



MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

Director's Office

Greg Gianforte, Governor
Misty Ann Giles, Director

doa.mt.gov
406.444.2460
doadirector@mt.gov

NOTICE OF INTENT TO AWARD

Solicitation Title/Event Name:

Solicitation Number:

Solicitation Close Date:

Notice of Intent to Award Posting Date:

Issuing Contracts Officer/Contact Information:

The State intends to award a contract to the apparent successful offeror(s) of the above-mentioned solicitation. The Notice of Intent to Award shall not be considered a binding commitment by the state.

In accordance with the Montana Procurement Act, the State has made available for public inspection the relevant scoring matrix/bid tab for the above-mentioned solicitation. Comments from the public regarding the proposed award must be submitted to the Contracts Officer listed above within this 7-day notice period.

APPARENT SUCCESSFUL OFFEROR(S)

UNSUCCESSFUL OFFEROR(S)

OPI-RFP-2026-0174AB
Evidence-Based Literacy Professional Learning for MHIT Program

SCORE SUMMARY WORKSHEET

Categories	Possible Points	Academy in Manayunk DBA AIM Institute for Learning and Research	Creative Coaching Consultants	Side-by-Side Consulting
Scope of Work				
Professional Learning Content Development				
Alignment to standards, Tier 1 - Tier 2 Integration, and Evidence-Based Reading Practices	100	93	75	96
Instructional Strategies and Data Use	100	85	73	96
Quality and Clarity	50	43	36	48
Iteration and Responsiveness	50	43	36	48
Online Courses via OPI Learning Hub				
Course Design and Accessibility	100	90	73	90
Content Alignment and Engagement	100	93	72	98
Pilot Implementation and Feedback Integration	40	32	25	35
Evaluation and Feedback Collection				
Feedback Plan and Coordination	20	15	16	18
Analysis and Reporting	10	8	7	8
Use of Findings	10	7	7	10
Offeror Qualifications				
Company Profile & Experience				
A detailed description of any similar past projects, including the service type and dates the services were provided.	20	17	14	20
The client for whom the services were provided.	20	20	15	20
A general description of the firm, including its primary source of business, organizational structure and size, number of employees, and years of experience performing services similar to those described within the RFP.	20	20	13	20
Executive Summary	20	18	16	20
Qualifications / Resumes				
Key Personnel	30	30	20	30
Approach and Timeline				
Proposed approach and methodology	40	35	28	38
work plan and timeline	30	27	22	29

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Evidence-Based Literacy Professional Learning for MHIT Program

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Categories	Possible Points	Academy in Manayunk DBA AIM Institute for Learning and Research	Creative Coaching Consultants	Side-by-Side Consulting
References				
Complete contact information provided	P/F	P	P	P
Budget Narrative				
Cost Alignment and Justification	30	23	18	24
Sustainability, Accessibility, and Scalability	20	14	12	16
Indirect and Miscellaneous Cost	10	8	0	6
Cost Proposal				
Cost Proposal	200	200	188	185
Equal Pay for Montana Women				
Equal Pay for Montana Women. Offerors who agree and certify compliance to Executive Order No. 12-2016, Equal Pay for Montana Women, will receive a bonus of 5% of the total points available. Offerors who do not comply will not receive bonus points	50	0	50	50
Scope of Work, Offeror Qualifications, & Budget Narrative	820	721	578	770
Cost Proposal	200	200	188	185
subtotal for all required sections	1020	921	766	955
Equal Pay for MT Women	50	0	50	50
Final Awarded Total	1070	921	816	1005

OPI-RFP-2026-0174AB			
Evidence-Based Literacy Professional Learning for MHIT Program			
Individual Scoring Matrix			
The evaluator/evaluation committee will review and evaluate the Offers according to the following criteria based on a total number of 1,000 points. The Scope of Work, Offeror Qualifications, and Budget Narrative will be evaluated based on the following Scoring Guide. The Cost Proposal will be evaluated based on the formula set forth below. ACHIEVE MINIMUM SCORE: Any proposal that fails to achieve 85% of the total points for the Scope of Work, Offeror Qualifications, and the Budget Narrative may be eliminated from further consideration.			
Offeror (Company) Name: Academy in Manayunk DBA AIM Institute for Learning and Research			Total Points Awarded: 921
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Scope of Work			
Professional Learning Content Development			
Alignment to standards, Tier 1 - Tier 2 Integration, and Evidence-Based Reading Practices	100	93	The PL content is strong and well documented, and the coaching piece meets the RFP's requirement for job embedded support. When it comes to connecting Tier 1 and Tier 2, the proposal mostly repeats general claims without showing how the pieces actually link. There's no mechanism for how coursework ties into tutoring or how coaching supports the connection to the tutoring side. This demonstrates exceptional alignment to the requirements outlined in the RFP. The proposal is deeply grounded in the Science of Reading and structured literacy practices and presents a comprehensive professional learning system designed to strengthen both Tier 1 instruction and Tier 2 intervention across participating MHIT schools. The Pathways to Proficient Reading coursework, Skills Workshops, and Teacher Coaching model collectively support educator knowledge, classroom implementation, intervention alignment, and MTSS literacy systems. The proposal also demonstrates a strong understanding of Montana's rural and tribal contexts and incorporates delivery structures designed to ensure equitable access statewide. The professional learning plan is grounded in SOR, structured literacy principles, and MTSS. The content aligns with standards and supports T1 and T2 settings. Projects in multiple states shows the ability of AIM to align with and support state standards (MA, MD, MS, LA, RI, NY, NE). Design includes foundational coursework, targeted workshops, and embedded coaching to strengthen instruction across T1 and T2 settings - aligned with SOR and MTSS. Professional learning model is designed to support approximately 240 educators across 60 schools during MHIT period. The blended implementation model is designed to support equitable access across the state.
Instructional Strategies and Data Use	100	85	A robust professional learning model that incorporates multiple evidence-based instructional delivery methods, including asynchronous coursework, virtual Communities of Practice, in-person workshops, and job-embedded coaching. The coaching component is particularly strong and includes classroom observation, instructional modeling, collaborative planning, implementation feedback, and reflection. These structures reflect current best practices in adult learning and implementation science. Each strategy/service is listed including a description an its alignment to other components of the program. Using a learn, practice, apply cycle for application of skills. It will emphasize instructional routines and evidence-based literacy practices supportive of explicit instruction, collaborative data analysis, progress monitoring, and instructional responsiveness. Data informed instructional adjustment within MTSS literacy systems will be used. This section is more lean. The coaching bullets mostly restate the RFP rather than showing AIM's approach, and there's no named data protocol, assessment tool, or decision-making framework to ground the work. It uses the right terms but never shows the mechanism behind them.

