

**Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B)  
Request for Proposals for an MTSS-B Program and the Provision of Training**

RFP release date:	May 30, 2014
Questions:	June 10, 2014
Intent to bid:	June 16, 2014
Proposal deadline:	July 16, 2014
Anticipated finalist presentations:	August 19-20, 2014
Anticipated contract award:	September 1, 2014

MDRC invites providers of training in multi-tiered systems of supports for behavior (MTSS-B) to submit proposals to participate in a large-scale, random assignment evaluation. The evaluation will focus on a system approach to teaching and reinforcing appropriate behavior for all students as well as providing additional support to students who need it. The impact evaluation will be conducted by MDRC, with its partners American Institutes for Research (AIR), Decision Information Resources, Inc. (DIR), and Harvard University, for the National Center for Education Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) Institute of Education Sciences.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the soundness of the proposed MTSS-B program and associated evidence of effectiveness, the quality and intensity of the proposed training and support activities, and staff experience and capacity in delivering equivalent MTSS-B training and support to schools in the past. Up to four training providers will be invited to Washington, D.C., to present their program and training plans. MDRC, in consultation with ED and an expert review panel, will then select one program, supported by one training provider or a consortium of providers for inclusion in the study.

The training will be provided in 80 elementary schools in approximately 12 school districts selected by the evaluation team. Training providers that do not have sufficient capacity to train on the scale needed for the study are encouraged to form a consortium with other training providers to respond to the Request for Proposal (RFP) requirements. Also, providers with experience providing training in school-wide strategies can form a consortium with other trainers of classroom-level strategies and/or targeted interventions to provide the totality of required training. In forming a consortium, the offeror must demonstrate an integrated program in the submitted proposal.

**A. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

This portion of the RFP provides information on the motivation for the evaluation of multi-tiered systems of supports for behavior, the program and training required for inclusion in the study, and the impact evaluation that will test the effectiveness of the implemented program.

**A.1. Project Rationale**

Creating and maintaining safe and orderly education environments in order to support student learning is a top federal priority, as indicated by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S.

Department of Justice jointly issued guidance on school discipline. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has supported the study and implementation of tiered systems of behavior support since the 1990s. Based on data from the IDEA National Assessment Implementation Study (NAIS), over one third of U.S. districts report implementing multi-tiered systems of behavior support in at least one of their elementary schools.<sup>1</sup>

Recent studies provide suggestive evidence in favor of school-wide strategies that include appropriate infrastructure to support them<sup>2</sup>. These initial studies have been on a relatively small scale (or conducted within a single state) or have examined a limited set of outcomes. Classroom-level strategies as well as individual or small group strategies have also been studied, although these studies have largely been conducted outside the MTSS-B context. To date, a coherent and comprehensive MTSS-B program has not been rigorously evaluated, although the MTSS-B approach is supported and reportedly implemented widely.

Therefore, this evaluation focuses on a comprehensive MTSS-B program that includes each of the components usually associated with MTSS-B: school-wide and classroom-level strategies (universal supports, or Tier I) and individual or small group strategies (targeted interventions, or Tier II), with appropriate infrastructure. This evaluation will not include intensive supports for students not responding to Tier II interventions (i.e., there will be no Tier III interventions). See Figure 1 below.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

The goal of the evaluation is to implement an MTSS-B program with fidelity and determine whether universal supports (Tier I) with appropriate infrastructure are effective when implemented in a large number of districts and elementary schools. The evaluation also will look separately at the incremental effectiveness of providing targeted interventions (Tier II) along with universal supports (Tier I), again with appropriate infrastructure. The proposed program must include required components as outlined in section A.3 as well as training and ongoing support outlined in section A.4 to implement the program with fidelity.

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<sup>1</sup> Bradley, M.C., et al. (2011), *IDEA National Assessment Implementation Study* (NCEE 2011-4027). Washington, DC, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U. S. Department of Education), pp. 53 and 45.

<sup>2</sup>Bradshaw, C. P., Waasdorp, T. E. & Leaf, P. J. (2012). Effects of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on child behavior problems. *Pediatrics*, 130(5), e1136-e1145. doi:10.1542/peds.2012-0243.

Bradshaw, C. P., Mitchell, M. M., & Leaf, P. J. (2010). Examining the effects of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on student outcomes: Results from a randomized controlled effectiveness trial in elementary schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 12, 133-148.

Horner, R., Sugai, G., Smolkowski, K., Eber, L., Nakasato, J., Todd, A., & Esperanza, J., (2009). A randomized, wait-list controlled effectiveness trial assessing school-wide positive behavior support in elementary schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 11, 133-145.

