



General Questions

A-1. Where can I find the Request for Applications (RFA) for SES Providers for 2008-2009?

The Request for Applications (RFA) for SES providers for 2008-2009 is available on the Bureau's website at <http://www.fldoe.org/flbpso> under *New and Hot Topics*.

A-2. Are current state-approved SES providers required to submit a new application for the 2008-2009 school year?

Yes. All interested applicants including current state-approved providers must submit an application to the Department in order to be considered for approval by the State to serve students for the 2008-2009 school year. Applications must be submitted on the Bureau's on-line system, which is available at <http://www.fldoe.org/flbpso>. The on-line application and hard-copy documentation must be received by 5:00 p.m. EST on March 3, 2008.

A-3. I forgot my password while I was trying to log on. What do I need to do?

If an applicant forgets the password to access the system, the applicant must select the *Forgot password?* link located on the log-in webpage and type in the e-mail address used to register. The password will be e-mailed to the individual. To find the RFA log-in webpage, select *2008-2009 RFA to become an SES Provider* under *New and Hot Topics* at www.fldoe.org/flbpso and then click on *Log-in to 2008-2009 RFA*.

We encourage all applicants to create the application as a Word document and draft responses to each section of the RFA. After the document is finalized, highlight, copy, and paste the sections from the Word document into the appropriate text boxes in the on-line system. This will enable applicants to easily make changes or edits to the application and ensure that a final copy is available in case there are any technical difficulties with the on-line system in the future.

A-4. What is the maximum or minimum number of characters or words allowed in each text box?

Each text box has a limit of 2500 characters (including spaces) or approximately 370 words.

A-5. Where are the Assurance Pages that need to be signed and submitted?

Applicants may select *Hard-Copy Document Requirements* from the main menu once an applicant has logged into the application. These documents must be mailed or hand delivered to the Bureau of Public School Options: Cover Page, Checklist of Hard-Copy Documentation Requirements, instructions for documents that must be submitted as evidence of Financial Soundness, and Attachment A: General Assurances and Attachment B: Internet Statement of Assurances.

A-6. Can an applicant submit more than one application for different locations of services provided by the same company?

Only one application is needed for each applicant. Organizations should not submit the same application multiple times for different locations of services.

The applicant must fully describe the curriculum, key instructional strategies, major design elements, and delivery model of all of the products to be used by the applicant.

A-7. Where can I obtain a copy of the rubric used for evaluating individual RFA answers?

Applicants may select view the *Review Rubric* from the main menu or from the printer friendly format of the application. It is recommended that applicants self-score their application using this rubric prior to submitting the application.

A-8. Will an application be considered for the 2008-2009 school year if an applicant has failed to submit documentation required for monitoring?

As stated in the assurances listed in the RFA for 2007-2008, SES providers must comply with all monitoring requirements. Failure to do so may cause the applicant to be ineligible to apply for the 2008-2009 school year. An applicant may complete the application; however, the application may not be considered for review.

Student Eligibility

B-1. Which students are eligible for SES?

Students from low-income families (eligible for the Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program) and who attend Title I schools identified in need of improvement for two or more years are eligible for SES.

B-2. Which schools are required to offer SES?

The list of schools required to offer SES for 2007-2008 may be accessed at <http://www.fldoe.org/bsa/title1/pdf/2007sinilist.pdf>. The final list for the 2008-2009

school year will be available after the beginning of the school year. Applicants are encouraged to contact school district SES coordinators to obtain the 2008-2009 list of schools required to offer SES.

Provision of Services

C-1. What are the qualifications to become a provider?

Section 3.0 in the RFA provides more information regarding the eligibility requirements and responsibilities for SES providers.

C-2. How should an applicant calculate the stated rate per hour?

Applicants must consider the factors under Funding on page 7, Section 3.3, of the RFA. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the SES coordinator in the districts for which the applicant is seeking to become approved to serve students. It will be useful to discuss these factors with school district staff:

- Per-pupil allocations for each of the districts
- Cost of hiring local teachers and staff as instructors
- Cost of rent charged by the district for use of school facilities
- Cost for conducting the diagnostic assessments
- District costs related to background checks

C-3. How many hours of tutoring can a provider offer in a district?

