

## Request For Proposals March 2024

The Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives ([MOEC](http://www.moecnet.org)) is seeking proposals from consultants to assist us in assessing existing collaborative school facilities, in order to inform the sustainability of the current funding model for educational collaborative projects.

Interested parties should please reply with a proposal beginning April 1 through May 1, 2024. MOEC will accept additional responses on a rolling basis until we identify a consultant who matches our needs. The goal is to have the assessment completed by September 1, 2024.

### Context

The Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives (MOEC) represents the 24 public Educational Collaboratives throughout Massachusetts with a combined membership of approximately 300 public school districts. We provide programs and services to educate some of the Commonwealth's most high need students with disabilities, while also providing specialized support within districts to effectively include many children with moderate and intensive special needs in their home schools. Across the Commonwealth, many school districts do not have the capacity to meet the complexity of student needs on their own. They turn to Collaboratives to provide both in-district and out-of-district programs for students with some of the highest needs including students with multiple disabilities, students with social/emotional disabilities, students who are medically fragile, and students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. We develop these programs with our districts and provide them in public school facilities or, for those students who are unable to be successful in larger school buildings for a variety of reasons, in separate buildings, thus providing the Least Restrictive Environment for our students.

### Current Status

On any given school day, approximately 5,000 students participate in Collaborative schools and programs, in buildings owned and/or operated by Collaboratives or their member districts. Currently collaborative school facilities are funded through their budget which is driven by student tuition paid by local school districts. Going back to our districts, with the historical reliance on local control, is creating equity issues across the state as different regions and districts are faced with different financial and political challenges. Local conditions change all the time and at times it is a burden to school district budgets to provide local funds to provide educationally appropriate facilities for students who attend our programs from a variety of communities. We seek a more direct pathway to funding or loans and intend to use this assessment to further that goal.

Facilities for collaborative schools typically fall in one of four scenarios:

1. Leased classrooms in public schools
2. Purchased buildings
3. Leased privately owned facilities
4. Leased municipal or school buildings

Across the state, many Collaborative school buildings are in need of critical capital upgrades and improvements. Many of our districts want us to expand services for children with autism and serious behavioral health issues. In some cases, collaboratives are using buildings that general education students are no longer using. Collaboratives often expend funds renovating these spaces to make them more educationally appropriate for their students. In other cases, Collaboratives are providing schooling outside of district-used schools, in buildings built in 1917, 1918, 1924, 1953, etc. These facilities would not be considered appropriate for general education students and, while we make every effort to improve and enhance them, more appropriate spaces are needed for students placed in collaborative programs.

Collaboratives must maintain buildings and provide safe and educationally appropriate spaces for all children and remain cost effective. Each collaborative must expand capacity in an equitable way. We seek to develop a clear(er) understanding of our own capital/facility needs and determine the most appropriate and feasible methods(s) and structure to meet our (individual and collective) needs.

### Purpose

We are undertaking this study to ensure the continued provision of quality programs and services in a responsible, accountable and cost-efficient manner. To begin, it is important that MOEC (as a group) has a clear understanding of the varied needs of the member collaboratives. To accomplish this, MOEC seeks a partner to assess our collective, and individual, capital and facilities needs. The resulting information (deliverable) would include an assessment of existing facilities to support current and future capital funding decision making, based upon information shared by participating collaboratives.

More specifically, the contracted services will include:

- An initial assessment that would be anticipated to be based upon reporting from each collaborative with guidance from a consultant (not a formal facility assessment of each building or a facility needs assessment by an architectural firm). This would include two-three hours at each of 24 collaboratives, likely totalling 70-100 hours with interviews and site visits.
  
- A broad strategic analysis of the condition of collaborative facilities to include:
  - Known mechanical and structural issues as reported by collaboratives
  - Critical Safety issues
  - Guidelines for repair & modernization
  - Associated costs over the life of the building
  - Potential new space needs

### General Scope of Work

- **Project List Development:**
  - The firm will assemble a list of facilities' ages; square footage; enrollment; deficiencies; and repair, modernization and expansion needs.
  - The firm will be fully responsible for the review and consolidation of information from interviews with individual Collaborative Leadership Teams to be included in the analysis. This will include any analysis the Collaborative may have completed independently or through a consultant.
  - Facilities professionals will subsequently conduct a visual inspection to clarify questions they may have about a limited number of facilities.

- **Analysis**
  - The selected firm will provide an analysis and presentation of facilities' conditions and needs, spanning deficiencies, repair, modernization and potential new space needs.
    - Building conditions,
    - Known mechanical and structural issues as reported by collaboratives,
    - Critical Safety issues,
    - Guidelines for repair & modernization,
    - Associated costs over the life of the building,
    - Summary of collaborative's utilization of space, recognizing the expanded needs for space of the specialized population served, and
    - Potential new space needs.

### Qualifications

The following qualifications of the firm are desirable for successful completion of the requirements:

- Strategic assessment of educational facilities and operations as a core business.
- Experience performing capital planning exercises at facilities of varying types.
- Existing database of comparable facilities metrics for benchmarking facilities' conditions and funding levels for purposes of capital planning.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively present findings to district-level senior leadership/governing boards/state legislature.

### Submission Requirements:

Responses to this RFP should include the following sections and contents:

- **Background:** Provide a brief background of the firm/individual containing history and primary markets served.
- **Experience:** A summary of relevant experience including a full list of entities where a similar Scope of Work has been performed within the last five years with three applicable case studies.
- **Project Team:** Submit a proposed project team including executive leadership, project management and data collection staff. Please note that licensed engineers are not required, but each participant should be experienced in work similar to that requested.
- **Scope of Work:** A detailed description of the firm's approach to the suggested Scope of Work above. Specific mention should be made of the firm's project classification, organization/segmentation of backlog and project selection processes.
- **Deliverables:** Provide sample deliverables to highlight both the organization's technical skills as well as the ability to deliver an effective presentation that will engage Board level audiences.
- **Fees:** List proposed fee for suggested Scope of Work.

The final proposal should address the above, and specifically list contacts for a number of references.

### Preferred Method of Contact

At this time, we prefer to communicate via email. As the proposal process progresses we will make ourselves available for phone calls and possible in person meetings. Additional questions are encouraged to clarify the deliverables of this RFP prior to submitting a proposal. If needed, please email Joanne Haley Sullivan [jhaleysullivan@moechnet.org](mailto:jhaleysullivan@moechnet.org) to set up a day/time to discuss.

Upon receipt of the proposal, the MOEC Capital and Facilities Committee will meet with selected consultants to provide an opportunity for mutual dialog for clarity.

MOEC reserves the right to waive any of the above criteria.