Is School-Wide Positive Behavior Support An Evidence-Based Practice? A Research Summary. OSEP Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. September 21, 2007. Retrieved on 7/11/08 from <http://www.pbismaryland.org/documents/Evidence%20base%20for%20SWPBS%2009-22-07%20GS.pdf>

## **A.2. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B) Theory of Action**

The implementation of MTSS-B is ultimately intended to improve student outcomes. The conduct of school-wide and classroom strategies (Tier I) and individual or small group strategies (Tier II), supported by appropriate infrastructure, are designed to improve school staff behavior practices as well as school and classroom climate. The improved practices and climate are, in turn, hypothesized to benefit student behavior and academic outcomes. The individual and small group strategies may affect the students who need additional support (Tier II) as well as all students if these strategies lessen the disruption of students needing additional support. Finally, improved student behavior could lead to better student academic outcomes. Figure 2 illustrates the MTSS-B conceptual model and hypothesized outcomes.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

## **A.3. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B) Program**

The proposed strategies and associated materials must already exist and be used in schools. This request for proposals does not include development work on the part of the provider. The following describes the type of required program components to be provided in the study (illustrated in Figure 1). In addition to describing each component, it is essential that the offeror describe how these various components operate as a coherent program.

Infrastructure:

- Behavior monitoring data system: The proposed program must include a tool to systematically record individual student behavior at each school. The offeror is to describe how this tool can be used by school staff to guide behavior support activities.
- Leadership team and coach: The proposed program must include a role for a school leadership team and an on-site school level coach<sup>3</sup> in fully implementing, and supporting the MTSS-B program. The offeror is to describe the roles that these staff will play and how these roles will support high-fidelity implementation.

Universal Supports (Tier I):

- School-wide strategies: The proposed program must include activities to promote appropriate behavior expectations for all students school-wide as well as reward appropriate student behavior and provide consequences for problem behavior.

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<sup>3</sup> The district or school coach is expected to spend up to 20% or 1/day a week supporting MTSS-B implementation in schools receiving the MTSS-B training. This coach could be a school-level staff person or someone from the school district assigned to multiple schools receiving MTSS-B training. MDRC will provide financial support to each coach to ensure that he/she will be available for the proposed role.

- Classroom-level strategies: The proposed program to be implemented by teachers must include classroom activities that are well defined, interconnected, and focused on teaching and reinforcing student behavior for all students. These activities may often be implemented on their own as a stand-alone behavior intervention (e.g., social skills curriculum, behavior management intervention). If a stand-alone behavior intervention is proposed, the offeror must provide a plan to coordinate it with the other proposed school-wide strategies.

#### Targeted Interventions (Tier II):

- Individual or small group strategies: The proposed program must include individual or small group strategies for students who are not responding to the school-wide and classroom-level Tier I strategies. These strategies may be implemented by classroom teachers or other school staff. This could include a behavior intervention that is implemented as its own stand-alone intervention. If a stand-alone behavior intervention is proposed, the offeror must provide a plan to coordinate it with the other proposed school-wide strategies.

#### **A.4. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B) Training and Ongoing Support to Promote Fidelity**

Eligible providers must include a plan for ensuring that the proposed MTSS-B program is implemented with fidelity. The proposed trainings and associated materials must already exist and must have already been used in schools. This request for proposals does not include development work on the part of the provider. However, there may be some customization or adjustment of the training materials in order to ensure that the overall training is cohesive and meets the needs of the evaluation. The MTSS-B trainings and supports must incorporate features of high-quality professional development geared toward adult learners, including sufficient duration, a focus on content, active learning experiences, and collective participation of school staff.

The following describes the required features of the training for inclusion in the study:

- The proposed training must include initial training for the leadership team and coach, and a training strategy for informing and engaging all relevant school staff on all assigned program components. Such training may rely largely on a train-the-trainer model (e.g., training of a school leadership team, who will in turn train the rest of the school staff), direct training of the relevant school staff (e.g., administrators, teachers, instructional and behavioral specialists), or a combination of the two. In any case, there must be at least **some** direct provider training of all relevant school staff (at least **four** hours).
- The offeror must include ongoing support, including onsite provider visits, to the leadership team, other school staff, and the coach. Such support must be designed to facilitate implementation, with fidelity, of all aspects of the MTSS-B program. The

offeror must assess implementation fidelity of the MTSS-B program and take steps to remedy any implementation issues identified by these assessments.

### **A.5. Impact Evaluation of MTSS-B**

The following provides information about the evaluation study design, including study sample size and study timelines. In order to meet the goals of the impact evaluation, it is important that the program reach provider-defined thresholds for acceptable implementation within the timeframe of the evaluation.

The study design involves assignment of three groups of 40 elementary schools to the following implementation activities: **Group I** - 40 schools will receive training in and implement universal supports (Tier I) with appropriate infrastructure; **Group II** - 40 schools will receive training in and implement universal supports (Tier I) *and* targeted interventions (Tier II), also with appropriate infrastructure; and **Group III** - 40 schools will receive typical district and school professional development activities (a “business as usual” group). Although most schools will be implementing some activities to support student behavior, the target sample of schools selected for participation in the evaluation will be schools that currently provide minimal support and funding for the implementation of an MTSS-B program (a low-intensity business-as-usual condition). Within each district, MDRC will randomly assign schools to Group I, II, or III with the implementation schedule indicated in Exhibit 1. The study includes a total sample of 120 schools across 12 geographically dispersed school districts. The schools and districts will be recruited by MDRC to participate in the evaluation by the end of 2014. We anticipate that approximately 30 staff members (of whom approximately 20 are teachers) will participate in implementing the universal supports (Tier I) in each study school assigned to treatment. The staff who will participate in implementing the targeted interventions (Tier II) will depend upon the staffing arrangement proposed.