The number of hours of tutoring offered by an SES provider is based upon the provider's rate per hour and the per pupil allocation. Information regarding the per pupil allocation may be found at www.fldoe.org/flbpso/xls/perpupil-allocation0708.xls.

C-4. Will a provider be allowed to invoice a school district for the time used to conduct a diagnostic assessment and develop the Student Learning Plan?

No, a provider will not be able to directly bill the school district for conducting a diagnostic assessment of a student. The RFA requires applicants to provide a stated rate per hour and includes a list of considerations that must be used in determining that rate. The list includes the cost of developing the Student Learning Plans and all assessment and evaluation costs that precede any tutoring sessions. It is more educationally sound to conduct a diagnostic assessment to identify skill or knowledge gaps and develop the Student Learning Plan that prescribes an instructional program based on the student's individual needs. The provider will be paid for the assessment and the development of the individual plan by including the cost and expense of doing so in the stated rate for tutoring.

It is recommended that each applicant contact the district coordinators for each district in which the applicant plans to provide services to determine if the district will approve Student Learning Plans developed upon district diagnostic assessment data. If so, the applicant may not be required to conduct additional diagnostic assessments. However, applicants must still identify a diagnostic assessment to be used for students for whom the district does not have diagnostic assessment data.

If a provider conducted a post-assessment on a student in the 2007-2008 school year, the provider may use this assessment data to develop the 2008-2009 Student Learning Plan.

C-5. What are the consequences for providers who fail to serve the minimum number of students assigned by the district?

In accordance with Florida Statutes, Section 1008.331 if a state-approved provider withdraws from offering services to students in a school district in which it is approved and in which it has signed either a contract to provide services or a letter of intent and the minimums per site set by the provider have been met, the school district must report the provider to the department. The provider shall be immediately removed from the state-approved list for the current school year for that school district. Upon the second such withdrawal in any school district, the provider shall be ineligible to provide services in the state the following year.

The provider will not be held responsible for serving less than the minimum number of students in the district as indicated in the approved application. If the provider is assigned less than the minimum number of students per site as indicated in the approved application, the provider may decide to withdraw from the district or choose to remain and serve the fewer number of students with the interest of ensuring that all students have the opportunity to access appropriate and effective academic remediation.

C-6. What should an applicant consider when choosing which districts to serve?

Each applicant should carefully consider all aspects of delivering services within each district it plans to serve since approved providers are expected to serve students based on the responses on the application. Since the application cannot be changed after it is approved, an applicant should select each district in which the applicant desires to serve students if a contract can be successfully negotiated with the district. If a provider has been approved to serve within a selected district, the provider must carefully consider their capacity to serve a given district before signing the district's letter of intent or contract. Once a letter of intent or contract with a district has been approved, a provider is obligated to serve students if the district enrolls at least the provider's minimum number of students per site.

Additional considerations that may vary by district are:

- Facility rental
- Process for fingerprinting and background checks

- Policies regarding hiring of classroom teachers as SES tutors
- Insurance requirements

C-7. How is the provider compensated for services?

State approved providers are reimbursed from the district for services provided after a district-provider contract and the Student Learning Plan have been completed and tutoring has begun. The district-provider contract will stipulate how invoices are to be delivered to the district and how payment is made for the tutoring that has been provided for the students assigned to the provider.

C-8. If an applicant selects to provide tutoring in Reading/Language Arts, can tutoring services concentrate on Reading?

A provider that has been approved to tutor in the subject area of Reading/Language Arts may target Reading while employing methods that would improve Language Arts skills as well.

C-9. How does an applicant indicate instructional qualifications of tutoring staff?

