions Pricing Guidance

Proposal pricing should include the following:

- A breakdown of non-contract (capex) and contract reoccurring costs (opex), as applicable.
- Expected duration of any contracts to support the operation of the e-Learning Lab and any warranty offering with costs clearly detailed.
- A breakdown of all costs associated with responses provided to the e-Learning Lab guidance above (i.e., educator access, family supports).
- Description of how any pricing may be impacted by income levels of student families (i.e., percentage of students on free and reduced lunch or families on SNAP).
- A breakdown of any other costs associated with launching, operating and accessing the e-Learning Lab.

Response Format and Timeline

Prospective vendors should respond with all available solutions and any recommended options per the above guidance. Responses should be no longer than five (5) pages and should not include more than six (6) pages of supporting materials (i.e., graphics, charts). **Responses are due by 4:00pm EST on May 29, 2020**, to allow for review and procurement next steps. **Responses should be returned via email to Kami Nielsen at nielsen@rmff.org.**