The study will assess the provision of and staff participation in MTSS-B trainings as well as MTSS-B implementation and fidelity. The study will examine the effect of the MTSS-B program on school climate, teacher practices, and student outcomes including behavior and achievement. The study will collect data for the schools receiving MTSS-B training as well as the control schools in the sample, including (1) behavior support practices, through site visits, school staff and teacher surveys, and student surveys; (2) teacher practice, through classroom observations and school site visits; (3) student behavior, through teacher inventories and district records; and (4) student achievement, through individual testing (grades 1 and 2) and school district records (grades 3 through 5).

**Exhibit 1. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior Interventions Implementation Schedule**

	<b>January-June, 2015</b>	<b>School Year 1 (2015-16)</b>	<b>School Year 2 (2016-17)</b>
<b>Group I: 40 Schools</b>	<b>Readiness Phase and Training Prior to MTSS-B Implementation</b>	<b>Universal Supports (Tier I) with Appropriate Infrastructure</b>	<b>Universal Supports (Tier I) with Appropriate Infrastructure</b>
<b>Group II: 40 Schools</b>	<b>Readiness Phase and Training Prior to MTSS-B Implementation</b>	<b>Universal Supports (Tier I) with Appropriate Infrastructure</b>	<b>Universal Supports (Tier I) <i>and</i> Targeted Interventions (Tier II) with Appropriate Infrastructure</b>
<b>Group III: 40 Schools</b>	<b>Business as Usual</b>	<b>Business as Usual</b>	<b>Business as Usual</b>

**B. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

This portion of the RFP provides information on the tasks to be undertaken and their anticipated timeline. It also provides direction on what each proposal should provide in terms of content, how it should be organized, and formatting requirements.

**B.1. Statement of Work**

The selected provider (or consortium of providers) shall prepare schools during the second half of the 2014-2015 school year and conduct their proposed training and provide ongoing support according to each school’s assigned treatment status across the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years. Specifically, the provider(s) shall train (1) 80 schools (Group I and II) to implement universal supports (Tier I) with appropriate infrastructure across the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years, and (2) 40 of these 80 schools (Group II) to also implement targeted interventions (Tier II) across the 2016-2017 school year. The tasks outlined in this section shall be the responsibility of the training provider(s). Any proposal that does not meet the requirements of this section will be disqualified from further consideration. Note that the proposal will be limited to 30 pages.

### **Task 1 – Attend Kick-Off Meeting**

The training provider shall meet with study team members and staff from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) within 10 working days of the award of the contract. The meeting shall be held at ED’s headquarters in Washington, DC. The purpose of the meeting will be to review the contract activities and timeline, and discuss any areas of concern. Prior to the meeting, the training provider shall provide three copies of all program-related materials, such as agendas, hand-outs/training materials, and training manuals, to MDRC. These materials shall provide the study team and ED with knowledge of the MTSS-B program and training in its entirety.<sup>4</sup> The training materials and meeting agenda shall be submitted to MDRC within seven working days of the contract award date. The provider shall also submit a kick-off meeting summary within five working days of the kick-off meeting.

Deliverable:     Training materials  
                          Meeting agenda  
                          Summary of the kick-off meeting

### **Task 2 – Assist with Site Recruitment**

As a first step in the process of recruiting districts and schools for the impact evaluation, MDRC will send notification materials to districts deemed by the study team and ED to be eligible to participate in the impact evaluation. The provider shall develop a program brochure that will be part of the notification materials. The brochure will detail the features and implementation requirements of the MTSS-B program. The provider shall submit a draft of the program brochure to MDRC within five working days of the contract award date. The study team and ED will provide feedback on the draft program brochure within three working days. The provider shall submit the final program brochure to MDRC within three working days of the feedback.

Although MDRC will be responsible for recruiting districts and schools for participation in the impact evaluation, it is likely that, after the notification materials have been sent out, districts and schools will have further questions regarding the MTSS-B training program. When requested by MDRC, the developer shall participate in recruitment calls made by MDRC to districts and schools for the purpose of further explaining the MTSS-B training program. For budgeting purposes, offerors should estimate that they will participate in approximately 20 recruitment calls.