Offeror (Company) Name: Academy in Manayunk DBA AIM Institute for Learning and Research			Total Points Awarded: 921
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Quality and Clarity	50	43	The provided plan is well-written and clear in its instructional path. Each component has a summary of what is expected and how it will be provided, making it easy to envision what a real life application of the program would be like. The timeline table is clear and tied to real cohort numbers that match the RFP, which helps show the overall project structure. The gap is the logistics layer. The plan doesn't explain how in-person professional learning will actually be scheduled and staffed across 60 schools spread across Montana. Well organized, professionally written, and easy to navigate. The structure follows the RFP requirements closely, and sections are clearly labeled. Graphics, tables, and narrative explanations contribute to readability and understanding.
Iteration and Responsiveness	50	43	Feedback sources are named, like surveys, reflections, coaching observations, and district collaboration. But there's no cadence, no revision process, and no example of feedback leading to a change. It ends up being a list of inputs rather than a true iteration cycle, no real mechanism, just collection channels similar to the RFP's own wording. <u>C</u> ommitment to continuous refinement through coaching feedback, implementation support, Communities of Practice, and statewide partnership structures. The five-year model reflects an understanding of iterative improvement and responsiveness to district needs. Designed to support alignment between classroom instruction and tutoring support. The professional learning (Pathways to Proficient Reading) emphasizes reading development, explicit and systematic instruction, assessment-informed teaching, and instructional decision-making that connect to classroom practices. The skills workshops extend the foundational learning via in-person sessions that support district needs. Teacher coaching supports implementation of evidence-based practices. This prioritizes an engaging learning interface - using a learn, practice, and apply cycles.
Online Courses via OPI Learning Hub			
Course Design and Accessibility	100	90	Well suited for statewide implementation. The proposal demonstrates thoughtful consideration of accessibility, flexible participation options, and support for rural educators. Virtual Communities of Practice enhance accessibility and engagement. Offeror will collaborate with OPI to implement learning opportunities through OPI Learning Hub. Online learning supports MTs rural landscape and accessibility with flexible access. AIM has experience creating coursework through online browser-based learning management systems and will work with OPI to provide course packages that will work within the OPI Learning Hub. Offeror names its LMS, Absorb, and notes SCORM compatible packaging, which is a real technical detail. The OPI Learning Hub work is only described as something they would do if requested, so the Hub-specific plan is not defined. Accessibility is also a gap, since the proposal focuses on geographic access and flexible schedules rather than disability or UDL features like captioning or screen reader compatibility

Offeror (Company) Name: Academy in Manayunk DBA AIM Institute for Learning and Research			Total Points Awarded: 921
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Content Alignment and Engagement	100	93	The online coursework supports asynchronous learning opportunities with synchronous virtual sessions. There will be reflection activities after implementation and application focused instruction supports that reinforce classroom implementation and educator collaboration. Supports sustained engagement and instructional consistency across schools. This section is stronger because it shows real interactive elements like sorting exercises, quizzes, and the "Watch Kayla Read" simulation. Skills Workshops, online coursework, and coaching are also described as working together rather than as separate pieces, which supports the engagement claim. Aligns strongly with evidence-based literacy instruction and reflects current research. The inclusion of facilitated Communities of Practice, coaching supports, and implementation-focused assignments strengthens participant engagement and transfer to practice. In-person requirement is a concern.
Pilot Implementation and Feedback Integration	40	32	The only real anchor is the Years 2–4 deliverable list that mentions evaluation summaries and improvement recommendations. Beyond that, there's no actual pilot design — no defined pilot group, no separate timeline, and no criteria for revising materials before wider release. It ends up as a deliverable list without a pilot mechanism, so the score drops because it doesn't meet what this line item specifically asks for. Demonstrates experience refining programming through statewide implementations and references independent evaluations and case studies. Feedback mechanisms are embedded throughout the professional learning model. Cannot find what they do with this information to show impact. The pilot year focuses on implementation launch, supporting approx. 20 educators. Will collaborate closely with OPI to support implementation planning, online course integration, and initiation of profession learning and coaching in participating schools. There will be educator feedback collection, with evaluation and feedback summaries as a deliverable. Refinement of professional learning supports based on implementation observations and educator input is included. Years 2-4 will expand educator participation and continued refinement of instructional support structures across participating MHIT schools. There is ongoing evaluation and feedback collection and continuous improvement recommendations. Their plan is to support approx. 240 educators across 60 schools.
Evaluation and Feedback Collection			
Feedback Plan and Coordination	20	15	Includes multiple opportunities for participant feedback through coaching, Communities of Practice, surveys, and implementation supports. Feedback appears integrated into ongoing improvement processes, but I don't see a spot for adjusting based on data. AIM and OPI will collaborate to ensure alignment with state and federal agency priorities, timelines, reporting expectations, and improvement processes. Educator feedback will be collected and used towards refinement of professional learning supports based on implementation observations and educator input. Feedback sources might include educator surveys, implementation reflections, coaching observations, and ongoing collaboration with participating schools. The feedback methods listed, like surveys and collaboration with schools, mostly mirror the RFP and don't show how AIM would actually coordinate them. There's no named owner, no schedule, and no process for turning feedback from 60 schools into a clear set of priorities.

Offeror (Company) Name: Academy in Manayunk DBA AIM Institute for Learning and Research			Total Points Awarded: 921
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Analysis and Reporting	10	8	Evaluation and reporting activities support refinement of professional learning materials, coaching structures, online learning support, and implementation over time. The proposal names deliverables with dates, like evaluation and feedback summaries in Year 1 and implementation monitoring summaries in Years 2–4, which is better than simply restating the RFP. However, it doesn't specify reporting frequency, format, or what OPI would actually receive and when. References independent evaluations and data collection processes demonstrates experience reporting outcomes at the state level. No idea of frequency, or who is responsible.
Use of Findings	10	7	"Continuous improvement recommendations" appears as a named Years 2–4 deliverable, which is the only concrete anchor in this line item. There's no example of what a finding-to-action loop would look like in practice — no sample decision rule or revision trigger tied to data. Demonstrates a commitment to using implementation and evaluation findings to improve services. Continuous improvement is evident throughout the model. Not clear how this information is used. The continuous improvement process is used to ensure professional learning is responsive to educator needs and remains aligned with MHIT goals. I didn't see a clear explanation of how they would use the findings.
Offeror Qualifications			
Company Profile & Experience			
A detailed description of any similar past projects, including the service type and dates the services were provided.	20	17	Extensive experience leading statewide literacy initiatives in multiple states, including Nebraska, Louisiana, Mississippi, Rhode Island, Maryland, and New York. The scale and scope of these projects closely mirror Montana's needs. They did not address the rural access issues and do not seem to understand what a large state we are. Multiple past projects were included. All included show support for gains in reading knowledge and positive student impact. Dates and services were provided in each description. AIM shows strong, dated experience across several large statewide partnerships, backed by independent outcome data from groups like Johns Hopkins and EdMetric. The gap is Montana-specific context. Their work with rural and tribal communities and Montana's unique delivery needs isn't clearly established, especially compared with the scale of the other states they highlight.
The client for whom the services were provided.	20	20	Clients who received services are listed and services provided are explained. AIM provides references with named agencies and individual contacts, including direct phone numbers and emails. That level of specific, checkable detail is exactly what this line item requires. Strong references and extensive state-level partnerships are provided. References appear highly relevant to the scope of work.
A general description of the firm, including its primary source of business, organizational structure and size, number of employees, and years of experience performing services similar to those described within the RFP.	20	20	The proposal is grounded in concrete facts rather than generic claims. It notes AIM was founded in 2006, operates as a nonprofit based in Conshohocken PA, and uses a practice partnership model through AIM Academy. It names research collaborators and cites work in more than 30 states. Independent evaluations from Johns Hopkins and EdMetric add third party verification beyond AIM's own statements. Key personnel are listed and specific roles are included - Megan Rush (project manager), Carolyn Durante (deputy project manager), Tamara Cella (teacher coaching lead), Colleen Danilson (professional learning lead), years of experience are listed in resumes

