COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA

2016 GPS Seal of Approval Solicitation

Introduction and Program Information

Complete College America

Established in 2009, Complete College America (CCA) is a national nonprofit with a single mission: to work with states to significantly increase the number of Americans with quality career certificates or college degrees and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations.

The need for this work is compelling. Between 1970 and 2009, undergraduate enrollment in the United States more than doubled, while the completion rate has been virtually unchanged. We've made progress in giving students from all backgrounds access to college – but we haven't finished the all-important job of helping them achieve a degree. Counting the success of all students is an essential first step. And then we must move with urgency to reinvent American higher education to meet the needs of the new majority of students on our campuses, delicately balancing the jobs they need with the education they desire.

Complete College America believes there is great reason for optimism … and a clear path forward. With a little more support – and a lot of common sense – we can ensure that many more young people get the high-quality college education that will help them live productive and fulfilling lives. All Americans will share in the benefits of their success.

GPS Seal of Approval Program

CCA developed the Guided Pathways to Success (GPS) to encourage higher education institutions to develop best practices for improved success, academic progress and degree attainment for students. The essential elements depend upon institutions defining and offering clearly organized pathways supported by the availability of courses. Both institutions and students should rely on technology to track progress and effectively manage resources for current and future planning.

The GPS Seal of Approval program will signal to American higher education institutions that implementation of GPS strategies can now be fully supported by technology. More than that, deployment of the right technology can also speed the shift in culture, policy and practice to ensure every student can choose their path, enter their path, maintain steady progress on their path and graduate on time.

For 2016, the award program will focus on software solutions that support pathways.

Pathways: Enabled by technology, pathways are structured area or program academic plans with a complete map of course registration leading to graduation. Undecided students may begin with an area pathway such as STEM, Fine Arts or Social Sciences that lead the student towards a specific major selection. Students with a declared major follow a program pathway to complete all degree requirements   Program pathways are mapped out for every term of study for the entire program with the guarantee that milestone courses will be available when needed. Students remain on their chosen path unless given approval to change by an adviser. Exploration outside one's major is still allowed and enabled as intentional investigation, replacing aimless wandering. Students stay on track for graduation and fully understand the time and financial consequences of making a change.

Pathways is a fundamental element for all GPS strategies and a must have on campuses. The GPS Seal of Approval program will recognize industry tools and practices that facilitate institutional effectiveness to achieve the goals of GPS. The award process is based on a review of solutions evaluated against a defined set of best practices, effective implementations and aspirational standards. In order to achieve the award, solution providers must demonstrate the features offered in their software solutions and strategies to develop policies and business processes during implementation. Any number of solution providers may receive the award.

Submission Guidelines

General Information

Proposals should be emailed to sealofapproval@completecollege.org by 5:00 pm ET on August 31, 2016. Proposals must be an electronic copy of the requirements spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel format and a signed cover letter. Please note that it is the solution provider's responsibility to ensure that the proposal and all other required documents are received at the address named above by the closing date specified above.

The solution provider shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of the solution provider's response to this RFP and the subsequent evaluation phase. CCA will in no case be responsible for these costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the evaluation process.

Questions and Clarifications

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Solution Providers should aggregate their requests for clarification and submit them via email to sealofapproval@completecollege.org. Such requests for clarification and responses will be posted to the program web-site without identifying the source of the inquiry. All questions must be received by 5:00 pm ET on August 15, 2016.

Timeline

Activity	Date(s)
August 1, 2016	Solicitation Announcement
August 1-15, 2016	Questions and Clarifications
August 31, 2016	Submission Due
September 1-30, 2016	Submission Review Finalist Presentations
October 1-15, 2016	Reference Checks
October 28, 2016	Award Announcements
November 10-11	Award Presentation at annual Convening

Submission Requirements

Cover Letter and Contact Information

The proposal must be accompanied by a cover letter, signed by an individual authorized to bind the entity. Full contact information for the authorized individual must be provided and include; name, title, address, email address and phone number. Please include a complete company profile; financial information is not required.

Response to Functionality Requirements

The spreadsheet should not be modified except to provide a response option and comments. The font should remain in 10pt. The entire response should not exceed fifteen (15) printed pages.

For ease in use and evaluation, please use the seal of approval functional requirements spreadsheet to provide answers for each question. Unless marked with N/A, each requirement

should have an option response and written explanation. Any information not provided will be assumed to be functionality not available from the solution provider. Solution providers are encouraged to add comments and/or attachments to demonstrate the capability or to demonstrate functionality. Any functionality that is currently in development must be so indicated.

CCA reserves the right to verify any information contained in the solution provider's submission or to request additional information after the submission has been received. Every affirmative answer to an item will be assumed to mean that the solution provider agrees the capability is currently available and supported within its product(s).

Response Option	Capabilities
0	Functionality not or partially provided.
1	Functionality provided; requires customized integration with third party.
2	Functionality provided by the solution provider, but requires customization.
3	Functionality provided seamlessly by third-party product.
4	Functionality provided out-of-the-box.

Attachment and Supplements

Submissions can include any material solution providers feels would enhance the response. Marketing brochures included as part of the main body of the submission shall not be considered. Such material must be submitted only as attachments and must not be used as a substitute for written responses. Identify the attachment file with the requirement number from the spreadsheet. In case of any conflict between the content in the attachments and solution providers' answers in the body of the proposal, the latter will prevail.

Confidential Information

CCA is aware that information contained in the proposals gives an indication of the solution provider's current operations. Therefore, use of this information from solution providers shall be confined to this request and will be treated as confidential.

Evaluation of Submissions and Awards

Evaluation Process

The evaluation process includes three steps to ensure the submissions are complete, contain acceptable responses to the requirements and verifiable as viable solutions in the market.

- Preliminary Evaluation: The preliminary evaluation will determine if the submission is complete. Solution providers will be notified if any part of the submission is incomplete.
- Detailed Evaluation: A detailed evaluation will determine the conformity to the best practice requirements and identify finalists for the award.
- Demonstration and Reference Checks: Finalists will be asked to provide demonstrations of the solutions. CCA will conduct interviews with the reference implementations to explore the solutions in action.

Awards

The Seal of Approval will be awarded to vendors who offer software solutions that promote and facilitate institutions to achieve GPS goals. To receive the seal of approval, vendors must demonstrate solutions that satisfy the best practice requirements and measurements. Additionally, vendors must make evident their strategies for promoting the policies and processes necessary for institutions to implement change.

CCA will be the sole judge of the qualifications of all prospective candidates and reserves the right to reject any and all submissions without recourse. CCA will not provide the evaluation or criteria to solution providers. The awards will be announced prior the annual convening and awarded during the convening in San Francisco, CA on November 10-11, 2016.