To provide more information to districts and schools, the provider shall participate in the preparation of a brief recorded webinar presentation describing their MTSS-B approach. The developer shall submit a draft script for the webinar to MDRC within 14 working days of the contract award date. The study team and ED will provide feedback on the draft script within three working days. The developer shall submit the final script to MDRC within three working

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<sup>4</sup> Sample program materials appended to offerors’ technical proposals (see section B.2.2) are intended to provide the review panel with snapshots of the content of the program. The full set of program materials shall be submitted by the developer prior to the kick-off meeting.

days of receiving study team and ED feedback. Within 10 working days of the final script, the developer shall provide a presentation following the revised script that MDRC will use to create a webinar.

Deliverables: Draft program brochure  
Final program brochure  
Draft script for webinar  
Final script for webinar  
Presentation for webinar

### **Task 3 – Finalize Training Plan and Materials (as Needed)**

ED intends to study existing training and materials. This request for proposals does not include development work on the part of the provider. However, there may need to be some adjustment of the training materials and joining of materials in order to ensure that the overall training is cohesive and appropriate for the evaluation. Also, there may need to be some refinement of the timeline for the trainings in order to meet the needs of the evaluation. If needed, the provider shall make adjustments to the existing MTSS-B training plan and materials so that they meet the requirements of the impact study and reflect any feedback provided by the study team and ED.

While the selected provider’s proposal will detail how the training is to be conducted in the districts, the revised training plan shall further flesh this out by including dates for when specific training activities will occur. The revised training plan shall also reflect any changes in the training plans as a result of the negotiation process and discussion among the selected developer, MDRC, and ED. If necessary, the provider shall revise these materials in order to reflect any modifications to the training plan as well as the negotiation process and discussion among the selected developer, MDRC, and ED.

All adjustments shall be completed in time for the MTSS-B training to be conducted prior to the 2015-2016 school year. The provider shall submit to MDRC a draft training plan and materials that incorporate the adjustments by November 14, 2014. MDRC and ED will provide feedback on the draft revised plan and materials within two weeks. The provider shall submit the final revised training plan and materials to MDRC by December 15, 2014.

Deliverable: Draft revised training plan and materials  
Final revised training plan and materials

### **Task 4 – Conduct MTSS-B Readiness, Training, and Ongoing Support: Universal Supports (Tier I) with Appropriate Infrastructure (80 schools)**

To conduct a fair test of the effectiveness of the MTSS-B program, it is necessary that the program be implemented with fidelity within each of the districts and schools participating in the impact study. This task (and subtasks) consists of providing the personnel, materials, instruction, and support to meet the specified training goals, in accordance with the plans provided in the proposal and finalized in Task 3. Training shall be held at a site convenient for school staff. Staff

from multiple schools within a single district, assigned to the same training, can be trained together. The provider shall not require that staff from different districts travel to one common training location.

#### **4.1 Administer the MTSS-B Readiness Phase (January-June 2015)**

The offeror shall be responsible for conducting any relevant readiness activities during the second half of the 2014-2015 school year. The readiness phase shall include provider-supported activities necessary for schools to be prepared for their initial training (Task 4.2). For example, the provider shall work with the district to identify, and hire if necessary, staff to serve as a coach in each of the schools receiving treatment. The provider shall also work with each treatment school to establish the leadership team. The provider shall ensure that all necessary systems, including the behavior monitoring data system, are installed and operational.

#### **4.2 Conduct the MTSS-B Training Prior to MTSS-B Implementation in the 2015-2016 School Year (Summer/Fall 2015)**

The provider shall conduct training for relevant staff to successfully implement their roles within the MTSS-B program. This shall include training the leadership team to introduce relevant systems and practices school-wide, training the coach to support both the leadership team and classroom teachers in the provision of MTSS-B, training teachers to implement classroom-level activities, and training the larger school staff to implement MTSS-B school-wide. The provider shall train relevant staff to use and update the behavior monitoring data system.

#### **4.3 Provide Ongoing Support across the 2015-2016 School Year**

The offeror shall provide the on-going support across the 2015-2016 school year that is necessary for school staff to implement MTSS-B with fidelity, including at least four in-person visits to each of the participating treatment schools to support the implementation of MTSS-B systems and practices. The provider shall systematically monitor implementation fidelity using well-defined thresholds for acceptable fidelity. The provider shall also use fidelity information from these checks to inform ongoing support.

#### **4.4 Provide Booster Training Prior to MTSS-B Implementation in the 2016-2017 School Year (Year 2)**

The provider shall conduct booster training for new staff and to provide additional support for the leadership team and coach to ensure that the MTSS-B program continues to function with fidelity in the second year of the implementation of universal supports (Tier I).

#### **4.5 Provide Ongoing Support across the 2016-2017 School Year (Year 2)**

The offeror shall provide the ongoing support across the 2016-2017 school year that is necessary for school staff to continue to implement MTSS-B with fidelity, including at least four in-person visits to each of the participating treatment schools to support the implementation of the MTSS-B program. The provider shall systematically monitor implementation fidelity using well-defined thresholds for acceptable fidelity. The provider shall also use fidelity information from these checks to inform ongoing support.