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Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Executive Summary	20	18	Clearly articulates the vision, rationale and approach. Executive summary provides a concise overview of their approach for instructional improvement, highlighting the need for professional learning in rural and tribal communities. AIM references their experience in supporting statewide literacy initiatives and incorporation of multiple delivery structures. The summary uses the RFP's own figures, which shows AIM read and understood the scope. But it mostly restates MHIT's goals in AIM's wording rather than highlighting what AIM uniquely brings to the project.
Qualifications / Resumes			
Key Personnel	30	30	They have it, resumes were included. This is the strongest section. Four named team members come with solid credentials, including multiple doctorates, and each has a full resume with concrete prior work, such as leading coaching for about 300 NYCPS literacy coaches or managing statewide work with Nebraska DOE. Their roles align cleanly with the project's needs, showing a well-built team ready for the scope. The resumes demonstrate literacy expertise, implementation expertise, and statewide project leadership capacity.
Approach and Timeline			
Proposed approach and methodology	40	35	This section is strong and concrete. It names real components like Pathways, the eight Skills Workshops, and Teacher Coaching, and gives actual dosage figures instead of vague descriptions. The Learn–Practice–Apply cycle is shown with a real example using the Kayla student data simulation, which adds practical detail most proposals don't provide. Comprehensive and grounded in implementation science, adult learning theory, and evidence-based literacy practices. The integration of coursework, coaching, and Communities of Practice is a significant strength. Timeline for year 1, 2-4, and 5 is provided. Potential activities and deliverables are listed. There is a heavy focus on educator support and sustainability in each part. AIM is receptive to continuous improvement and feedback adjustments.
work plan and timeline	30	27	The five-year timeline is realistic, detailed, and aligned with project goals. Deliverables and implementation phases are clearly defined but the impact and feedback cycle needs some work. A workplan and timeline for years 1-5 is provided including sustainability planning in year 5. Each service has a clear description for what and how it will be provided. The year-by-year plan matches the RFP's participation numbers exactly, showing it was built for this project rather than adapted from a template.
References			
Complete contact information provided	P/F	P	References with contact person, phone number, and email provided
Budget Narrative			
Cost Alignment and Justification	30	23	A yearly plan for the budget is included. The total budget is \$508,700 which is below the total budget allowed by OPI. The cost alignment supports the implementation of all proposed components of the professional learning plan (pathways to proficient reading, skills workshop, teacher coaching). Each cost component is justified in a short summary explaining what the costs provide. The budget table gives a clear five-year total of \$508,700, which fits under cap and generally lines up with the phased educator counts. What's missing is the unit-level detail — no rates, hours, or cost-per-educator — so the total looks fine, but the math behind it isn't shown. This aligns well with the proposed scope of work and includes reasonable allocations for coaching, professional learning, coordination, and implementation support for all years but the last year of the program (year 5).

Offeror (Company) Name: Academy in Manayunk DBA AIM Institute for Learning and Research			Total Points Awarded: 921
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Sustainability, Accessibility, and Scalability	20	14	Sustainability planning is integrated throughout the five-year model, and the proposal demonstrates a clear vision for long-term statewide implementation and capacity building. Year five does not have enough funding Long-term sustainability is supported, with equitable access and statewide scalability with blended professional learning structures and ongoing refinement over time. Online learning and the blended delivery model support MTs vastly rural landscape, making accessibility to the professional learning possible. This section mostly repeats the RFP's prompts about sustaining PD content, online platforms, and equitable access without offering a concrete mechanism, cost detail, or a named person responsible for keeping the platform running after the contract ends.
Indirect and Miscellaneous Cost	10	8	Travel and in-person delivery supports, venue and hosting costs, and technology/online learning support cost summaries are included. One solid detail stands out: hosting costs are included based on OPI guidance from the procurement Q&A, which shows real responsiveness. Beyond that, travel and materials are only described by category, with no trip counts, per diem figures, or budget percentages, so there's not much to verify the numbers against. Sustainability planning is integrated throughout the five-year model, and the proposal demonstrates a clear vision for long-term statewide implementation and capacity building. Too many undefined costs.
Cost Proposal			
Cost Proposal	200	200	
Equal Pay for Montana Women			
Equal Pay for Montana Women. Offerors who agree and certify compliance to Executive Order No. 12-2016, Equal Pay for Montana Women, will receive a bonus of 5% of the total points available. Offerors who do not comply will not receive bonus points	50	0	
Scope of Work, Offeror Qualifications, & Budget Narrative	820	721	
Cost Proposal	200	200	
subtotal for all required sections	1020	921	
Equal Pay for MT Women	50	0	
Final Awarded Total	1070	921	

OPI-RFP-2026-0174AB			
Evidence-Based Literacy Professional Learning for MHIT Program			
Individual Scoring Matrix			
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Offeror (Company) Name: Creative Coaching Consultants			Total Points Awarded: 816
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Scope of Work			
Professional Learning Content Development			
Alignment to standards, Tier 1 - Tier 2 Integration, and Evidence-Based Reading Practices	100	75	Tier 1-Tier 2 integration are not specifically addressed. CCC references a focus on evidence based instructional practices aligned to the SOR and structured literacy principles. There is a heavy focus on instructional alignment, coaching supported implementation, instructional consistency, and continuous improvement processes. Their course design is grounded in adult learning theory and implementation science. They reference giving educators ongoing opportunities to learn, apply, reflect, and refined rather than just isolated PD sessions. Aligned to EBP, Foundational skills building up to systems and supports, multi-year sustainability and scaling - clearly brings real, verifiable experience developing New Jersey aligned K-8 curriculum and delivering inclusive, evidence based literacy instruction, which adds strong credibility. But none of that experience ties directly to Montana's standards or MTSS, and there's still no demonstration of the Tier 1-Tier 2 linkage the RFP specifically requires. The credentials are solid but the required mechanism still isn't shown. The proposal repeatedly references evidence-based literacy instruction, intervention support, and implementation fidelity. However, the proposal remains largely conceptual and lacks the specificity around: Science of Reading implementation, Structured literacy practices, Tier 1/Tier 2 integration models, Montana-specific literacy priorities, and detailed literacy content sequences. The proposal demonstrates understanding of literacy improvement but provides fewer concrete examples of literacy content development than expected for a statewide literacy initiative.
Instructional Strategies and Data Use	100	73	The response talks a lot about data use and mentions some evaluation experience, but never shows an actual tool, protocol, or classroom-level example. It stays at the level of intent without demonstrating a real strategy/tool. The proposal describes how coaching supports implementation and educator growth. However, specific details regarding: Data collection protocols, Fidelity monitoring tools, Educator growth measures, Student outcome measures, and the Statewide reporting structures are less developed than would be expected for a project of this scale. There is an included graphic on p19 that proposes a research based implementation model for educator growth. P21 has an additional graphic that further explains instructional strategies with a brief summary of what those include. Monthly coaching sessions, data-analysis meetings, leadership planning, follow up feedback sessions, implementation reflection, alignment consultations, asynchronous support, and follow-up feedback sessions are mentioned as strategies. The PD will focus on evidence based instructional practice aligned to SOR and structured literacy principles - a graphic including the instructional pillars and assessment & support is on p23. They support educators through practical modeling, collaborative problem-solving, coaching conversations, implementation feedback, and actionable instructional tools that can be immediately applies in practice. Ensuring that PD learning translates into improvements in instructional delivery in the classroom. CCC states that data informed improvement will be used, guided by precise student data analysis.

