

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Contract for NC Learning Object Repository Migration
FY 2019-20

Request: The State Board of Community Colleges is requested to approve a new contract for the migration of the learning object repository content from the open source Equella platform to an Open Education Resource (OER) Commons platform, and for ongoing hosting and support for a three-year contract term for an amount not to exceed \$212,000.

Strategic Plan Reference(s):

Theme: System Effectiveness

Goal 4: Advance organizational effectiveness, operations, and decision-making to support a cohesive system of nimble, empowered, and community driven colleges.

- Objective 4.2: Improve decision-making through increased access to comprehensive, timely, and quality data.

Background: The [North Carolina Learning Object Repository \(NCLOR\)](#) is a large database of shared instructional materials for teaching and learning. This database allows educators to collaborate across the NC Community College System on a platform where they can contribute and share digital content in the form of videos, learning objects, lectures, assignments, self-assessments, professional development webinars and tutorials, and other teaching and learning assets. Shared content can be embedded into online courses, used as supplemental materials for all course deliveries, and as a basis for individual and group professional development opportunities. The NCLOR contains OER content, as well as licensed collections only accessible to NCCCS staff and instructors. The NCLOR is a secure permissions-based resource that provides all 58 colleges with a cost-effective way to access and share the same digital content with students across our System. Digital storage is kept at a minimum for colleges as they share content by embedding links in courses and assignments.

The NCLOR currently exists on an Equella software platform. Originally, this platform required a proprietary license, hosting and support contract. In 2018, the software was released by the vendor into the open source market. NCCCS hosts the NCLOR on servers at the NC Department of Information Technology (DIT) and pays another vendor for support and maintenance. In order to upgrade the Equella platform to functional standards and to meet State security requirements, NCCCS would need to invest over \$50,000 in this additional maintenance process and additional DIT hosting cost because the current servers used for the NCLOR are at end-of-life and scheduled for replacement.

In 2019, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) received approval from DIT to award the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME) with a software as a service (SaaS) contract for the Open Education Resource (OER) Commons platform. DPI has migrated content to this new SaaS platform. DPI and NCCCS will each build their own microsites containing digital content for each educational sector.

Moving to the OER Commons platform will save money and resources for NCCCS. NCCCS currently pays \$92,000 per year for hosting and support of the Equella platform. After migration, the hosting and support costs will drop to \$40,000 per year, saving the State over \$50,000 per year. Technical support and maintenance is included in the contract.

NCCCS was approved by the Office of State Budget Management (OSBM) to carry forward the remaining 2 + 2 E-Learning Initiative funds to be used for migration costs of the NCLOR platform in 2019-20. Moving the NCLOR away from DIT hosting will save DIT from investing in additional servers, because the current servers used for the NCLOR are at end-of-life and scheduled for replacement.

Rationale: NCCCS is migrating to an OER SaaS platform to provide a stable and secure hosting environment for the learning object repository content used by the System Office and 58 community colleges. The hosting and support costs will save the State over \$50,000 a year while providing an environment to expand NCCCS teaching and learning resources.

Method of Procurement: In accordance with the procurement practice of the State of North Carolina, approval by outside purchasing authorities (DIT) is required. State Board approval is contingent upon approval of the DIT Procurement Office.

Contract Amount and Time Period: The contract amount will not exceed \$212,000, for a three-year period after award of contract.

Fund Source and Availability: Funding is available from carry forward approved by the Office of State Budget and Management and FY 2019-20 State General Fund appropriations for the 2 + 2 E-Learning Initiative. Funding in each fiscal year thereafter is contingent upon availability of State General Fund appropriations for the 2 + 2 E-Learning Initiative.

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