**Task 5 – Conduct MTSS-B Readiness, Training, and Ongoing Support: Targeted Interventions (40 schools)**

**5.1 Conduct the Targeted Interventions Training Prior to Implementation of Targeted Interventions in the 2016-2017 School Year (Summer/Fall 2016)**

The provider shall conduct training to relevant staff (specified in the provider proposal) to successfully implement the targeted interventions. The provider shall also include training to identify students for these targeted supports.

**5.2 Provide On-going Support for the Provision of Targeted Interventions across the 2016-2017 School Year**

The offeror shall provide the ongoing support across the 2016-2017 school year that is necessary for school staff to successfully implement the targeted interventions with fidelity. The provider shall systematically monitor implementation fidelity using well-defined thresholds for acceptable fidelity. The provider shall also use fidelity information from these checks to inform ongoing support.

**Exhibit 2: Schedule of Deliverables**

Deliverable	Date
<b>Task 1 – Attend Kick-Off Meeting</b>	
Training materials	Within 7 working days of the contract award date
Meeting agenda	Within 7 working days of the contract award date
Summary of the kick-off meeting	Within 5 working days of the kick-off meeting
<b>Task 2 – Assist with Site Recruitment</b>	
Draft program brochure	Within 5 working days of the contract award date
Final program brochure	Within 3 working days of study team and ED feedback
Draft script for webinar	Within 14 working days of the contract award date
Final script for webinar	Within 3 working days of study team and ED feedback
Presentation for webinar	Within 10 working days of

Deliverable	Date
	acceptance of the final script
<b>Task 3 – Finalize Training Plan and Materials (As Needed)</b>	
Draft revised training plan and materials	November 14, 2014
Final revised training plan and materials	December 15, 2014
<b>Task 4 – Conduct MTSS-B Readiness, Training, and On-going Support: Universal Supports (Tier I) with Appropriate Infrastructure (80 schools)</b>	
<b>Task 5 – Conduct MTSS-B Readiness, Training, and On-going Support: Targeted Interventions (40 schools)</b>	

### **Study Team Responsibilities:**

- **Coordination:** MDRC and its partners will coordinate the training activities across sites, including scheduling MTSS-B–related activities, locating and contracting facilities, inviting participants, and monitoring and tracking participation.
- **Support of district and school staff time:** MDRC and its partners will be responsible for the cost of any district or school staff time (e.g., time that the leadership team, coach, and school staff will spend in trainings as well as time that the leadership team and coach will spend supporting MTSS-B implementation).
- **District and school recruitment:** MDRC and its partners will select the districts and schools that will receive MTSS-B training as part of this project.
- **Random assignment of schools:** MDRC and its partners will randomly assign schools to receive either (1) training in universal supports (Tier I) with appropriate infrastructure, (2) training in universal supports (Tier I) and targeted interventions (Tier II) with appropriate infrastructure, or (3) typical district and school professional development activities (business as usual).
- **Implementation data collection for the evaluation:** MDRC and its partners will collect independent, evaluative data on the fidelity of implementation of MTSS-B and all associated outcomes.

### **Training Provider Responsibilities:**

- **Training:** The provider shall design the training, prepare materials, and provide the training and support.
- **Support of provider staff travel and time:** The provider shall pay for the cost of transportation and lodging of its own training staff as well as any provider staff time.
- **Providing information to districts:** The provider shall assist MDRC with sharing information about the MTSS-B program and training with potential districts and schools during recruitment.

- Implementation data collection for implementation fidelity: The provider shall collect information on MTSS-B implementation fidelity in each of the participating treatment schools to inform ongoing implementation support. The provider shall share these data with MDRC.

## **B.2. Technical Proposal Requirements**

### **B.2.1. General Instructions**

Providers are encouraged to submit their best offer, as they may not have an opportunity to revise their proposal, and awards may be made without discussion. Each offer should consist of two **separately packaged** proposals: a technical proposal and a business proposal. All information necessary to judge the technical soundness and management capabilities of the vendor should be contained in the technical proposal. The technical proposal must not make reference to pricing data.

The technical proposal should include enough detail so that the expert review panel can effectively assess the merits of the MTSS-B program and training plan. Simply restating the requirements of this RFP will not be sufficient. The technical proposal should provide detailed information and examples of the content of the MTSS-B program and the provider's training, with particular emphasis on how the training relates to the goals of the study. The technical proposal should demonstrate that the provider has the knowledge, capacity, and experience necessary to provide high-quality training and support.

Questions: Questions regarding this RFP shall be sent to Anja Kurki at AIR, [akurki@air.org](mailto:akurki@air.org), no later than June 10, 2014. A copy of the solicitation will be available online at <http://www.mdrc.org>. Responses to technical questions will be provided online at <http://www.mdrc.org> no later than June 17, 2014. It is the responsibility of vendors to check this site regularly to see if questions and answers have been appended to the solicitation.