Offeror (Company) Name: Creative Coaching Consultants			Total Points Awarded: 816
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Quality and Clarity	50	36	Required sections are included and clearly labeled. However, formatting is inconsistent throughout. Several sections contain broad narrative statements without supporting detail, and some sections read more like marketing materials than technical responses. Additional specificity and clearer alignment to the scoring criteria would improve overall quality. The materials are fairly well-organized, and include many references to MTSS. Clear statements including connecting Tier 1 and Tier 2 practices are missing. The graphics are helpful in understanding different sections of the proposal, but clear examples of what educators will see and use are not available. CCC acknowledges that their experience in serving tribal communities is limited, but that they have experience in culturally responsive literacy practices. Some sections could use further elaboration to meet the needed inclusions for the RFP. The risk and mitigation table is genuinely strong, it identifies real challenges and offers practical strategies, showing CCC actually thought about varied educator needs. The rest of the document doesn't keep that same level of clarity, often repeating similar language or echoing the RFP without adding detail. The thoughtful risk table earns credit at the low end of Good, but unevenness across the proposal holds it back.
Iteration and Responsiveness	50	36	CCC states that they will use a continuous improvement process. The professional learning content, coaching supports, and instructional resources will be continuously refined based on educator feedback, implementation observations, and student support needs. Direct references to T1/T2 is not evident. They list several useful improvement activities like surveys and coaching reflection tools, but doesn't explain when or how feedback actually leads to changes in materials. It shows a plan to collect input, not a real process for using it. The proposal references reflection, implementation support, and instructional refinement. The limited evidence is provided showing how prior feedback has been systematically used to revise programs or improve outcomes.
Online Courses via OPI Learning Hub			
Course Design and Accessibility	100	73	Lays out a nice-looking asynchronous course with solid accessibility features, but it doesn't show the LMS experience the RFP requires or any past work on the OPI Learning Hub. Their proposal treats Hub compatibility as something they'll figure out later, not something they've already done. The instructional design is good, but the technical know how the RFP calls for isn't really demonstrated. The proposal references online learning, professional development modules, and virtual supports. There is limited information regarding: Learning Hub integration, Course architecture, Accessibility standards, Universal Design for Learning, Accommodations for diverse learners, and Course completion supports. More detailed course design documentation would strengthen this section considerably. Learning Hub assets are referenced in the deliverables section. Using the flexible learning delivery structures supports access across Montana, scheduling responsiveness, and sustained educator engagement. Using online learning experiences that are compatible with OPIs learning hub will make the content accessible, scalable, and responsive to educator needs across the state. The online learning modules will be designed using research based adult learning principles and implementation focused instructional design structures. The courses will be organized into learning segments that support educator reflection, application, and continuous learning. They will be designed to be accessible and user-friendly. There is not a reference specifically to linking T1/T2 instruction strategies.

Offeror (Company) Name: Creative Coaching Consultants			Total Points Awarded: 816
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Content Alignment and Engagement	100	72	Coaching and implementation support would likely increase participant engagement. Specific examples of module content, participant activities, assignments, assessments, and literacy learning progressions are largely absent. The response states that their online learning approach is intentionally designed to support asynchronous access, adult engagement, implementation applications, and ongoing instructional reflection. They will develop online learning experiences that are compatible with OPI's learning hub. The materials include evidence based instructional components, references in the graphic on p. 25. Plans for adult engagement structures are included. Direct references to T1 instruction reinforcing T2 interventions are not included. This names the right frameworks and engagement strategies, and Julie Lang's research adds some credibility. But they don't provide any sample module or content, and there's no sign they're familiar with Montana's specific HQIM. The response shows awareness of the components, not how they'd actually be built
Pilot Implementation and Feedback Integration	40	25	There is a section in the proposal for pilot implementation and feedback integration. The professional learning content, coaching supports, and instructional resources will be continuously refined based on educator feedback, implementation observations, and student support needs. A graphic of their proposed improvement process is included. The relation of these to T1/T2 instructional alignment and effectiveness is not included. CCC includes a "Pilot Implementation & Feedback Integration" section and lists some relevant reflection activities, but never defines a pilot cohort, timeline, scale, or criteria for scaling up. It reads the same as their general continuous improvement plan rather than a distinct pilot phase. The proposal references continuous improvement and educator feedback but does not clearly outline a pilot process, beta testing procedures, or structured feedback integration cycle for Montana implementation.
Evaluation and Feedback Collection			
Feedback Plan and Coordination	20	16	This names a feedback coordination role and offers a solid mix of feedback methods, like surveys and attendance data. It falls short because the collection schedule isn't defined and the role isn't actually staffed, reflecting broader personnel gaps. Still, the plan is more developed than most other parts of the proposal. Feedback collection is discussed generally through coaching conversations and educator reflection. The proposal does not provide detailed evaluation instruments or participant feedback systems. The response states that they will use ongoing feedback and implementation data to refine support throughout the project. They include potential evaluation measures such as participant feedback surveys, professional learning attendance, leadership feedback, and educator self-assessment data.
Analysis and Reporting	10	7	The proposal references data-informed decision-making but provides limited detail regarding, reporting schedules, Dashboard creation, State reporting requirements, and Data analysis methodologies. They will use ongoing feedback to analyze and refine support throughout the project. A variety of evaluation measures are included in a graphic on p35. This has names annual summary reports and the data sources they'd use, but doesn't explain the report structure, who they're for, or whether anything is reported between annual cycles. It identifies a deliverable without showing an actual reporting process.
Use of Findings	10	7	CCC states that they will use the data to strengthen implementation and responsiveness. CCC does reference using the feedback to continue refining their PD. The response mentions using findings for sustainability planning and module refinement, and the year by year structure suggests results would inform each phase. But there's no clear mechanism showing how specific findings lead to specific actions, so it remains an intention rather than a demonstrated feedback loop. Continuous improvement is discussed conceptually. Stronger examples of how findings have informed previous projects would improve this score.

Offeror (Company) Name: Creative Coaching Consultants			Total Points Awarded: 816
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Offeror Qualifications			
Company Profile & Experience			
A detailed description of any similar past projects, including the service type and dates the services were provided.	20	14	CCC gives a solid list of 21 partner districts plus two clearly dated, funded projects, which covers the RFP's need to show past work with dates and service types. The district list doesn't include individual timelines or scope, so it's not as strong as it could be, but the specific examples they do provide are credible. Experience in coaching, curriculum, and instructional leadership. Fewer examples of large-scale, statewide literacy initiatives are provided. CCC is an instructional leadership organization specializing in literacy instruction, instructional coaching, curriculum design, professional learning systems, leadership development, MTSS implementation, and evidence based instructional practices. Specific examples of past related projects are missing - though there is a list of places they have partnered with as references. Examples of the work done with those places are not included.
The client for whom the services were provided.	20	15	Limited client references and project examples are included in the proposal materials provided. CCC references experience in designing literacy based professional learning, but does not include specific examples of those services or the client for whom the services were provided. A New Jersey Dept of Ed grant initiative is noted, but not elaborated on. The response includes a full references section with six organizations and complete contact details.
A general description of the firm, including its primary source of business, organizational structure and size, number of employees, and years of experience performing services similar to those described within the RFP.	20	13	The firm is an instructional leadership organization that specializes in literacy instruction. They have partnered with school districts, other organizations, and state-level initiatives to strengthen instructional systems and educator capacity through research-based professional learning and coaching support. The organizational structure and size is shown in an organizational chart including 2 employees. Michael has overseen elements in the business profession for over 25 years. Julie has 29 years of experience in education and 6 years of experience in professional development and coaching. This is a two-person partnership with defined roles for instructional work and administration, which gives a basic picture of the organization. Still, they don't provide overall staff numbers, a founding date, or organizational level experience the 29+ years noted are Julie Lang's personal career, not the firm's. Experience appears strongest in coaching and leadership development rather than statewide literacy systems implementation.
Executive Summary	20	16	Clear, well organized, and accurately frames the MHIT initiative and CCC's role. It introduces the lead consultant and the service model effectively and touches on the equity priorities in the RFP. Communicates the organization's vision and commitment to literacy improvement. It provides a good overview but lacks specific deliverables and implementation details. The executive summary focuses on the plan on an ongoing cycle of learning, application, reflection, refinement, and continuous improvement. CCC references MTSS frameworks and differentiated literacy instruction designed to maximize student engagement and achievement. The inclusions of alignment to T1 and T2 instruction is missing.

Offeror (Company) Name: Creative Coaching Consultants			Total Points Awarded: 816
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Qualifications / Resumes			
Key Personnel	30	20	Julie Lang and Michael Santamaria bring relevant educational leadership experience. The proposal provides less evidence of a large project team with extensive statewide literacy implementation experience. Julie Lang's resume includes her years of experience, related experience, skills, volunteer service, certifications, and publications. Only one resume is included - there is no designation of proposed role A staffing plan with project roles is included - there is no clarity as to who will be in each of those roles. A business partner, Michael Santamaria, is mentioned - A resume for him is missing. CCC names a strong lead consultant with solid, relevant credentials, but the rest of the staffing plan is just job titles with no actual people or qualifications attached. The proposal even notes that these roles might shift depending on the project phase, suggesting they aren't yet filled. For a multi year, statewide project of this size, that leaves big questions about who will deliver most of the work. The lead's strengths are overshadowed by the uncertainty around the rest of the team.
Approach and Timeline			
Proposed approach and methodology	40	28	Methodology is thoughtful and aligned with professional learning research. Implementation details are not sufficiently developed in several areas, including literacy content development, course creation, and evaluation structures. The proposed approach is designed to build educator knowledge and also establish sustainable structures that improve instructional consistency and long-term implementation success. The methodology includes evidenced based workshops, job embedded coaching, tutoring alignment, intervention support, data informed planning, and sustainability systems. They prioritize equity and access by supporting educators in meeting the needs of diverse learners. There is an implementation roadmap included on P31, showing their approach in a phased structure. CCC outlines a clear five stage methodology with a coaching cadence and timeline, but it does not address the RFP's specific scale or required training dosage. The proposal doesn't show how its approach or staffing would serve 240 educators across 60 schools or meet the stipulated training day counts.
work plan and timeline	30	22	A table timeline is provided for years 1-5. The table includes the major activities to be completed in each year as well as the timeline focus. These include Y1: design, launch, and foundation building, Y2: Implementation and refinement, Y3: Deepening practice and sustainability, etc. A more in depth description for each year and a work plan on how the major activities will be completed is missing. CCC's year by year plan aligns well with the RFP structure, but it never connects activities to the project's actual scale. Strong alignment, but the key details are missing. The proposal references a five-year effort but lacks the detailed milestones, deliverables, implementation phases, and timelines expected for a project of this magnitude.
References			
Complete contact information provided	P/F	P	References with contact person, phone number, and email provided

Offeror (Company) Name: Creative Coaching Consultants		Total Points Awarded: 816	
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Budget Narrative			
Cost Alignment and Justification	30	18	The budget is clearly organized and aligned to the year by year work plan, but the hours don't match the RFP's expected scaling... the option years are supposed to expand, yet the budgeted hours drop. There's also no explanation of what the flat \$200/hour rate covers or why it stays constant across five years. While costs are listed by year, there is little explanation connecting expenditures to: Deliverables, Staffing, Professional learning development, Course creation, and Evaluation activities. This is a significant weakness. The budget proposal comes in below the total budget allowed by OPI at \$540,000. A proposed budget table, outlining the amount per year then broken down into hourly rate and estimated work hours, is included for the full 5 years, with years 4&5 labeled as optional years. The budget table shows the proposal broken down by years, but a deeper justification is missing.
Sustainability, Accessibility, and Scalability	20	12	The proposal discusses sustainability conceptually through coaching and capacity building. More specific plans for statewide scaling and long-term maintenance would strengthen this section. CCC references a sustainability plan, stating that their goal is to help districts establish sustainable literacy support systems that remain effective after the implementation period. The plan doesn't continue to explain future steps in depth but does offer a graphic of sustainability pillars. They do state in their implementation roadmap (p31) that the proposed phased structure allows districts to build literacy implementation systems while maintaining responsiveness to the local needs and implementation readiness. They reference statewide accessibility, noting that all MT educators should have equitable access to literacy professional learning and implementation support. They offer flexible service delivery structures - though those structures aren't explained in a way that aligns entirely with Montana's unique rural and tribal landscape. Annual summary reports, evaluation & survey logs, and scalable district resources are referenced as deliverables. They note that their program is designed to scale appropriately across varied district contexts while maintaining consistency. CCC explains sustainability and scalability well in concept, but the budget doesn't reflect it. The pricing shows flat rates and declining hours in the years meant for expansion, so the cost model doesn't support growth. The narrative is clear, but it isn't carried through in the budget.
Indirect and Miscellaneous Cost	10	0	There is not a section included that addresses indirect and miscellaneous costs explicitly. CCC doesn't identify any indirect or miscellaneous costs. The budget is just an hourly rate times hours, with no breakdown for overhead, travel, materials, or other indirect expenses. Very limited justification is provided for indirect costs, travel, technology, or other project expenses
Cost Proposal			
Cost Proposal	200	188	
Equal Pay for Montana Women			
Equal Pay for Montana Women. Offerors who agree and certify compliance to Executive Order No. 12-2016, Equal Pay for Montana Women, will receive a bonus of 5% of the total points available. Offerors who do not comply will not receive bonus points	50	50	
Scope of Work, Offeror Qualifications, & Budget Narrative	820	578	
Cost Proposal	200	188	
subtotal for all required sections	1020	766	
Equal Pay for MT Women	50	50	
Final Awarded Total	1070	816	

OPI-RFP-2026-0174AB			
Evidence-Based Literacy Professional Learning for MHIT Program			
Individual Scoring Matrix			
The evaluator/evaluation committee will review and evaluate the Offers according to the following criteria based on a total number of 1,000 points. The Scope of Work, Offeror Qualifications, and Budget Narrative will be evaluated based on the following Scoring Guide. The Cost Proposal will be evaluated based on the formula set forth below. ACHIEVE MINIMUM SCORE: Any proposal that fails to achieve 85% of the total points for the Scope of Work, Offeror Qualifications, and the Budget Narrative may be eliminated from further consideration.			
Offeror (Company) Name: Side-by-Side Consulting		Total Points Awarded: 1005	
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Scope of Work			
Professional Learning Content Development			
Alignment to standards, Tier 1 - Tier 2 Integration, and Evidence-Based Reading Practices	100	96	Provides a completed Training Alignment Document that maps 18 sessions to IES guides, Montana standards, and clearly explains how each session connects to High Impact Tutoring and Tier 1/Tier 2 alignment. It's an actual, demonstrated crosswalk, not just a promise to build one. Additional concrete artifacts and clear familiarity with Montana standards reinforce this. Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the Science of Reading, MTSS frameworks, Tier 1 instruction, Tier 2 intervention, HQIM implementation, and High-Impact Tutoring integration. The materials connect to the MTSS frameworks, support SOR, using HQIM, and evidence based practices. The included appendices can be used as a reference to see examples of the materials that will be used. SBSC uses the MTSS frameworks to strengthen T1 instruction and connect it to T2 supports. SBSC has an established SOR training series (appendix D) that focuses on foundational reading skills. SBSC uses instructional pathways and consistent instructional routines to achieve coherence across T1 and T2 instruction. The alignment between T1 T2 and tutoring instruction contribute to a unified system of literacy improvement.
Instructional Strategies and Data Use	100	96	The response presents a robust professional learning model centered on job-embedded coaching, implementation support, modeling, observation, and continuous improvement. Data-informed instruction is discussed throughout and connected to educator practice. The included materials in the appendices support T1 and T2 instruction. SBSC states that structured data tools and analysis protocols will be used to support educators in identifying patterns in student performance and making informed decisions about instruction and intervention. The approach insures that is not just used for evaluation but as an ongoing tool for instructional improvement. Instructional strategies support statewide implementation of aligned literacy practices, the professional learning will be completed across a combination of in-person, synchronous virtual, and asynchronous formats. The use of each format will support different phases of implementation in support of coherence across the project. The response provides multiple purpose built data tools directly tied to instructional decision making in both Tier 1 and Tier 2. These tools show real, practical mechanisms for data use, not just an intention to "use data," and they connect clearly to the coaching cycle.

Offeror (Company) Name: Side-by-Side Consulting			Total Points Awarded: 1005
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Quality and Clarity	50	48	The materials are well-organized, following the table of contents in a way that makes sense. The attached appendix items are easy to apply in a useable way for educators. The material connects T1 and T2 practices, ensuring alignment between core classroom content and T2 implementation. The content is not a standalone set of materials but structured to support implementation within classrooms and tutoring settings over time. The content is designed to take research and translate it into daily instructional practice that educators can apply in their classrooms with consistency. There is a section included with experience related to Montana's Tribal and Rural communities. This is well organized, with clear headings and 22 appendices that make it easy to check evidence rather than take claims on faith. The narrative can get dense and repetitive, but that doesn't undermine the overall clarity or usability of the document. The response describes online learning modules, flexible delivery structures, and statewide accessibility. There is evidence of experience supporting rural educators and providing flexible participation options.
Iteration and Responsiveness	50	48	Continuous improvement in a clear PDSA protocol, giving a real decision making cycle rather than just listing feedback activities. Multiple feedback sources are tied to outputs like refined materials, adjusted coaching, and updated modules. It shows a genuine, structured process for iteration. Demonstrates an understanding of continuous improvement through coaching, implementation support, and refinement cycles. There is evidence that the organization values ongoing adaptation and educator feedback. SBSC states that they bring extensive experience supporting broader systems for data-informed continuous improvement, including facilitation of data teams, implementation planning structures, and collaborative instructional review processes. They emphasize ongoing reflection, educator feedback, and continuous refinement of professional learning and instructional practices to support long-term implementation and evidence-building.
Online Courses via OPI Learning Hub			
Course Design and Accessibility	100	90	This describes online learning modules, flexible delivery structures, and statewide accessibility. There is evidence of experience supporting rural educators and providing flexible participation option. SBSC designs professional learning that is accessible to educators across Montana using online courses that can be hosted within learning management systems such as the OPI learning Hub. In year 1, they will use the asynchronous learning modules developed to be integrated into the learning hub and designed to support engagement over time. SBSEC's online modules draw on substantial, already-developed content and show credible LMS experience along with a long OPI partnership. The gap is that "accessibility" is addressed only in terms of statewide reach, not disability or UDL principles — there's no mention of captioning, screen reader compatibility, or other accessibility features.
Content Alignment and Engagement	100	98	SBSC includes a training alignment document in Appendix C that is very helpful in understanding their outline and plan for sessions and it alignment to MHIT/T1/T2 instruction. They also include content from Appendix E, P, and L, that will be used in the online modules. These modules will support preparation, reinforcement, and reflections to ensure that learning remains connected to instructional practice and contributes to a sustained implementation across sites. The engagement is actually designed, not just described. SBSEC uses team-based collaboration, structured modules with readings and videos followed by live debriefs, and optional coaching to support real implementation. The mechanics are specific and time bound, showing active consultant interaction rather than passive content delivery. Combined with the earlier evidence of content alignment, this meaningfully addresses the engagement criterion. This is clearly aligned with literacy outcomes and MHIT priorities. The proposal emphasizes educator engagement through implementation, coaching, application activities, and reflection.

Offeror (Company) Name: Side-by-Side Consulting			Total Points Awarded: 1005
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Pilot Implementation and Feedback Integration	40	35	Year 1 isn't explicitly labeled as a pilot, but it functions like one. SBSEC starts with a smaller cohort of about 20 educators before scaling to 60 in later years - matching MHIT plan, and the PDSA cycle provides a built in way to adjust the model before expansion. It's a real, structured pilot even if the proposal doesn't name it or spell out specific scale up criteria. This includes continuous refinement and educator feedback processes. The commitment to implementation support suggests that participant feedback will inform improvements. The pilot phase implementation (Year 1) materials will be integrated into the OPI learning hub, feedback from educators will be used to refine the materials for future implementation in the following project years. The plan for year 5 states that the phase supports continued access to aligned literacy resources through the learning hub while strengthening the long-term usability and sustainability of the materials based on implementation feedback and evaluation findings collected throughout the project.
Evaluation and Feedback Collection			
Feedback Plan and Coordination	20	18	Multiple opportunities for feedback are embedded within coaching, implementation support, and professional learning activities. The organization demonstrates a commitment to gathering participant input. SBSC places a strong emphasis on the use of data to inform instruction and guide decision-making at all levels of the system. Within the scope of the MHIT project, educators will engage with screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring data as part of the professional learning modules, coaching cycles, and instructional reflection processes designed to strengthen literacy instruction and intervention alignment. Educator feedback will be collected to refine materials and implementation outcomes. SBSC names a specific coordination role, Evaluation and Data Support Specialists, whose purpose is to surface implementation issues early so the team can adjust rather than just report data later. The role is integrated into the broader staffing structure, with multiple concrete feedback sources feeding into it.
Analysis and Reporting	10	8	SBSC will work with OPI to ensure alignment to project goals, meet reporting expectations, implementation priorities, and literacy initiatives. They will use evaluation reports to document participation, implementation progress, alignment, and emerging outcomes. SBSC clearly identifies the reporting content, including participation, implementation progress, feedback trends, and emerging outcomes, and explains the audience and purpose. The reports are meant to show what is working and what needs refinement. Reporting and evaluation are discussed, but the proposal provides limited detail regarding reporting schedules, dashboards, and specific outcome measures.
Use of Findings	10	10	There are clear categories of adjustments driven by evaluation findings, including updates to professional learning materials, coaching support, online modules, and instructional routines. These changes are tied to the structured PDSA cycle, showing that findings lead to defined actions rather than a general promise to be responsive. Strong Montana references and evidence of successful partnerships with districts. SBSC will collect evaluation reports and use those reports to gain insight into how professional learning is being applied and how it influences instructional practice and student progress. The findings collected through the project period will help during year 5, where SBSC states that they will focus on statewide scaling, long-term accessibility of professional learning resources, and refinement of materials based on implementation feedback and evaluations findings

Offeror (Company) Name: Side-by-Side Consulting			Total Points Awarded: 1005
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Offeror Qualifications			
Company Profile & Experience			
A detailed description of any similar past projects, including the service type and dates the services were provided.	20	20	This cites multiple Montana literacy projects, including MCLSDP and district literacy implementation work. The examples are directly relevant to the MHIT initiative. SBSC included projects that relate to the RFP, all include job-embedded professional learning, MTSS implementation, statewide coordination, and measurable impacts on student outcomes. They also include additional examples of the work in the Appendices. 3 projects referenced are: Project 1: Montana Comprehensive Literacy School Development Project (MCLSDP), Project 2: Sheridan County School District #3 Literacy Systems Implementation, and Project 3: Victor Elementary School Literacy Improvement Initiative. SBSC provides three references with full contact details and clear descriptions of services and dates, covering Troy Public Schools, Sheridan County SD 3, and Libby School District 4.
The client for whom the services were provided.	20	20	The clients are included in the project overviews. Additional examples are in the appendices as well. Three complete references, each with named contacts, titles, phone, email, service description, and dates. Fully responsive with no gaps. They appear highly relevant and capable.
A general description of the firm, including its primary source of business, organizational structure and size, number of employees, and years of experience performing services similar to those described within the RFP.	20	20	SBSC's organizational section names Carrie Cole as President, describes the group as a collaborative team of experienced literacy consultants, and states the organization has over seventeen years of experience and primarily provides PD, coaching, and consulting to schools and agencies. Team size isn't listed in one sentence, but eight consultants appear later in Key Personnel, which effectively shows the staffing level. This section demonstrates substantial experience in literacy, MTSS, coaching, implementation science, and statewide professional learning. Their Montana focus is a significant asset. SBSC describes their company and how it is positioned to support the M-HiT project, referencing their 19 years of experience in working with schools and districts to support literacy goals, providing professional learning and consulting services. They have approached this work in multiple ways, such as in-person, virtual, and hybrid models. SBSC states that their work supports educators, grounded in research and evidence. They state their general plan for implementation of professional development programs in alignment with T1 and T2 supports can be tailored to align with the goals of the MHIT project to support educators. They outline their primary services provided in a clear and concise way. The organizational structure and size are clear and summarized. They include relevant project experiences with years and summaries of the projects with a direct link to the relevance to the RFP.
Executive Summary	20	20	Clearly communicates the organization's philosophy, approach, and qualifications. It effectively establishes the rationale for the proposal. The executive summary provided a clear overview of SBSC plan to deliver professional learning designed to translate learning evidence-based practices into classroom application and implementation. Highlighting alignment to SOR and supporting the goals of the M-HiT grant. SBSC states that improving early literacy outcomes requires more than isolated professional development, that it requires coherent systems that align instruction, intervention, assessment, and professional learning. SBSC also states they approach this work with a strong commitment to relationships, cultural responsiveness, and collaboration with local stakeholders. Our work reflects an asset-based perspective and includes a focus on culturally relevant instruction and meaningful family engagement as essential components of improving student outcomes. Clear and well organized, it accurately frames the MHIT/EIR context and SBSC's role. It highlights key claims like nineteen years of experience, a Science of Reading foundation, Tier 1–Tier 2 alignment, plus OPI Learning Hub and rural/tribal experience, all of which are backed up elsewhere in the proposal.

Offeror (Company) Name: Side-by-Side Consulting			Total Points Awarded: 1005
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Qualifications / Resumes			
Key Personnel	30	30	Resumes for key personnel, contact information, and areas/years of related experience are included. Each resume includes qualifications, experience, related skills, education, certifications, references, and a table with the key personnel and their proposed roles. SBSC names eight consultants, each with full resumes, verified credentials, and in several cases documented student outcome data from past coaching. A roles table links each person to specific responsibilities, and the organizational chart shows clear reporting lines. Highly qualified literacy professionals with extensive Montana experience. The team appears capable of delivering the proposed scope of work.
Approach and Timeline			
Proposed approach and methodology	40	38	Methodology directly matches the project's scale and dosage, with clear year by year educator counts and a defined coaching cycle that shows how individualized support will work. Each delivery format has a stated rationale, making the plan genuinely project specific. The only challenge is that the narrative can get dense and repetitive, which makes the concrete mechanics harder to pick out. The response is coherent, research-based, and grounded in implementation science. The combination of coaching, professional learning, systems development, and continuous improvement is well aligned with MHIT goals. Their proposed approach and methodology is working side-by-side with educators and leaders to connect professional learning to daily instruction. The goal is to set educators up to be successful with implementation with clarity, consistency, and purpose. They support the MHIT project in their approach by supporting and strengthening T1 instruction and ensuring T2 supports are connected to reinforce classroom instruction. They use a continuous improvement approach the uses data to guide decision making and refine instruction over time.
work plan and timeline	30	29	This demonstrates thoughtful planning and phased implementation. Deliverables are generally clear and aligned to project goals. The overview of the workplan is organized, and structured to support statewide accessibility and participation. It is designed to support the implementation of evidence-based literacy practices through professional learning, classroom application, individualized coaching, and continuous refinement. SBSC states that phases of the work will be coordinated with the OPI to ensure alignment with literacy priorities, project deliverables, implementation expectations, and continuous improvement efforts. A plan for year 1, years 2-4, and year 5 is included with specific plans for each phase. The timeline lays out clear year specific activities tied to the same cohort numbers used throughout the proposal and distinguishes ongoing work from phase specific tasks. This consistency makes it a real, usable plan that meets the expectations.
References			
Complete contact information provided	P/F	P	References with contact person, phone number, and email provided
Budget Narrative			
Cost Alignment and Justification	30	24	The budget proposal follows OPIs total budget, not exceeding \$550,000. SBSCs total contract value comes in at \$549,100. Costs were distributed across 5 years in a way that reflects how instruction change occurs over time and how educators move from initial exposed to consistent implementation within classrooms and tutoring settings. The budget narrative ties costs to specific deliverables and materials and correctly notes that educator stipends are handled by OPI. However, it provides no year by year breakdown, rate structure, or hours estimate, so there's no way to confirm the claim that costs scale with cohort size. While costs fall within budget limits, the narrative provides only minimal explanation of how expenditures align to deliverables and staffing.

Offeror (Company) Name: Side-by-Side Consulting			Total Points Awarded: 1005
Category	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Mandatory Justification Comments for Points Awarded
Sustainability, Accessibility, and Scalability	20	16	The budget narrative explains how the work is designed to sustain itself after the grant period and how centralized content development supports scaling. It falls short of a top score because it doesn't provide any cost figures to back up the scalability claim. This demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability through coaching, capacity building, and systems development. Statewide scalability is addressed throughout the proposal. The year 5 of their workplan emphasizes sustainability and long-term usability of professional learning resources developed through the MHIT project. Resources housed within the OPI Learning Hub will remain organized and accessible to support ongoing educator learning, implementation, and instructional refinement beyond the initial project period. They state that the MHIT proposal is intentionally designed around the scope and budget requirements of this project, these additional supports may be incorporated in collaboration with participating schools or districts as implementation needs evolve over time.
Indirect and Miscellaneous Cost	10	6	This provides almost no narrative justification for indirect costs, travel, technology, or materials. SBSC referenced that the budget reflects costs associated with professional learning design and delivery, asynchronous module access, instructional materials, implementation feedback, and related project support. No indirect or miscellaneous costs are identified, described, or broken out anywhere in the budget narrative. This requirement is not addressed
Cost Proposal			
Cost Proposal	200	185	References with contact person, phone number, and email provided
Equal Pay for Montana Women			
Equal Pay for Montana Women. Offerors who agree and certify compliance to Executive Order No. 12-2016, Equal Pay for Montana Women, will receive a bonus of 5% of the total points available. Offerors who do not comply will not receive bonus points	50	50	
Scope of Work, Offeror Qualifications, & Budget Narrative	820	770	
Cost Proposal	200	185	
subtotal for all required sections	1020	955	
Equal Pay for MT Women	50	50	
Final Awarded Total	1070	1005	

OPI-RFP-2026-0174AB
Evidence-Based Literacy Professional Learning for MHIT Program

SCORING GUIDE

In awarding points to the evaluation criteria, the evaluator/evaluation committee will consider the following guidelines:

Superior Response (95-100%): A superior response is an exceptional reply that completely and comprehensively meets all of the requirements of the RFP. In addition, the response may cover areas not originally addressed within the RFP and/or include additional information and recommendations that would prove both valuable and beneficial to the agency.

Good Response (75-94%): A good response clearly meets all the requirements of the RFP and demonstrates in an unambiguous and concise manner a thorough knowledge and understanding of the project, with no deficiencies noted.

Fair Response (60-74%): A fair response minimally meets most requirements set forth in the RFP. The offeror demonstrates some ability to comply with guidelines and requirements of the project, but knowledge of the subject matter is limited.

Failed Response (59% or less): A failed response does not meet the requirements set forth in the RFP. The offeror has not demonstrated sufficient knowledge of the subject matter.

Score	10	20	30	40	50	100
Superior (95-100%)	9.4 - 10	18.8 - 20	28.2 - 30	37.6 - 40	47 - 50	94 - 100
Good (75-94%)	7.4 - 9.4	14.8 - 18.8	22.2 - 28.2	29.6 - 37.6	37 - 47	74 - 94
Fair (60-74%)	5.9 - 7.4	11.8 - 14.8	17.7 - 22.2	23.6 - 29.6	29.5 - 37	59 - 74
Failed (0-59%)	0 - 5.9	0 - 11.8	0 - 17.7	0 - 23.6	0 - 29.5	0 - 59

OPI-RFP-2026-0174AB**Evidence-Based Literacy Professional Learning for MHIT Program****Cost Worksheet**

Lowest overall cost receives the maximum allotted points. All other proposals receive a percentage of the points available based on their cost relationship to the lowest. Example: Total possible points for cost are 300. Offeror A's cost is \$20,000. Offeror B's cost is \$30,000. Offeror A would receive 300 points. Offeror B would receive 200 points ($\$20,000/\$30,000 = 67\% \times 300 \text{ points} = 200$).

Cost			
Points Available	200		
Lowest Cost	\$508,700.00		
Vendor Name	Proposed Cost	Points Earned	Notes:
Academy in Manayunk DBA AIM	\$508,700.00		
Institute for Learning and Research		200	
Creative Coaching Consultants	\$540,000.00	188	
Side-by-Side Consulting	\$549,100.00	185	

Technical Scoring Session

OPI-RFP-2026-0174AB

Evidence-Based Literacy Professional Learning for MHIT Program

Date

Time

Location

Teams

Evaluation Committee Members:

Marie Judisch

Aimee Konzen

Jackie Ronning

Contracts Officer:

Amanda Battin, amanda.battin2@mt.gov

Order of Evaluation:

Alphabetical

Scoring Method:

Consensus