For questions 4.5.2, all applicants must have staff with the minimum standards for Title I paraprofessional. If an applicant selects any of the other tutorial staff qualifications, then it is not necessary for all tutorial staff members to meet the higher qualifications. For example, if an applicant selects “Are qualified as state certified or licensed teachers,” it would not be necessary for all of the tutors to hold a current teacher certificate or license. In question 5.5.2, the applicant should clearly describe the qualifications of the staff who will provide the tutoring and the procedures for recruiting, hiring and initial training of high quality staff. A provider who checked certain areas of additional qualifications of tutors in the application should have tutors in place at each district who could serve students with disabilities and/or English language learners.

C-10. What will the e-mail address in Section 4.1 be used for?

The e-mail address used to register with the on-line application system is for the person who is submitting the on-line application. The e-mail address submitted within the application for Section 4.1 Contact Information is for the agency head who administers the provision of services and instruction. This will be the contact person who would communicate directly with the Department and receive critical information regarding SES.

Hard-Copy Documentation Requirements

D-1. What is the deadline for submitting hard-copy documentation?

All hard-copy documentation must be received by the Bureau of Public School Options no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on March 3, 2008. It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure that all hard-copy documentation is received

by the stated deadline. Failure to submit these documents by the required deadline will result in the application deemed ineligible for review and approval.

D-2. Why are financial documents required as part of the application process?

NCLB requires state-approved SES providers to be financially sound. Since SES is a reimbursement program, providers must be able to sustain services before payment is received by the district. In addition, providers must pay all of the up-front costs for the development of the Student Learning Plans including purchasing assessments and payment to tutors or staff to conduct, score, and analyze the results. All documents required as evidence of financial soundness can be found in Section 4.8 Financial Soundness in the RFA.

D-3. Does the state require a certain amount of general liability insurance?

The Department has not set a minimum amount of general liability insurance required; however, many districts require at least \$1,000,000 of general liability insurance. Some districts also require automobile insurance for all contractors serving the district. It is recommended that applicants contact the districts in which they plan to serve to determine the minimum insurance requirements. Please note that the certificate of insurance submitted to the Department must indicate the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Public School Options as a certificate holder.

D-4. What is meant by evidence of fiscal soundness?

Fiscal soundness can be documented by written proof that a provider has sufficient operating funds, on hand or available in reserve, to cover all expenses associated with services for which financial risk has been assumed. This involves a record of past performance, current economic health, and management personnel in place.

D-5. Will any documents other than those documents listed in number two (2) of Section 4.8 be accepted as evidence of fiscal soundness?

No. The only evidence of fiscal soundness that will be accepted are:

- annual financial statements for the past two years or
- fiscal audits signed by a certified public accountant for the past two years, or
- federal income tax returns for the past two years along with a letter of credit from a financial institution.

D-6. If an applicant does not have an established business for two years, what documents should they submit to show fiscal soundness?

Applicants who have not been an established business for two or more years may submit a copy of their federal tax returns of an individual on the Board of Directors for the past two years. Applicants who submit individual tax returns must also submit a letter of credit from a financial institution. Applicants that have been in

business for two years or more may not submit personal tax returns to show fiscal soundness.

D-7. What is a financial letter of credit?

A financial letter of credit is a pre-approved loan from a financial institution which can be used to support the applicant's fiscal soundness. The amount of the loan should be equivalent to three (3) months operating expenses to include any start-up activities such as training of staff, costs of instructional materials and costs associated with finger printing and background checks of staff. This letter must be on the financial institution's letterhead and signed by an official of the institution. If an applicant wishes to submit a home-equity line of credit or any other loan established prior to January, the applicant should contact the financial institution to document the current loan balance. This balance should be equivalent to three (3) months operating expenses and must be documented on the financial institution's letterhead and signed by an official of the institution within the last forty five (45) days.

D-8. What is meant by "legally qualified" to do business in Florida?

All applicants must register with the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations in order to do business in Florida. Florida's official business filing site, Sunbiz, is located at <http://www.sunbiz.org>. Once on www.sunbiz.org, click on *Electronic Filing*. Applicants should then follow the appropriate link for the type of business, such as LLC or Non Profit, under the title *On-Line Filing*. A copy of the filing documents is evidence that the applicant is legally qualified to do business in Florida.