Proposal Submission: An original and seven copies of your written technical proposal and an original and two copies of your business proposals **as well as** electronic versions of the technical and business proposals must be submitted to Anja Kurki at AIR no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on July 16, 2014. Offers received after the official deadline for proposal submission will not be considered. Proposals must be mailed to the following address:

Dr. Anja Kurki  
American Institutes for Research  
1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
Telephone: 202-403-5153  
Email: [akurki@air.org](mailto:akurki@air.org)

The technical proposal (text plus all figures, charts, tables, and diagrams) is limited to 30 single-sided pages. The six specified appendixes will not count as part of the 30 pages. All text must be double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font with standard character spacing; exhibits can use 10-point Times New Roman (or larger) font, but should remain clear and easy to read. Pages should be 8.5 by 11 inches, with a one-inch margin along all four sides. Any materials submitted outside of the 30-page limit (other than the exceptions noted) will not be reviewed.

The anticipated award date is September 1, 2014.

### **B.2.2. Content and Organization of Technical Proposal**

The technical proposal should include the following content and be organized into the following sections:

Title Page. The title page must include (at a minimum) the name of the provider; the name, title, and contact information of the proposal author(s); and contact information for a person with authority to negotiate for the provider.

Table of Contents. The table of contents should provide an easy means to locate each section of the proposal.

Introduction. The introduction should briefly present the provider's MTSS-B approach and understanding of the goals, processes, and products of the project. If the proposal is submitted by a consortium of providers, the introduction also should include a short description of members and their roles in the consortium. If training providers form a consortium in order to train on the scale needed, the introduction should specify that the providers will train schools in the same MTSS-B program. If training providers form a consortium to train on individual pieces of the MTSS-B program, the introduction should specify which provider is responsible for each key component (see Figure 1) of the MTSS-B program training.

Description of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B) Program. This section should describe in detail the key components of the proposed MTSS-B program, clearly indicating how the program operationalizes the infrastructure as well as the Tier I and Tier II components presented in Section A.3. It should clearly indicate that the program is an existing program, capable of being implemented on the scale required in the upcoming study.

The offeror must provide a convincing rationale for how the proposed MTSS-B program is intended to affect the outcomes to be measured in the study. This section should include a logic model or theory of action (with an illustration) for the proposed MTSS-B program. The logic model should be a well-specified conceptual framework that specifies the following:

- the key components (activities and inputs delivered by the provider and considered by the provider to be essential in implementing the program) of the proposed MTSS-B program, and how the key components connect to form a coherent program,
- the target population,

- the expected pathways/mediators for effects on students, and
- the specific mechanisms of change (how aspects of the proposed program such as content, organization, duration and intensity will improve relevant outcomes).

This section should specify whether the infrastructure, school-wide and classroom level activities (Tier I), and targeted interventions (Tier II) have been previously implemented together or are being joined for this project. If they are being joined for this project, this section should clearly articulate how the components fit together into one coordinated and cohesive system of practices. Any materials or products associated with the implementation of the MTSS-B program should be described in this section (e.g., behavior monitoring system, classroom-based strategies, targeted interventions) and any examples of these products/materials should be included in Appendix A. If the MTSS-B program involves the use of specific measures (e.g., student behavior screening instruments), this section should describe the measures and their psychometric properties.

This section should describe each role required of district and school staff in implementing MTSS-B (e.g., leadership team, coach, teachers, and full staff).

Offerors should clearly detail all requirements of the districts and their staff to implement the program with fidelity, including a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation for each key component in the logic model/theory of change (see discussion of fidelity measures in Statement of Work section below).

Description of Evidence of Effectiveness. This section should include a very brief summary of any previous research on the proposed MTSS-B program and trainings, specifically including evidence for the classroom activities and targeted supports. Please provide only citations that are studies of the program (or key components of the program) being proposed. Providers should also include in Appendix B copies of up to five of the most relevant publications and reports they wish to be used to evaluate the evidence of effectiveness. The publications should be primary articles or evaluation reports (not articles that discuss or summarize the results of other studies) that include the following types of information:

- Description of the study design (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental, regression discontinuity, single case study), sample size (number of schools, teachers, students), and types of outcomes (e.g., school climate, teacher/staff practice, student behavior, student academic outcomes)
- Similarity of treatment and comparison groups at baseline
- Level and type of attrition (differentiated versus non-differentiated)
- Description of the effect (e.g., effect size, an average effect versus a subgroup effect)

Statement of Work. This section should provide a detailed discussion of how each task outlined in Section B.1 of this RFP will be completed. It should expand on each of the tasks, including a discussion of procedural issues related to completing each task. It should identify the staff members who will play a major role in each task.

The discussion of Tasks 4 and 5 (Task 4: Conduct MTSS-B Readiness, Training, and On-going Support: Universal Supports (Tier I) with Appropriate Infrastructure (80 schools) and Task 5: Conduct MTSS-B Readiness, Training, and On-going Support: Targeted Interventions (40 schools)) should include the purpose, type, and sequence, and timeline of proposed training and supports, and should address how these elements will enable schools to implement the MTSS-B program with fidelity. The discussion should address the necessary features in *Section 3: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B) Training*. The description of readiness activities, trainings, and supports should be supported by as many examples of materials (including agendas, schedules, training materials, and manuals) as necessary to demonstrate the quality of the activities/materials. All sample materials related to readiness activities, trainings, and support should be included in Appendix C.

The plans for supporting implementation fidelity should describe the information that the provider will use to determine if the training goals have been met and, if not, what activities will be used to remedy the relevant problems. The offeror should describe the plans for assessing implementation fidelity, including the use of a fidelity measure or set of measures. The fidelity measure(s) should be described in this section and the actual instruments included in Appendix D. The study team will use this instrument(s), or a version of these instrument(s) to conduct independent assessments of implementation fidelity in treatment schools.

If the proposal includes multiple training providers who will conduct similar trainings across different districts through a consortium, this section should describe the materials that will be used by all providers and how the training, with any variations, will result in the proposed MTSS-B program being implemented consistently and with fidelity across sites.

Management Plan. This section should detail the overall management plan, as well as lines of authority, coordination, and communication within the provider organization or organizations. If the proposal is submitted by a consortium of providers, it must include a clear description of each organization's roles and responsibilities, and, if the providers plan to work together, plans for communicating, monitoring, managing, and assuring quality across organizations. This section should describe any experience that the providers have working together.

All key personnel, including staff and consultants, should be identified by name, title, and position in the project's management structure in an organizational chart. This chart should clearly depict the lines of authority and responsibility for all staff and organizations involved in the conduct of this training, including time commitments during the specified period. This section also should include a project management chart showing the timelines for all major tasks and subtasks, with start and completion dates for each task as well as intermediate dates for any precursor steps and draft deliverables. Staff responsible for each task must be identified in the chart.

The provider should include three letters of performance references. The letters should include a brief description of the work/project and the relationship with the person/organization providing the reference as well as current contact information. The letters should be sent directly to AIR by no later than July 16, 2014, 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

Corporate Capabilities and Experience. The statement of corporate capabilities and experience should demonstrate that the provider has sufficient staff to deliver the trainings and supports proposed. This portion of the proposal should describe the provider’s experience with similar projects and demonstrate an understanding of the nature of the requested tasks. The provider should include a list of schools and districts in which it is currently conducting or has recently conducted similar work (within three years) in Appendix E. The list should include a description of the completed work, the duration of the work, and the dates that the work was completed.

Staff Qualifications. This section should include brief descriptions of the qualifications of all key personnel, including key trainers and staff providing direct support to schools and conducting site visits, and how they will meet the requirements of the contract. This section should include the proposed hours of each staff person by subtask and should describe the specific responsibilities of each proposed staff member. The staff must have demonstrated ability to meet deadlines, conduct high-quality training, and keep MDRC/AIR informed of, and involved in, major decisions or events that are likely to affect the training provided. The resumes of the key personnel, including trainers and staff providing direct support to schools and conducting site visits, should be included in Appendix F. Resumes of proposed key staff are limited to **three pages each**. Resumes should include prior experience relevant to their proposed role for this project. They should include a description of the work conducted, the recipient of the support (e.g., number of schools), and the specific role played by the staff.

**Appendix A: Examples of products/material associated with implementation of the proposed MTSS-B program.**

**Appendix B: Previous research on the proposed MTSS-B program and trainings**

**Appendix C: Sample of materials related to proposed MTSS-B readiness activities, trainings, and support**

**Appendix D: Proposed MTSS-B fidelity measure**

**Appendix E: List of Schools and districts in which the provider has or is currently conducting similar work**

**Appendix F: Resumes of key staff, trainers, and staff providing direct support to schools**

### **B.3. Business Proposal Requirements**

#### **B.3.1. General Instructions**

This study is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and provided through a subcontract with MDRC. The contract will be structured as a fixed-price contract (with payments keyed to deliverables). The maximum funding available for providing the trainings is \$3,200,000.

The provider’s business proposal should be consistent with the technical proposal with respect to the number of districts and schools estimated to participate in the study. The provider should propose to serve 80 schools. We anticipate that approximately 30 staff members (of whom approximately 20 are teachers) per school will participate in implementing the universal supports (Tier I) with appropriate infrastructure in each study school assigned to treatment. The staff who will participate in implementing the targeted interventions (Tier II) in 40 schools will depend upon the staffing arrangement proposed.

### B.3.2. Content and Organization of Business Proposal

The provider's business proposal **must** include the following information:

- **A statement of the total costs that will be incurred by the provider in preparing and delivering the readiness activities, training, and support as described in this RFP.** The total costs should include all of the tasks and deliverables described in this solicitation.
- **An itemized budget estimate for the cost preparing of and delivering the readiness activities, training, and support as described in this RFP.** This budget estimate should include all costs for materials and services to be provided by task and subtask. These costs should include the salaries and expenses of trainers and other support staff; the development and printing costs of all materials and products used as part of MTSS-B implementation, including shipping materials to district/school sites; and costs for travel of trainers and support staff to sites, including air, ground transportation, hotel, and meals. The budget should **not** include the costs of teacher honoraria, substitute teacher payments, or compensation for school-based coaches' time, participants' meals, or training facilities.

Providers are requested to organize their cost estimations according to the major cost line items indicated below.

1. **Direct Labor.** Please provide project personnel salaries and wages only (include expenses for consultants under Other Direct Costs). For all personnel, provide the title, salary, and amount of time in hours that each person will devote to the project. The rates to be supplied in the price proposal should not be loaded rates or average rates.
2. **Fringe Benefits.** Please provide estimated fringe benefit costs according to your most recent audited financial statements or Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). Include a copy of your most current NICRA. If you do not have a negotiated rate agreement, the rates proposed will need to be justified and negotiated.
3. **Other Direct Costs (ODCs).** Indicate all significant direct costs not covered above. Examples are printing and reproduction, materials and supplies, facilities and equipment, consultants, outside services, postage and delivery, communications, and travel. These costs should be broken down in sufficient detail to analyze by instance and unit. If consultants are proposed, include on separate lines all consultant fees. Provide the name, rate, and level of effort (LOE) for each proposed consultant, if known. If unknown, indicate TBA in the budget and provide the estimated rate and LOE.
4. **Indirect Costs.** Apply all applicable indirect costs according to your recovery practice. Please indicate whether you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or NICRA approved by the federal government. If you do not have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by a federal agency, please provide audited balance sheets and profit and loss statements for the last two complete years, and the current year-to-date statements (or lesser period of time if your organization is newly formed).

5. **Budget Narrative.** Provide a detailed budget narrative of all costs proposed. The narrative should be in sufficient detail to explain how all costs were derived.
6. **Fee.** Providers wishing to include fee must indicate the total proposed percentage and provide a justification or rationale that is consistent with prior business practices.
7. **Payment Schedule.** Provide a payment schedule based on the deliverables listed in *Section B.2. Deliverables.*

We reserve the right to request additional pricing information on all costs proposed and other documentation prior to issuing any award, such as a certificate of insurance, recent contract reference information, documentation of existing commitments, evidence of adequate business integrity, and personnel policies and procedures.

#### **B.4. Proposal Review**

Proposals will undergo a three-stage review process. In the first stage, the evaluation team will review proposals to ensure that they are complete. In the second stage, an expert review panel will review all complete proposals and select up to four proposals for final consideration. The third stage will consist of presentations by the finalists, after which the expert review panel will make a recommendation. The final selection of the provider will be made by MDRC in consultation with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the expert review panel.

##### **B.4.1. Minimum Qualifications**

Only complete proposals received by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on July 16 , 2014** will be reviewed. Proposals that do not include all of the requested information will not be considered.

##### **B.4.2. Technical Proposal Review Criteria**

Technical proposals that meet minimum requirements will be evaluated against the criteria specified in Exhibit 2. Each criterion will be weighted as indicated, for a total of 105 points.

#### **Exhibit 2. Technical Review Criteria**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Points</b>
Evidence of effectiveness	Strength of evidence of effectiveness will be judged based on the design and implementation of relevant studies, with well-implemented randomized controlled trials receiving more points than quasi-experimental designs.	20
Quality of proposed MTSS-B intervention and training	Proposals will be evaluated according to the quality of the proposed Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B) program as well as the associated readiness, training, and support activities.	40

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Points</b>
Corporate capability	Proposals will be evaluated based on evidence of having provided similar readiness, training, and support activities in school districts, and capacity to provide the proposed readiness activities and training model at the scale required by the study.	15
Staff qualifications	Proposals will be evaluated based on the inclusion of a well-developed staffing plan in which staff qualifications match staff responsibilities, staff members have adequate breadth and depth of experience, and the proposed time commitments of staff are adequate for the proposed work.	20
Management approach	Proposals will be evaluated based on the inclusion of a credible plan for management and oversight.	10

#### **B.4.3. Finalist presentations**

MDRC, in consultation with ED and an expert review panel, will select up to four finalists based on the above evaluation criteria to present their training and support models for the evaluation. Subsequently, MDRC, in consultation with ED and an expert review panel, will select one training provider (or one consortium of training providers) for inclusion in the study.

#### **B.4.4. Review of Business Proposal**

Costs will be evaluated for congruence with the quality of the proposed work as long as the total budget is within the \$3,200,000 allocated for this scope of work. Strong proposals will have a realistic budget for each of the tasks, with a detailed budget justification.

Price will be a factor in selection; however, quality factors are more important than price. MDRC will determine whether the difference in quality is worth the difference in price. Cost-sharing in the provision of training could be a method by which the offeror keeps the price down.