The county and/or city in which the provider is operating may also require licensure in order to do business in a particular area. These requirements must be fulfilled by the applicant, at the local level; however, local requirements are not part of the response needed for the application process.

D-9. Does a copy of the most recent registration with the Department of State (www.sunbiz.org) satisfy the documentation requirements for verification of business status?

Each applicant must submit documentation verifying business status. If the applicant's most recent registration with the Department of State includes an FEIN number, this will satisfy the requirements for business status.

D-10. What signed statement is needed from an organization as proof that it has not been suspended or disbarred?

A statement on company letterhead with an original signature by the organization agency head attesting to not having been suspended or disbarred by a local, state, or federal agency from receiving federal funds may be submitted as evidence to meet this requirement.

Application Narrative

E-1. How can an applicant access the Florida Sunshine State Standards and tested benchmarks?

Applicants may access information related to the Sunshine State Standards at the following websites:

- Sunshine State Standards and Grade Level Expectations for all grade levels for Language Arts can be found at http://etc.usf.edu/flstandards/la/new-pdfs/la_sss.pdf
- Sunshine State Standards and Grade Level Expectations for all grade levels for Mathematics can be found at http://www.fldoestem.org/uploads/1/docs/2007_FL_Mathematics_Standards_9_13_07.doc
- FCAT tested benchmarks at <http://fcats.fldoe.org/> (click on *Publications for Educators*).
- *Content Focus Reports for FCAT for 2007 for Language Arts and Mathematics* that provides specific information related to tested benchmarks may be accessed at <http://fcats.fldoe.org/fccontentfocus.asp>

This information will be useful when completing the application and describing the alignment between the applicant's curriculum and the Sunshine State Standards, describing how the applicant will use the benchmarks to assess and identify students' academic deficiencies, and developing and implementing students' individual plans.

E-2. What do high quality and research-based services mean?

Section 1116(e)(12)(C) in NCLB defines supplemental educational services as tutoring and other supplemental academic enrichment services that are in addition to instruction provided during the school day and are of high quality, research based, and specifically designed to increase the academic achievement of eligible children on the state's academic assessments required by NCLB and attain proficiency in meeting the state's academic achievement standards. The RFA for 2008-2009 requires applicants to describe and provide evidence that the key instructional practices and major design elements of the proposed program are high quality and research based. Evidence may include qualitative and/or quantitative data that indicate the applicant's program and major elements such as time on task, mode of instruction, or instructional materials are effective in increasing students' proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics.

E-3. Why are providers required to use high-quality and research-based materials?

NCLB requires that supplemental educational services are high quality and research based services. One of the foundations of NCLB is the use of educational practices, instructional strategies, and instructional materials that have evidence to suggest that they will increase student academic achievement. This concept is foundational to the accountability required in NCLB.

E-4. What type of evidence should an applicant use to demonstrate that their company or organization has had a positive impact on increasing student achievement toward meeting state achievement standards?

Applicants must be able to provide evidence that the applicant has had a positive impact on increasing student academic achievement. Current providers may describe success with SES students including student performance data using pre and post test. New applicants may also include student performance data including evidence of the success of their organization's program in regards to increasing student's academic performance in the classroom, in other states, or other forums.

E-5. What type of evidence should a new provider use to demonstrate that the curriculum is effective?

Applicants must be able to indicate that the curriculum is researched based and is effective in improving the academic achievement of eligible students. Applicants must provide quantitative evidence that the curriculum has had a positive impact on student achievement. Evidence of effective curriculum could include a description of the curriculum and any supplemental curriculum, citations to research, and data supporting the curriculum. Include citations to current research from the last five years. Provide specific citations including title, author(s), date, and publishing entity.

E-6. Where can I find appropriate diagnostic reading assessments?

Information on appropriate diagnostic assessments for reading can be found at the Florida Center for Reading Research at <http://www.fcrr.org/assessment/PDFfiles/DiagnosticTools.pdf>. This website includes a list of diagnostic assessments for reading that addresses the major components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension).