

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Examination Development and Administration Services

Association of Social Work Boards

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PART 1: IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS

A. Purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP)

The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) is a not for profit, 501(c) (3) entity whose membership consists of the social work regulatory bodies in the United States and Canada. ASWB develops, administers, and maintains a social work licensing examination program for use by its member boards as one criterion in the process of licensing social workers. ASWB member boards are legally created and empowered to license social workers and rely upon the ASWB examination program as one criterion in the licensure process. In addition to its flagship examination program, ASWB provides its member boards with additional programs and services designed to promote the public protection mission of its member boards. These programs address mobility issues, continuing education, application processing, licensure renewal audits, as well as education and information exchange related to the regulation of the profession. ASWB is also an information source to education programs, students, licensees and others on matters related to the legal regulation of social work practice.

ASWB membership is comprised of the statutorily created and empowered social work regulatory entities established to administer licensure programs relative to the legal regulation of social workers in their jurisdictions. Currently, ASWB membership is comprised of 61 member boards in the United States, its territories, the District of Columbia, and Canada. It is anticipated that during the upcoming contract term there will be an expansion of the number of social worker candidates that take ASWB examinations. Growth in exam use is particularly expected in the Canadian provinces.

ASWB is seeking a contractor through this Request For Proposals (RFP) to provide services for ongoing examination development activities and to administer the examinations at computerized test delivery centers across the United States and Canada, with the capability for computerized testing to occur at additional locations in other parts of the world, as necessary.

The contract term will be from January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2013. ASWB may extend the contract for two additional years through December 31, 2015, contingent on the satisfactory performance of the selected contractor.

B. Organization of the RFP

Part 1 of this RFP provides background information for prospective bidders, including key action dates, contractual information, corporate capability requirements, technical requirements, and background information on ASWB's examination program. Part 2 provides information about the scope of work for which the Contractor will be responsible. Part 3 provides a description of the additional supporting information and cost detail that is required to complete the proposal of prospective bidders. Part 4 summarizes an optional component of the proposal process, in which bidders are invited to suggest program enhancements that they could provide to ASWB for an additional cost (to be presented separately from the proposal's base costs). Part 5 describes the criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals, while Part 6 describes the ASWB process for reviewing the proposals and making contract decisions.

B. Key Action Dates

The schedule is as follows:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Date</u>
RFP issued	August 2009
Intention to Submit forms filed	September 11, 2009
Bidders' conference call	September 17, 2009 2:00 p.m. EST
Deadline for submission of written questions	October 5, 2009
ASWB responses to written questions	By October 9, 2009
Proposal submission deadline	November 30, 2009 5:00 p.m. EST
Proposal review	December 1-11, 2009
Negotiations with finalists	December 14-18, 2009
Finalists' Presentations (if necessary)	January 28, 2010
Board of Directors vote	January 28, 2010
Contract negotiated, signed	By February 28, 2010

(Minor changes to these dates could occur at ASWB discretion.)

C. Communications

After the issuance of this RFP, no contact regarding this RFP is allowed between potential bidders and members of the ASWB Board of Directors or ASWB staff, with the exception of ASWB staff referenced in this RFP. Any unallowable contact may disqualify a potential bidder from further consideration.

D. Notice of Intention to Submit a Proposal

Organizations with an interest in this RFP are encouraged to send to ASWB, by e-mail, fax or registered mail, a Notice of Intention to Submit a Proposal (Appendix A). Notice should be submitted as soon as possible to the contact listed on the Notice.

The purpose of the Notice is solely to inform ASWB of the identity of those who may wish to participate in the competitive bidding process, so that any related correspondence (e.g. answers to questions as described below) can be appropriately distributed. Submission of a Notice of Intention to Submit a Proposal is not a promise or obligation to submit a proposal, nor does lack of a Notice of Intention to Submit a Proposal disqualify a bidder from submitting a proposal.

F. Bidders' Conference Call

ASWB will hold a Bidders' Conference Call beginning on the time and date noted in Key Action Dates, Section C of Part 1. ASWB will set up and pay for the conference call. If you would like to participate in the Bidders' Conference Call, contact Phil Gullion, ASWB Examination Program Manager, at 540-829-6880 x3031 or pgullion@aswb.org by 5:00 p.m. EST on the day before the conference call.

During the Bidders' Conference Call, ASWB staff will provide an overview of the RFP and respond orally to questions posed by potential bidders about the RFP and the contract. If a question requires research, ASWB staff will request that the potential bidder submit the question in writing, as outlined in Section G below. No written or recorded record will be made of the Bidders' Conference Call.

G. Written Questions about the RFP

ASWB will accept written questions about this RFP. Written questions must be accompanied by the submitter's name, organization, address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address. Written questions should be clear and should indicate the page number and/or section number in the RFP where there is information related to the question. Written questions should be submitted by e-mail, fax, or registered mail so they are received no later than the date and time of the Deadline for Submission of Written Questions noted in Key Action Dates, Section C of Part 1.

Submit the written questions to:

Phil Gullion
Examination Program Manager
Association of Social Work Boards
400 South Ridge Parkway, Suite B
Culpeper, VA 22701
E-mail: pgullion@aswb.org
Fax: 540-829-0562
Phone: 540-829-6880 x3031 (Only non-substantive questions by phone, please.)

Questions received after the Deadline for Submission of Written Questions time and date noted in Key Action Dates, Section C of Part 1, will not be answered.

As soon as possible, ASWB staff will distribute the questions and ASWB responses to the questions to all who have submitted a Notice of Intention to Submit a Proposal. To ensure that all prospective bidders have equal access to information, no substantive questions related to the RFP or the contract will be answered by telephone, other than those posed during the Bidders' Conference Call.

H. Contractual Information

H-1 Length of the Contract

ASWB expects to enter into a contract that will begin January 1, 2011, and expire on December 31, 2013 with a clause whereby ASWB, at its sole discretion, may extend the contract for two additional years through December 31, 2015, contingent on the satisfactory performance of the selected contractor. If the contract is extended beyond December 31, 2013, all conditions within the contract will continue until the end of the extended period.

H-2 Scope of the Contract

The Contractor will be responsible for all aspects and costs of ASWB examination development and administration defined in Part 2 (Scope of Work) of this RFP. The scope of work specified in Part 2 of this RFP represents the minimum required of the Contractor.

ASWB encourages bidders to propose no-cost enhancements, improvements, or innovations to the scope of work. Discussions of such enhancements may be integrated into the narrative provided in response to the tasks outlined in Part 2 of this RFP. The cost detail and financial arrangements of bidders' proposals is an important criterion for evaluating proposals.

Any enhancements that a bidder would like to suggest to ASWB at an additional cost should be provided in a separate narrative in response to the optional Part 4 (Bidders' Suggestions for Program Enhancements) of this RFP, with cost detail provided separately from the cost detail and financial

arrangements specified in Section C (Cost Detail and Financial Arrangements) of Part 3 (Supporting Information Required from Bidders).

H-3 Ownership of Materials

All work done in connection with the examination program must be done exclusively for ASWB. All examination materials will be owned by ASWB. These materials include, but are not limited to, test items, answer keys, test blueprints, practice tests, judgmental data about test materials, the results of statistical analyses of test items and test forms, examinee registration data, examinee responses, examinee test results, test performance data, planning documents and reports developed under the terms of the contract resulting from this RFP, and all data collected pursuant to the contract resulting from this RFP. All materials owned by ASWB at the beginning of this contract will remain the property of ASWB.

When requested by ASWB, the Contractor will deliver in the manner(s), at the time(s), to the location(s), and to the extent specified by ASWB, all requested examination materials and any other materials, including examinee data, owned by ASWB and in the possession of the Contractor, its employees, its agents, and its subcontractors, including at the conclusion of any contractual relationship.

H-4 Possible Changes to the Work in the Resulting Contract

The work of the ASWB examination program is in compliance with related policies established by the ASWB Board of Directors. Even though no specific changes to these policies are expected at this time, new policies may affect the work established in the contract resulting from this RFP.

If, based on the needs of ASWB, changes to the examination products and services described in this RFP are required, the Contractor agrees to support ASWB's decision and negotiate in good faith an amendment to the agreement related to its scope of work, cost details, and length, as appropriate.

H-5 Business Recovery Plan

The successful bidder for the contract is required to submit its Business Recovery Plan to ASWB prior to contract execution. The Business Recovery Plan is subject to ASWB approval, and must include but not be limited to a detailed description of the following:

- a. A strategy for managing disaster situations related to all aspects of the services to be provided, including addressing, if applicable, use of subcontractors.
- b. Distinct management and staff assignment responsibilities immediately following a disaster and continuing through the period of re-establishing normal operations.
- c. Prioritizing of critical applications and business functions recovery.

- d. A method for documenting operational procedures in a systematic fashion to permit a timely and orderly recovery.

H-6 Transition at the End of the Contract

Before the ending date of the contract (or its successor contract or contracts with the Contractor) is reached, the Contractor will deliver in the manner(s) at the time(s), to the location(s), and to the extent specified by ASWB, all examination materials and other materials, including examinee data, owned by ASWB and in the possession of the Contractor, its employees, its agents, and its subcontractors.

I. Role of ASWB in Examination Development and Administration

I-1 ASWB Function and Purpose

The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) is a not for profit, 501(c) (3) entity whose membership consists of the social work regulatory bodies in the United States and Canada. ASWB develops, administers, and maintains a social work licensing examination program for use by its member boards as one criterion in the process of licensing social workers. It was incorporated in March, 1979, by representatives of state regulatory agencies, and has grown rapidly to include many other jurisdictions across the United States and Canada. For its first 20 years, it was called the American Association of State Social Work Boards (AASSWB). The name was changed in December, 1999, in order to be inclusive of the Canadian provinces and other non-state jurisdictions that are members.

ASWB membership is comprised of the statutorily created and empowered social work regulatory entities established to administer licensure programs relative to the legal regulation of social workers in their jurisdictions. Currently, ASWB membership is comprised of 61 member boards in the United States, its territories, the District of Columbia, and Canada. It is anticipated that during the upcoming contract term there will be an expansion of the number of social worker candidates that take ASWB examinations. Growth in exam use is particularly expected in the Canadian provinces due to provincial recognition of an examination as part of the licensure criteria.

ASWB member boards are legally created and empowered to license social workers and rely upon the ASWB examination program as one criterion in the licensure process. ASWB offers a uniform, international standardized examination program for use by its member boards which rely upon such exam results in making essential decisions related to licensure eligibility of applicants for licensure. The security, validity, and reliability of the examination program are of highest concern to ASWB. High standards are required in the handling of testing materials, from test development and test delivery through scoring, analysis, and reporting.

In addition to its flagship examination program, ASWB provides its member boards with additional programs and services designed to promote uniformity in the licensure process and the public protection mission of its member boards. These programs address mobility issues, disciplinary

information, continuing education, application processing, licensure renewal audits, model legislation, as well as education and information exchange related to the regulation of the profession. ASWB is also an information source to education programs, students, licensees and others on matters related to the legal regulation of social work practice.

I-2 ASWB Examination Committee

Pursuant to its bylaws, ASWB maintains an Examination Committee empowered to review and approve questions for the examination program and work in consultation with ASWB exam vendors. Currently, the Examination Committee is comprised of 18 members. Examination Committee members are appointed by the ASWB President taking into consideration diversity in geographic, practice areas (including academia), ethnicity and gender. Examination Committee appointments are subject to input and approval from the Board of Directors. The Examination Committee meetings are facilitated by committee chairpersons and ASWB staff. The Contractor's test development work will include the preparation of some of the review materials that will be used at meetings of the Examination Committee.

The primary purpose of Examination Committee meetings is for committee members working on each of the ASWB exams to review, revise, and approve for pretesting, new items for that examination. After each meeting of the Committee, ASWB staff will provide the new items to the contractor to be entered into the item bank. The Examination Committee is also charged with reviewing and revising (as necessary) items that have been pretested by the contractor and have been indicated for further review, due to item performance data. If the Committee approves the pretested item as is, it is approved for operational use. But if the Committee revises the reviewed item, it must then be pretested again before it is approved for operational use. Moreover, the Committee reviews any items that have been previously approved for operational use, but are indicated for further review based on cumulative item performance data. Finally, it is in conjunction with Examination Committee meetings that ASWB-established Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) will also review each new test form (and replace items, as necessary) that has been constructed by the contractor prior to its implementation as an operational test form. The role of the contractor in preparing materials for meetings of the Examination Committee is described in Section A-1 (Prepare Materials to Support Examination Committee) or Part 2 (Scope of Work) of this RFP.

I-3 ASWB Staff

The work of the contractor on the ASWB examination program will be managed by the staff of ASWB. The Examination Program Manager for ASWB will be the principal ASWB staff member with whom the contractor will interact during the term of the contract. The Examination Program Manager will serve as liaison between the contractor and ASWB, its Executive Director, and its other administrative staff. The Examination Program Manager, along with the Director of Candidate

Services and the Examination Development Coordinator (and/or their designees) will monitor the contractor's work, especially for the quality of services and products and the adherence to performance deadlines.

All materials, products, services, and procedures under this contract must be reviewed and approved by ASWB. Some of these may require review and approval by the Executive Director and/or the ASWB Board of Directors.

J. Corporate Capability

The contractor must have significant experience and competence in the large-scale test development and test administration of high-stakes tests for certification or licensure, must have sufficient corporate resources for the products and services to be provided, and must be able to develop and implement a sound plan for managing and staffing the project. The project director and other personnel responsible for key components of the project must have at least two years of recent experience in a comparable capacity with an examination program similar in nature and scope to the ASWB examination program.

K. Background Information About ASWB Examinations

The ASWB examinations are offered in five categories – Associate, Bachelors, Masters, Advanced Generalist, and Clinical. The Associate and Bachelors examinations use the same forms, but the Associate category relies upon a slightly lower passing score and is used by the jurisdictions using the exam for candidates seeking Associate-level licensure. Additional detail about the examinations for each level of licensure, including the content outlines for each exam, is provided online at <http://www.aswb.org>. The examination program tested 27,733 candidates in 2006, 29,221 in 2007, and 30,767 in 2008. The total number of candidates tested for each examination in 2008 is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: N of Candidates by Examination (2008)

Examination	Number of Examinees
Associate/Bachelors*	4,850
Masters	14,157
Advanced Generalist	254
Clinical	11,506

*Associate and Bachelors candidates take the same test form, with a lower passing score for Associate candidates.

These licensure examinations are designed to measure the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of social workers for initial licensure at each of the various levels. Each of the four examinations contain a total of 170 single-best answer, four-option multiple-choice items, 150 of which count in determining the score. The remaining 20 items are pretest items, on which performance data is collected to determine if the new items should be approved for the operational item bank. These 20 items are embedded throughout the exam. The time for the total testing session is 4 ½ hours, with four hours of actual testing time. As previously mentioned, the examinations are developed by an Examination

Committee comprised of licensed social workers. Examinations are developed and administered in accordance with the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (1999), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines (1978), and under applicable law related to testing candidates with disabilities. Examination security is a major consideration and potential contractors must clearly specify all security measures proposed, including the monitoring of computer testing centers with video cameras.

The content of the current examinations is based on a series of national and international practice analyses of the social work profession, including analyses of practice in the United States and Canada completed by ASWB's Practice Analysis Task Force (PATF) in 2003. Under this coming contract, the content outlines for the latest versions of the examinations will be based on the most recent practice analyses, currently being conducted by the PATF through new surveys of U.S. and Canadian social workers – to be completed in 2010.

Examination items are written by social work experts contracted by ASWB, who are selected, trained and supervised by ASWB staff. After new items are submitted to ASWB, they are then reviewed, revised, and approved for pretesting by the ASWB Examination Committee. Questions in the ASWB study guides, ASWB Candidate Handbook, and the practice test, all available online at <http://www.aswb.org>, are representative of the type of items used, both in content and format.

L. Responding to the RFP

L-1 Introduction

Part 2 of the RFP describes the majority of the required information to be provided by the bidder in response to the RFP. Bidders are reminded that one of the criteria within the proposal scoring process is the overall clarity and quality of the proposal. Further details on proposal organization and content are provided below.

L-2 Proposal Organization and Contents

The proposal must be completed according to instructions in this section. Failure to follow the required format may adversely affect the competitiveness of the proposal or cause the proposal to be rejected. A proposal should have all of the content specified below. Missing content will result in a lower score. The required information should be provided in a concise manner, without superfluous elaboration or redundancy. Sufficient detail should be included, however, to indicate (a) that the bidder understands the issues associated with the services and products to be provided and (b) how the bidder plans to accomplish each project task and activity.

The selected proposal will serve as the basis for, attached to, and will be incorporated by reference into, the contract. Therefore, it is important that the responses to the criteria be clear, accurate, complete, and concise.

ASWB will not be responsible for organizing the bidders' proposals. It is the bidder's responsibility to ensure that all pages and appropriate documents are included. Responses consisting solely of marketing materials will not be accepted.

The Cover Sheet and Statement of Assurances must be completed and submitted. The Statement of Assurances indicates the intention of the bidder to comply with state and federal requirements. Failure to complete and sign this statement may result in the rejection of the proposal.

Paper copies of the proposal must be printed on standard 8 ½ x 11 paper and placed within a binder with tabs delineating each section. All forms must be completed. The proposal must include a signed statement indicating that the bidder will comply with all the terms and conditions stated in the RFP.

Proposal text should be in a font size of no less than 12-point type, with not less than a one-inch margin on all pages, in order to facilitate the proposal review process. All pages must be consecutively numbered. Attachments and appendices do not need to be consecutively numbered from the main body of the proposal as long as any referenced attachment or appendix pages are easy to locate and the pages within each attachment or appendix are consecutively numbered.

Bidder's responses must be organized and indexed. At a minimum, the format must contain items listed below in the sequence indicated. Failure to follow the proposal instructions and format may result in rejection or decreased competitiveness of the proposal.

a. Cover Sheet, Table of Contents, and Introduction

Begin with a *Cover Sheet* that identifies the bidder and indicates that the proposal is in response to this RFP.

The cover sheet must:

1. identify the submitting organization;
2. identify the name and title of the person authorized by the organization to contractually obligate the organization;
3. identify the names, titles, e-mail addresses, and telephone and fax numbers of the persons to be contacted for clarification during the proposal review period;
4. indicate the price for services offered; and
5. be signed by the person authorized to contractually obligate the organization.

Follow the cover sheet with a *Table of Contents* that clearly outlines the sections, subsections, and topics of the proposal, and indicates by page number the locations of all sections, subsections, and topics.

Next, provide an *Introduction* of no more than three pages that briefly demonstrates the bidder's understanding of the central issues associated with the tasks to be performed.

b. Proposal Narrative

The narrative of the bidder's proposal should provide a detailed description of how the bidder would accomplish the entirety of the Scope of Work described in Part 2 of this RFP. The scope of work specified in Part 2 represents the minimum required of the contractor.

The narrative of the bidder's proposal should also provide a detailed description of the entirety of the Supporting Information Required from Bidders (Part 3 of the RFP), including a description of Corporate Capability and a proposed Management and Staffing Plan.

The bidder should also separately provide a description of proposed Cost Detail and Financial Arrangements. The Cost Detail and Financial Arrangements section must contain all cost information associated with the bidder's base proposal to accomplish the scope of work specified in Part 2 of this RFP. Financial proposals should be separate from the main body of the proposal.

Finally, as described in Part 4 of the RFP, the bidder may include an additional OPTIONAL (not scored) section of the proposal narrative that provides a detailed description of suggested program enhancements that the bidder could provide to ASWB for an additional cost. Proposed cost detail and financial arrangements for each suggested program enhancement should be presented in this section, separately from the cost detail and financial arrangements described in Part 3, which are associated with the bidder's base costs for the scope of work outlined in Part 2.

The responses to the areas specified in Parts 2, 3, and 4 of this RFP, including all required sections, subsections, and topics, must be organized by, follow the same order as, and address each of the sections, subsections, and topics. The titles of the main sections are provided below.

- I. Scope of Work
- II. Corporate Capability
- III. Management and Staffing Plan
- IV. (SEPARATE FROM MAIN BODY OF PROPOSAL)
Cost Detail and Financial Arrangements
- V. (OPTIONAL) Bidder's Suggestions for Program Enhancements

Within the narrative of the proposal, the bidder should specifically indicate that the bidder will perform the work, provide the deliverables, and meet the timelines as described in Part

2 and Appendix D of this RFP. In addition, for each section, subsection, and topic under the subsection, the bidder should describe how the bidder will accomplish the required work with high quality and in a timely manner. If subcontractors will be used, all tasks or activities that will be carried out by each proposed subcontractor must be specified.

L-3 Submission of Proposals

Proposals must comply with the following instructions:

- a. Submit a completed "Intention to Submit a Proposal" Form by **September 11, 2009.**
- b. Complete "Cover Sheet"
- c. Respond to the Proposal Evaluation Criteria, in the manner described in Section L-2, providing cost information as instructed.
- d. Submit the completed proposal by **November 30, 2009, 5:00 p.m. EST.**

Bidders shall provide **an original hard copy** of the proposal, containing original signatures and marked ORIGINAL, **eight additional** numbered (i.e. 1 of 8, 2 of 8, etc.) hard copies of their proposal, and a Compact Disc Read-Only Memory (CD-ROM) containing the text of the proposal. In addition, they shall provide an original and two copies of any supporting documentation in the form of appendices, etc. Only one copy of the Statement of Assurances is required. The proposal hard copies and CD-ROM must be delivered to ASWB no later than the date specified above. The CD-ROM may be used for the potential development of a Board of Directors agenda item recommending award of the contract and/or for development of the contract.

Proposals should be sent to the address below, either by secure carrier or hand-delivery. Proposals not received by the date and time specified will not be considered for review. All proposals will be considered sealed bids and will be opened on the same date.

Proposals should be sent to:

Phil Gullion
Examination Program Manager
400 South Ridge Parkway, Suite B
Culpeper, VA 22701

The contents of any proposal are considered proprietary to ASWB and the respective bidder. All bidders agree such bids shall not be discussed with or disclosed to any other parties, including competitors at any time.

Any costs incurred by the bidder in the preparation, transmittal, and presentation of any proposal or material submitted in response to this RFP shall be borne solely by the bidder.

Any bidder may submit a revised proposal before the due date. Such revised proposals must be complete replacements for a previously-submitted proposal and must be clearly identified as such in a transmittal letter.

Bidders will be allowed to withdraw their proposals at any time prior to the proposal submission deadline. The bidder must submit a written withdrawal request by certified mail, signed by the bidder's duly authorized representative and addressed to the Examination Program Manager at the address above.

Responses to this RFP, including negotiated costs, will be considered firm for 180 days after the due date for the receipt of proposals.

Only information included in this RFP, or supplied by ASWB in writing through the Examination Program Manager, is to be used in the preparation of proposals.

L-4 Notification Regarding the Disposition of Proposals

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP will not be returned to the bidders.

ASWB will notify in writing each bidder of the disposition of their bid one week following the date on which a decision is finalized.

M. Corporate Status/Governance Information from Bidders

All bidders must provide the following corporate status/governance information. A bidder not providing this information will be deemed nonresponsive, and such bidder's proposal will not be evaluated, and the bidder will not be eligible for the contract award. A listing of this information is also provided on the Proposal Evaluation Criteria listed in Part 6 of the RFP.

The required corporate status/governance information is as follows:

- a. Identification of the legal corporate status of the bidder. Also specify any parent company or subsidiaries.
- b. The name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and fax number of the individual(s) authorized to discuss the terms of the contract.

PART 2: SCOPE OF WORK

A. Examination Development and Item Bank Maintenance Services

ASWB will execute most examination development activities on its own.

ASWB will be responsible for new item development, including the management of the item development process. It will select, train and supervise item writers, obtain raw items from contracted item writers, edit the items for both content and grammatical issues, and prepare the items for review by the Examination Committee.

With the exception of the activities outlined in Activity A-1 below, ASWB will also be responsible for the costs of Examination Committee meetings, including the establishment and training of the Committee. ASWB will typically schedule each year's Examination Committee meetings during the fall of the previous year – and will then be able to communicate the meeting dates to the test contractor, in order for the contractor to schedule the production and delivery of the materials that will be required to support the meetings (as described in Activity A-1 below). ASWB will plan, execute, and facilitate the Examination Committee meetings.

ASWB will record item revisions and approvals from the Examination Committee, and will incorporate the revisions before the new items are delivered to the contractor. Using materials that the contractor will be responsible for providing to ASWB, ASWB will also facilitate the Examination Committee's review of items that have been flagged for further review by the contractor during pretesting or from operational test administrations, along with any other items that need to be reviewed by the Examination Committee.

Using materials that the contractor will be responsible for providing to ASWB, ASWB will facilitate the review of new test forms by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in conjunction with Examination Committee meetings, along with the selection of any necessary replacement items.

The contractor will be responsible for several activities related to examination development, as described below, including the preparation of a few specific materials required to support item development, Examination Committee meetings, and the Subject-Matter Expert (SME) reviews of new test forms that will be conducted in conjunction with Examination Committee meetings.

The contractor will be responsible for entering all currently existing ASWB items and item and test form information into the contractor's secure, computerized item banking system. Since new test items developed by ASWB will be submitted to the contractor after they have been approved for pretesting by the Examination Committee, the contractor will then also be responsible for entering new items into a computerized item bank and continually maintaining the item bank by updating item files with performance data and other important item information. The contractor will also conduct pretesting of the items and related item analyses. After the receipt of new items from ASWB, the contractor will be solely responsible for the accurate retention, disposition, and documentation of items and data from pretesting and operational administrations. Therefore, the contractor will also be responsible for the preparation of – for Examination Committee review – items and data that are indicated for further review by pretesting or operational data, or items that need subsequent review to ensure their continuing currency and acceptable psychometric characteristics.

Activity A-1 Prepare Materials to Support Examination Committee

- a. *Develop Plan for Support of Examination Committee Meetings.* During the 2010 transition year for the ASWB examination program, after the 2011-2013 contract has been awarded – but before work begins for the new contract period in January 2011 – the contractor for the new contract period will develop a Plan for Support of Examination Committee Meetings that will provide a detailed description of the procedures that will be used to produce the

materials needed by ASWB for its Examination Committee Meetings, the content and format of the materials that will be provided, and the timeline for deliverables. The plan will function as a more detailed account of the corresponding section of the contractor's agreement with ASWB, since it will discuss the contractor's tasks outlined in Section A-1 of this RFP. ASWB will review the plan and will initiate any necessary follow-up conversations with the contractor. The plan will be revised by the contractor as necessary, and ASWB will give signature approval for the contractor to execute the plan as written. The deadline for completion of the plan is listed in Appendix D of this RFP. Once established, the plan will govern the contractor's preparation of materials to support the Examination Committee meetings for the duration of the contract period, unless procedures need to be revised for any reason by the contractor or ASWB. If procedures change, then the plan will be updated by the contractor and approved by ASWB.

- b. Deliver clear, accurate and complete materials to support the Examination Committee.*
- ASWB typically conducts up to four Examination Committee meetings during each calendar year in various locations throughout the United States and Canada. ASWB typically establishes the dates of Examination Committee meetings each year by the fall of the previous calendar year. The contractor will produce the following materials for each examination, to inform the development of new items and the facilitation of Examination Committee meetings, and securely deliver them to ASWB by a date no later than 2 weeks prior to each scheduled Examination Committee meeting.

The content, format, methods of quality control, and method of secure delivery of all of the deliverables listed below will be established by ASWB and the contractor as the Plan for Support of Examination Committee meetings is drafted by the contractor, revised as necessary, and approved by ASWB.

- 1) ITEM BANK INVENTORIES. Currently one booklet of three tables for each examination, each of these documents provides an inventory of the number and status of all items in the item bank by the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) that are the basis for the test's content outline.
- 2) ITEM BANK HIGH NEEDS LISTS. Currently a one-page table for each examination, each of these lists provides information to inform the work of the Examination Committee and future item development, by highlighting particular content areas that should be avoided and areas that should be targeted for the upcoming Examination Committee meeting and future item development.
- 3) PRETEST ITEMS & DATA FOR COMMITTEE REVIEW. The contractor will deliver to ASWB an electronic file of pretest items that have been indicated for further review (based on pretest performance), along with their associated performance data. The file will be in

Word format or another format approved by ASWB that can be easily viewed and revised as a projected image during committee review.

- 4) OPERATIONAL ITEMS AND DATA FOR COMMITTEE REVIEW. The contractor will deliver to ASWB an electronic file of items (and their associated data) that survived pretest data analysis, but have been indicated for further review by cumulative data from operational administrations. Again, the file will be in Word format or another format approved by ASWB that can be easily viewed and revised as a projected image during committee review.
- 5) DRAFT NEW TEST FORMS FOR SME REVIEW. The contractor will deliver to ASWB booklets of the new draft test forms of items (typically no more than three booklets per test form) that have been selected for introduction during upcoming test administration periods. Booklets should be formatted for ease of individual review by multiple SMEs. The contractor should also provide a list of step-by-step guidelines for test form reviewers, including the review process and review criteria.
- 6) POSSIBLE ITEM REPLACEMENTS FOR TEST FORMS. The contractor will deliver to ASWB booklets of possible replacements for items contained within the new draft test forms. These booklets of possible item replacements will be used in the event that SMEs do not approve certain items within the draft test form. The contractor should clearly identify for the ASWB facilitator which replacement items may be selected for which items on the test form and what the criteria are for choosing item replacements.
- 7) OTHER ITEM AND TEST FORM INFORMATION, AS NECESSARY. From time to time, as necessary, the contractor will provide to ASWB (on request) additional information from the test item bank to inform item development and review.

Activity A-2 Pretest New Items

- a. *Develop Plan for Pretesting of Items.* During the 2010 transition year, the contractor for the new contract period will develop a Plan for Pretesting of Items that will provide a detailed description of the procedures that will be used to pretest new and newly-revised items for the examination program, including the process for embedding pretest items into operational test forms, the data analyses that will be conducted, and the criteria for indicating items for further committee review. The plan will function as a more detailed account of the corresponding section of the contractor's agreement with ASWB, since it will discuss the contractor's tasks outlined in Section A-2 of this RFP. The plan will be reviewed by ASWB, revised as necessary by the contractor, and approved by ASWB. The deadline for completion of the plan is listed in Appendix D of this RFP. Once established, the plan will

govern the contractor's pretesting of new items for the duration of the contract period, unless procedures need to be revised for any reason by the contractor or ASWB. If procedures change, then the plan will be updated by the contractor and approved by ASWB.

- b. Conduct ongoing pretesting of items.* Approximately four weeks following each meeting of the Examination Committee (or sooner, when necessary), ASWB will submit to the contractor new items that have been approved for pretesting by the Examination Committee. After the contractor has entered the new items into the item bank, the contractor will pretest the items by embedding the new items as nonscorable items throughout new operational test forms. The contractor will be responsible for specifying, in the Plan for Pretesting of Items, the psychometric and logistical considerations that will be taken into account as items are embedded in operational test forms. Such considerations will include, the number of candidate responses that are required to collect useful data on each item, ways to minimize order/placement effects (and other construct-irrelevant effects) on the pretest item data, and the even distribution of pretest items across the content areas represented on each test form.

Table 2 below provides, for 2008, the number of items that were approved for pretesting and the number of items that were pretested.

Table 2: N of Pretest Items by Examination (2008)

Examination	N Items Approved for Pretesting	N Items Pretested*
Associate/Bachelors	305	300
Masters	311	480
Advanced Generalist**	0	N/A
Clinical	447	560
Total	1,063	1,340

*N Items Pretested may include items that were approved for pretesting during a previous year

**Due to the small numbers of candidates who take the Advanced Generalist examination, new items are not developed for that exam at the same rate as the other examinations.

- c. *Collect candidate response data on pretested items.* The contractor will collect candidate response data on pretested items as operational test forms are administered at computerized testing centers.
- d. *Establish pretest item performance criteria in collaboration with ASWB and analyze pretest data.* Both classical statistics and Item Response Theory (IRT) statistics will be used by the contractor in data analyses to examine item performance during pretesting (e.g. too easy, too difficult, poor discrimination, non-modal correct response, Differential Item Functioning (DIF), etc.). Item performance criteria and the number of candidate responses that will be the basis of pretest data analyses will be established in conjunction with ASWB approval of the Plan for Pretesting of Items.
- e. *Record the status of pretested items, based on data analyses.* Items that meet performance criteria will be approved by the contractor for scorable status on future test forms, while items that do not meet performance criteria will be indicated by the contractor for further review.
- f. *Prepare electronic file of items (and associated data) for Examination Committee review and securely deliver to ASWB.* The contractor will prepare review materials as previously described under Activity A-1.
- g. *Ensure accuracy and security in the pretesting of all items.* Quality control and security procedures will be described by the contractor in the Plan for Pretesting of Items.

Activity A-3 Maintain the Test Item Bank

- a. *Develop Plan for Item Bank Maintenance.* During 2010, the contractor for the new contract period will develop a Plan for Item Bank Maintenance that will provide a detailed description of the procedures that will be used to maintain the item banks for the ASWB examination program. The plan will include a discussion of the process of entering current ASWB items and item and test form information into the contractor's item banking system, entering new items into the item banks, updating item information, researching item issues, the annual delivery to ASWB of an electronic file of items (and associated data) from the item bank that have not been used on test forms during the previous five years, and the other tasks described in this section of the RFP. The plan will function as a more detailed account of the corresponding section of the contractor's agreement with ASWB, since it will discuss the contractor's tasks outlined in Section A-3 of this RFP. The plan will be reviewed by ASWB, revised as necessary by the contractor, and approved by ASWB. The deadline for completion of the plan is listed in Appendix D of this RFP. Once established, the plan will govern the contractor's procedures for item bank maintenance for the duration of the contract period, unless procedures need to be revised for any reason by the contractor or ASWB. If procedures change, then the plan will be updated by the contractor and approved by ASWB.
- b. *Enter current and new items into the item banks.* The contractor will enter current ASWB items and the associated item and test form information into the contractor's secure and computerized item banking system. As new items that have been approved by the Examination Committee for pretesting are received from ASWB, the contractor will also enter the new items into the item banks. Although items will be edited by ASWB staff prior to their submission to the contractor, any additional necessary editorial revisions will also be incorporated into the item, with the revision date noted. Content-related revisions will not be made by the contractor, but will instead be returned to ASWB for SME review.

Item information that the contractor will enter into the computerized item bank includes: the text of the item and its options, the keyed correct response, the examination for which the item has been approved, item content codes (KSA-related information), the cognitive level of the item, any reference information noted for the item, the date of Examination Committee-approval (last action date), the ASWB-assigned item identification number, and notes about any "Not for Canada" designation or noted item enemies. Bidders should specify the capabilities of their test item banking system, including its flexibility in handling changes to specifications.

- c. *Update the item bank with new item information.* Throughout the contract term, the contractor will continually update the item information contained in the item banks on an as needed basis. Updated information will include: cumulative data (classical and IRT item

- performance statistics) from pretesting and operational administrations, any necessary item revisions (and revision dates) from additional reviews by ASWB SME or Examination Committee reviews, the status of items (e.g. approved for pretesting, approved for operational use, indicated for further review, etc.), and additional item enemies or other important notes for an item.
- d. *Deliver files of inactive items and data for review and revision.* On an annual basis, the contractor will prepare an electronic file of items (and associated item performance data) to be revised or deleted by ASWB item developers and/or the Examination Committee. The goal of this review will be to revise items for future pretesting, in order to increase the percentage of the items that demonstrate acceptable performance (and thus, are eligible for use on operational test forms). All items that are still in the item bank (excluding any items used for practice tests or removed from the banks for other purposes) that have not been used during the previous five years will be included in the electronic file. The file for review will be in Word or another format that will be easily projected on screen for committee review and revised by an ASWB facilitator. The content and format of the item file will be determined as the contractor and ASWB finalize the Plan for Item Bank Maintenance.
 - e. *Research questions about items, as necessary.* From time to time, ASWB will receive comments and questions about the accuracy of items from candidates who have recently taken an examination. When requested by ASWB, the contractor will research possible item issues and work with ASWB to promptly resolve identified issues.
 - f. *Provide ASWB with other bank and item information, as necessary.* As the sole keeper of the item banks for the ASWB examinations, ASWB may periodically request other bank or item information from the contractor. The contractor will promptly respond to any such requests.
 - g. *Establish a plan for reducing the rate of item development.* The contractor will develop a plan for establishing item development targets for each item bank that will enable ASWB to set a course for reducing the rate of future item development as targets are met. The contractor's plan will ensure that ASWB's high standards for test validity, reliability, and security continue to be upheld.
 - h. *Ensure the accuracy and security of test item banks.* Security provisions for the test item banks must be thoroughly described by the bidder. The contractor will provide ongoing monitoring of all staff with access to the test item banks. The contractor will describe quality control and security procedures, including steps taken to restrict staff access to test item banks and conduct security background checks on staff with access to item banks, including checks of any criminal records, in the Plan for Item Bank Maintenance.
 - i. *Collaborate with ASWB to explore the possibility of integrating ASWB's item development system with the contractor's item banking and test publishing systems.* It is a goal of ASWB

to develop a secure, user-friendly web-based item development system that would seamlessly interface with the contractor's item banking system and computer testing driver.

- j. Collaborate with ASWB to provide secure read-only access to the contractor's ASWB item banks.* It is also a goal of ASWB for the contractor for the new contract period to establish a virtual interface through which designated ASWB staff may view, on a read-only basis, items and item information contained in ASWB item banks that are maintained by the contractor.
- k. Transfer current item banks to the contractor for the new contract period.* If the contractor for the new contract period is not the same as the current contractor, then the contractor for the new contract period will be responsible for working with the current contractor to transfer the current item pool to the item banking system of the contractor for the new contract period. In the Plan for Item Bank Maintenance, the contractor will describe plans for managing this transfer of ASWB items and associated data. The plans will address issues such as quality control and verification of the accuracy of item text and data.

B. Examination Administration Services

ASWB will itself execute most services related to information dissemination about the examination program, candidate registration, and call center services (including discussing with candidates their requests for special testing).

ASWB will operate the Candidate Registration Center (CRC), which will provide customer service to candidates who are calling in to register or ask other questions related to the examination program. After candidates register through the ASWB registration system, ASWB's CRC will direct the candidates to the contractor's test session appointment scheduling system, using information provided by the contractor. The contractor's test session appointment scheduling system will provide candidates with the opportunity to schedule test session appointments online and by telephone. The CRC will provide registration data to the testing contractor and maintain ASWB's own database of candidate information.

Per ASWB policy, agreements with its member boards, and to the extent required by law, ASWB will consult with jurisdictions and the testing contractor on providing testing accommodations at testing centers for otherwise qualified candidates with disabilities who request such services and have followed the outlined procedures in the candidate handbook. Once candidates have been approved by ASWB for special testing arrangements, it will be the responsibility of the contractor to make the necessary arrangements at testing centers.

Per ASWB policy, ASWB will consult with jurisdictions and the testing contractor on providing special testing arrangements at test centers for candidates for whom English is a Second Language (ESL) who request such services, are testing in a jurisdiction that allows such arrangements, and have followed the outlined procedures in the candidate handbook. Once candidates have been approved by ASWB for ESL arrangements, it will be the responsibility of the contractor to make the necessary arrangements at testing centers.

The contractor will be responsible for the secure, standardized administration of the examinations, including test form construction, test form equating, the publication of tests to a computerized test delivery platform, candidates' scheduling of test session appointments (both online and by telephone) after their registration by ASWB, and the delivery of examinations at a network of computer testing centers across the U.S. and Canada.

The contractor will score the tests taken by candidates, provide unofficial score reports to candidates at the testing centers (both on-screen and printed, presented to candidates in ways that will protect the confidentiality of candidate results), calculate scaled scores, and report official examination results to the jurisdictions, and ASWB in a format determined by ASWB in consultation with its member boards. The contractor will also provide a variety of services related to technical reporting for the program.

Activity B-1 Construct Examination Forms from the Item Bank

- a. Develop Plan for Test Form Construction.* During 2010, the contractor for the new contract period will develop a Plan for Test Form Construction that will provide a detailed description of the procedures that will be used to construct test forms for the ASWB examination program. The plan will include a discussion of the process that the contractor will use to schedule the introduction of new test forms, to select items from the item bank for use on test forms, to securely deliver each new test form (along with possible replacement items) to ASWB for SME review, and to replace test forms at the end of each testing period. The plan will also describe the systematic quality control checks that will be used to ensure accuracy in the construction of new test forms. The plan will function as a more detailed account of the corresponding section of the contractor's agreement with ASWB, since it will discuss the contractor's tasks outlined in Section B-1 of this RFP. The plan will be reviewed by ASWB, revised as necessary by the contractor, and approved by ASWB. The deadline for completion of the plan is listed in Appendix D of this RFP. Once established, the plan will govern the contractor's procedures for test form construction for the duration of the contract period, unless procedures need to be revised for any reason by the contractor or ASWB. If procedures change, then the plan will be updated by the contractor and approved by ASWB.
- b. Construct new examination forms.* The contractor will construct new test forms at a pace that will enable the contractor to maintain at least four forms of each examination (two forms for the Advanced Generalist examination) to be administered during each 3-month testing period, including at least one form with items that have been selected to ensure that all items are valid for both the U.S. and Canada (the actual number of forms for use in Canada will be established in conjunction with ASWB approval of the Plan for Test Form Construction and will depend on the projected number of Canadian candidates during a testing period). The forms will be randomly administered to candidates in the U.S., although not all forms may be made available to Canadian candidates, due to any "Not for Canada"

- items included on the test forms. Items will be selected for test forms through a process that will ensure consistency in content coverage (using the KSAs and Content Outlines), maximize the use of high-performing items and ensure comparability in test statistics, and minimize item overlap.
- c. *Replace at least one test form at the end of each testing period.* At the end of each 3-month testing period, the contractor will introduce one newly-constructed test form for each examination (except for Advanced Generalist). The criteria for choosing which test form to replace (typically the oldest form will be replaced) and the frequency of the introduction of new Advanced Generalist test forms will be among the issues determined by the contractor and ASWB in conjunction with the approval of the Plan for Test Form Construction.
 - d. *Establish contingency plans for immediate test form replacement in the event of a compromised test form.* The contractor will construct one new test form for each examination that could be held in reserve for immediate introduction in the event of a compromised test form or will develop an alternative strategy for such contingency planning. Contingency plans will be established in conjunction with ASWB approval of the Plan for Test Form Construction.
 - e. *Construct full-length practice tests.* ASWB may choose to publish additional versions of the full-length practice tests that it makes available to candidates. At the request of ASWB, the contractor will construct a full-length (170 - item) practice test for each examination area (except for the Advanced Generalist examination), from items that will be retired from the item banks. The contractor will select items for the practice tests according to content - and performance-related criteria that will result in a practice test that is as comparable as possible to an operational test form (in content and difficulty), while not stripping the operational item banks of items that are among those most needed for highly-reliable test forms that meet the test blueprints. After selecting items for the practice test, the contractor will securely deliver the practice test forms to ASWB. The contractor will not be responsible for adding rationales and other elements of the practice tests to the items selected or for publishing the practice tests.
 - f. *Conduct systematic quality control and security checks.* The contractor will conduct checks to ensure accuracy in the construction of new test forms. The contractor will ensure that non-active test forms are promptly removed from test site servers. Quality control and security procedures will be established in conjunction with ASWB approval of the Plan for Test Form Construction.

Activity B-2 Calculate Passing Scores

- a. *Calculate preequated passing scores for new test forms.* Because candidates are informed of their results immediately upon completion of the examination, a passing score must be set for each examination form before that form is introduced. For each newly-constructed test form, the contractor will calculate the passing score for the form using Item Response Theory (IRT). Each test form will be preequated to the raw performance standard (or standards, for the Associate/Bachelors exam) established by the ASWB Passing Score Panel and approved by the ASWB Board of Directors in 2010, for the latest version of the ASWB examination content outlines. The contractor will maintain IRT item statistics consistent with the IRT equating method chosen.
- b. *Conduct systematic quality control checks of passing scores.* The contractor will conduct systematic quality control checks to ensure accuracy in the calculation of passing scores.

Activity B-3 Provide Draft Test Form Indices to ASWB

- a. *Deliver each newly-constructed draft test form to ASWB for SME review.* As previously described in Section A-1 of this RFP (Prepare Materials to Support Examination Committee), after each new draft test form has been constructed by the contractor, the test form will be reviewed by SMEs in conjunction with the next meeting of the ASWB Examination Committee. The contractor will securely deliver the test form to ASWB two weeks before the meeting at which the SME review will occur. Please refer to Section A-1 for further discussion of this activity.
- b. *Deliver test form indices to ASWB prior to the introduction of the test form.* Before each new test form is introduced, the contractor will also send to ASWB a test form index that contains an array of information about the new test form that will be added to the test form rotation. The test form index will include: item identification numbers, content codes, and item performance statistics (classical and IRT parameters) for the items selected; the amount of item overlap among the new test forms for the upcoming testing period (target is 10% or less overlap for forms concurrently administered); the raw and IRT-equated passing scores for the new test forms and raw score to ability conversion tables for each form; and notes regarding any deviation for the form from the test blueprint and rationale for the deviation.

Activity B-4 Publish Operational Examinations

- a. *Publish the examinations to the computerized test delivery platform.* The contractor will publish exams to one or more platforms that will deliver the exams to test centers throughout the U.S. and Canada and will be capable of delivery to test centers elsewhere in the world.

- b. *Conduct systematic quality control checks of each newly-published test form.* The contractor will ensure the accuracy of the exams, in the content and format presented to candidates. The contractor will also establish a means by which authorized ASWB staff or Board members may attend a local testing center and view a published test form (for periodic quality control purposes) and/or actually sit for an exam at no additional charge.
- c. *Establish and maintain the capability to print at least one test form for each examination as a hard copy test form booklet.* The paper-and-pencil version of the test form will be administered in the limited situations in which such testing is allowed, per ASWB policy. Due to the small numbers, the contractor will print paper-and-pencil test forms on an as-needed basis. Each paper-and-pencil test form will be a 170-item test, like the computer-delivered test forms, and will include nonscorable items embedded throughout the test form in a seamless manner that will not be noticed by candidates. A test form may not be taken by the same candidate twice. Therefore, if a candidate is approved for paper-and-pencil testing who has already taken the one test form that has been printed as a hard copy test form booklet, then the contractor will print another test form for that examination as a hard copy test form booklet.

Activity B-5 Conduct Test Session Scheduling

- a. *Provide a system for candidates to schedule their testing sessions on the Internet and by telephone.* After candidates have registered for an examination with ASWB and have been authorized by ASWB to sit for the exam, the contractor will provide a candidate-friendly system by which the candidate will complete scheduling of their test session appointment at one of the contractor's computer testing centers. The contractor will provide candidates with the opportunity to schedule their test session appointments online and over the telephone. The contractor will also provide, to candidates who are scheduling special testing arrangements, direct contact information with appropriate members of the contractor's staff.

Activity B-6 Deliver Examinations

- a. *Deliver examinations via secure and standardized computer testing centers.* The contractor will deliver examinations at secure and standardized computer testing centers in at least 225 locations across North America, including all U.S. states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and all Canadian provinces and geographically located near urban areas to meet the needs of the testing community. The contractor will also maintain the capability for delivering the examinations at some locations in countries beyond North America. The contractor will be responsible for all costs related to the establishment and maintenance of computer testing centers, and will maintain on its website at all times a

- current online list of test sites. The contractor will also send a hard copy of the list of test sites to ASWB, to be replaced by the contractor each time the list is updated.
- b. For a small number of candidates, deliver examinations via secure and standardized paper-based testing.* In limited circumstances per ASWB policy, including a request from a group of candidates in a remote geographic location with no computer testing center available, or a request from an individual candidate with a disability (or another need for an alternative mode of testing), candidates will be approved by ASWB for a paper-based examination administration. The contractor will deliver paper-based examination administrations in these circumstances. In 2008, there were four special paper-based administrations for groups of candidates (typically groups of 10 or more) in British Columbia and Alberta (due to a lack of computer testing centers). In 2008, there were 93 individuals who were approved by ASWB for paper-based administrations. Of these, 78 were candidates with disabilities, 8 were candidates who had failed the computer delivered tests on multiple occasions, and 7 were candidates from the U.S. Virgin Islands without access to computer testing centers.
 - c. Ensure that test delivery fits ASWB test administration parameters.* The contractor will ensure that repeat examinees receive an exam form that they have not previously taken and will randomize the sequence of items presented to each candidate. The contractor will: include an ASWB-customized welcome screen, customized confidentiality statement, and customized candidate satisfaction survey at the end of the testing session (all subject to ASWB revision and approval); provide a tutorial to candidates on how to use the computerized test delivery system; present items to candidates one-by-one, with responses easily captured into the examinee score file; allow candidates to respond to items in any order; and allow candidates to flag items for later review, review all items (including both flagged items/responses and unanswered items), and make changes to original responses.
 - d. Provide 4 ½ hours total time allowance for ASWB examinations.* The contractor will provide four hours of actual testing time within the total 4 ½ hour time for the testing session. The contractor's test delivery platform will provide appropriate time "warnings" and be capable of automatically stopping at the end of the testing time – but also be able to accommodate extra time, if required (i.e. for approved special testing arrangements for candidates).
 - e. Provide regular updates to ASWB about test center locations in all ASWB jurisdictions.* The contractor will maintain regular contact with the ASWB Director of Candidate Services and/or her/his designee in the ASWB Candidate Registration Center (CRC), providing information on test center locations in all jurisdictions, as needed, and providing updates on changes, problems, and irregularities at test center sites.
 - f. Provide special testing arrangements for candidates with disabilities.* Per ASWB policy, agreements with its member boards, and to the extent required by law, ASWB approves some candidates for special testing arrangements due to disability, as described in the ASWB Candidate Handbook at <http://www.aswb.org/pdfs/handbook.pdf>. In consultation

- with the jurisdictions and ASWB, the contractor will provide special testing arrangements at test centers to ASWB-approved candidates with disabilities, using the latest available adaptive technologies (such as automated item reading capability). Accommodations may include: wheelchair-accessible workstations; separate rooms; qualified and experienced readers; markers; extra time; Braille, large print, or recorded exams; and signers for the hearing impaired (for either instructions only or for the entire exam, as needed by candidates for whom signing is their first language). In 2008, there were 535 candidates who were approved by ASWB for special testing arrangements due to disabilities.
- g. Provide special testing arrangements for candidates for whom English is a Second Language.* Per ASWB policy, ASWB approves some candidates for special testing arrangements due to their ESL status, as described in the ASWB Candidate Handbook at <http://www.aswb.org/pdfs/handbook.pdf>. ESL arrangements are based on ASWB policy and jurisdiction policies and may include extra time and/or the use of foreign language and English dictionaries. In 2008, there were 257 candidates who were approved by ASWB for special testing arrangements due to ESL status.
- h. Provide thoroughly screened and trained test administration staff.* The contractor will ensure that staff at the main office of the contractor and at the computer testing centers have undergone criminal background checks and are thoroughly trained in testing procedures. Staff at computer testing centers must be able to answer any questions that may arise at testing centers, including questions about test delivery equipment.
- i. Provide regular reports on candidate testing activity.* The contractor will report key information related to candidate test-taking activity, as requested by ASWB, including weekly reports on: the numbers of candidates taking the exams; candidate “no-shows” (registered candidates who do not show up at the test center for their scheduled test sessions or do not cancel per program policy); and the results of candidate surveys administered at the end of the testing session.

Activity B-7 Ensure the Security and Standardization of Administrations

- a. Develop Test Administration Plan.* During 2010, the contractor for the new contract period will develop a Test Administration Plan that will provide a detailed description of the procedures that will be used to ensure that the ASWB examinations are delivered in a secure and standardized manner across all test centers. The plan will include a discussion of the process that the contractor will use to publish new test forms and conduct form quality control, conduct scheduling of test session appointments (both online and by telephone), administer test forms at computerized test delivery centers (including the features of the test delivery application), train the staff of testing centers, administer limited numbers of tests on paper, provide special testing arrangements (including providing direct contact to appropriate staff for candidates who are scheduling special testing arrangements), and provide regular reporting of candidate testing activity. The plan will function as a more

- detailed account of the corresponding sections of the contractor's agreement with ASWB, since it will discuss the contractor's tasks outlined in sections B-4, B-5, B-6 and B-7 of this RFP. The plan will be reviewed by ASWB, revised as necessary by the contractor, and approved by ASWB. The deadline for completion of the plan is listed in Appendix D of this RFP. Once established, the plan will govern the contractor's procedures for test administration for the duration of the contract period, unless procedures need to be revised for any reason by the contractor or ASWB. If procedures change, then the plan will be updated by the contractor and approved by ASWB.
- b. Develop and implement security procedures.* The contractor will develop and implement stringent procedures, including any encoding of computer files, all methods of data transfer, and all quality control methods that are designed to prevent breaches of examination security involving examination materials. The contractor will provide monitoring of testing centers by videotape and will provide ASWB with a report on videotaped behavior, as needed. The contractor will use data forensics procedures, including statistical procedures designed to prevent and detect security violations by candidates (e.g. gain score analyses, flagging of pre-determined suspicious behavior patterns at test sites) and logistical procedures that will also reinforce test security (e.g. erasable white boards for candidates to use at testing centers instead of scratch paper). The contractor will analyze item and test response data and passing rates at regular intervals for non-normative test responses indicative of cheating, piracy, or collusion. The details of procedures will be established in conjunction with ASWB's approval of the Test Administration Plan.
 - c. Report all candidate testing irregularities.* The contractor will immediately report in written format all candidate testing irregularities to ASWB, by the close of the first business day following the testing irregularity in question.
 - d. Prohibit employees from taking the ASWB exams for at least one year after separation.* The contractor will prohibit employees of the test contractor and the testing centers that administer ASWB examinations from taking an ASWB examination for at least one year after they have concluded their period of employment.
 - e. Conduct Web monitoring to uncover unauthorized distribution of examination content.* The contractor will monitor websites where exam content might be disclosed. The contractor will provide infringement monitoring reports to ASWB every four months, describing the findings of the monitoring system. The details of Web monitoring procedures will be established in conjunction with ASWB's approval of the Test Administration Plan.
 - f. Investigate potential security breaches.* In collaboration with ASWB, the contractor will investigate potential security breaches and initiate steps to resolve any emergent security issues.

- g. Ensure the security and confidentiality of candidates' individual scores.* The contractor will be responsible for ensuring that candidates' scores are handled in ways that will ensure accuracy and confidentiality.

Activity B-8 Score Candidate Responses and Maintain/Monitor Data

- a. Collect candidate response data on items and calculate scores.* The contractor will collect candidate response data on items and calculate candidate test scores, as operational test forms are administered at computerized testing centers and a limited number of paper-and-pencil administrations.
- b. Maintain Item Response Theory (IRT) statistics.* The contractor will maintain and monitor IRT item statistics consistent with the IRT model utilized for analysis and equating. Data will be updated at least monthly.
- c. Maintain classical statistics and raw score descriptive statistics.* The contractor will maintain and monitor classical statistics, including difficulty (p-value), discrimination (point biserial), and response by ability level for each item. The contractor will also maintain and monitor raw score descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, reliability, standard error of measurement, decision consistency index, and passing score for each examination form. Data will be updated at least monthly.
- d. Maintain examination data for each candidate and test form at each administration.* The contractor will maintain and monitor examination data for each candidate at each administration. The data will include name, identification number, jurisdiction, test date, test site, examination category, examination form, raw score, scaled score, IRT ability level, result (pass/fail), and response string. The answer key for each examination form will be maintained in a compatible format.
- e. Analyze item responses for Differential Item Functioning (DIF).* The contractor will analyze examination results and item responses for DIF related to gender and ethnicity. Cumulative data from each examination form will be analyzed every three months, concurrent with the introduction of a new examination form. As described in Activity A-1, the contractor will prepare for the Examination Committee's review, any items (and their associated data) that are indicated for further review by the DIF analyses.
- f. Report any irregularities that emerge from cumulative data.* The contractor will conduct regular analyses of cumulative data and immediately report in written format to ASWB any irregularities that emerge in cumulative item, examination form, or candidate data. In conjunction with ASWB, the contractor will investigate any irregularity until the issue is resolved to the satisfaction of ASWB.

- g. Provide additional data to ASWB on request.* The contractor will provide additional item, examination form, and examinee data to ASWB on request, as required for research or other purposes.

Activity B-9 Report Examination Results

- a. Develop Plan for Results Analyses and Score Reporting.* During 2010, the contractor for the new contract period will develop a Plan for Results Analyses and Score Reporting that will provide a detailed description of the procedures that will be used to analyze candidate response data and report test results. The plan will include a discussion of the process that the contractor will use to maintain and monitor cumulative test, item, and candidate data, and will review procedures for scaling scores and providing candidates, jurisdictions, and ASWB with score reports. The plan will function as a more detailed account of the contractor's agreement with ASWB, since it will discuss the contractor's tasks outlined in sections B-8 and B-9 of this RFP. The plan will be reviewed by ASWB, revised as necessary by the contractor, and approved by ASWB. The deadline for completion of the plan is listed in Appendix D of this RFP. Once established, the plan will govern the contractor's procedures for results analyses and score reporting for the duration of the contract period, unless procedures need to be revised for any reason by the contractor or ASWB. If procedures change, then the plan will be updated by the contractor and approved by ASWB.
- b. Compute scaled scores.* The contractor will compute scaled scores based on a linear transformation of the difference between the IRT ability level corresponding to the candidate's performance and the ability level corresponding to the passing score. Jurisdictions may set the scaled passing score at either 70 or 75, so two scales will be necessary for each examination form. Scales will be rounded to the nearest whole number.
- c. Report examination results to candidates.* Upon completion of the examination, the contractor will immediately report results to candidates on screen and on a printed unofficial score report (in a manner that protect the confidentiality of candidate results). Passing candidates currently receive administration date, examination category, pass/fail status, jurisdiction, information on the raw passing score required for the test taken and on the raw number of questions correctly answered. Failing candidates currently also receive information on the number of questions in each content area of the test and on the number of questions correctly answered in each content area. Up to two pages of information may be included on the reports that the contractor provides to candidates, including results, interpretive score report information, and related ASWB information. The results file for the candidate that is retained in perpetuity by the contractor (or as established in the approved Plan for Materials Retention described in Section C-1 of the RFP) should also include a digital photo, fingerprint/palm print, or other biometric information that can be used to verify a candidate's identity as necessary. The content and format of the reports will

be determined in conjunction with ASWB approval of the Plan for Results Analyses and Score Reporting.

- d. Provide examination results to jurisdictions and ASWB.* The contractor will provide individual score reports to each jurisdiction weekly, via a secure Web site. The contractor will report rosters of examinees and results to jurisdictions and ASWB weekly, via a secure Web site. The roster information currently includes name, address, ID number, date of birth, examination category, repeater status, raw score, scaled score, and pass/fail status for each candidate. The content and format of the reports will be determined in conjunction with ASWB approval of the Plan for Results Analyses and Score Reporting.
- e. Conduct score verification and rescoring, as needed.* As requested by ASWB, the contractor will provide score verification and rescoring services. Score verification will occur upon the reasonable request of a candidate and under current ASWB policy. Rescoring occurs when a candidate asks to have their result scored to a different passing score than the passing score computed for the calculation of the candidate's original pass/fail status (e.g. compute a new result for the Bachelors passing score, when the original result was computed for the Associate passing score or vice-versa). In 2008, the contractor conducted 20 score verifications. There were no requests (0) for rescoring in 2008.
- f. Work with the ASWB Candidate Registration Center (CRC).* The contractor will work closely with the ASWB CRC to facilitate candidate registration and test session appointment scheduling, and to transfer data as needed. The contractor will constantly seek to increase the speed of communications with the CRC and will be prepared to use the latest technology to do this.

Activity B-10 Provide Bimonthly and Annual Technical Reports

- a. Provide bimonthly administration reports.* The contractor will provide to ASWB a bimonthly administration report that summarizes the administration and scoring of test forms administered during the previous two months. The summary of results by form for each category of the examination will include mean score, standard deviation, reliability coefficient, standard error of measurement, raw passing score, and passing rates for all examinees, first time test-takers, and repeat examinees. By the end of 2010, prior to the production of the first bimonthly administration report for the new contract period, the contractor for the new contract period will prepare a shell of the report (containing everything but the data itself) for ASWB's review and approval, in order to establish the final format and content of the report. Each bimonthly administration report will be provided to ASWB no later than 2 months after the last day of the second month covered by the report in question (i.e. by April 30, 2011, the contractor will deliver the January/February 2011 bimonthly administration report to ASWB).

- b. *Provide annual technical reports.* The contractor will provide to ASWB an annual technical report that summarizes test development, administration, and scoring activities conducted during the preceding year. The report will include raw to scaled score conversion tables in an appendix. The annual technical report will be organized to be aligned with the organization of the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, and the content of the annual technical reports to be prepared during the new contract period will be consistent with the content of current annual technical reports. Please refer to Appendix E for the Table of Contents and List of Tables from the 2008 Technical Report. By the end of 2011, prior to the production of the first annual technical report for the new contract period, the contractor for the new contract period will prepare a shell of the annual technical report (containing everything but the data itself), along with a list of quality control procedures that will be conducted on the technical report data, for ASWB's review and approval, in order to establish the final format, content, and quality control process for the report. By May 31 of each year, the contractor will provide to ASWB a draft report with the statistical data that will be included in the report for the previous year (i.e. by May 31 of 2012, the draft of the 2011 technical report with the 2011 data will be provided to ASWB). ASWB will review the draft report, provide any revisions, and provide the contractor with its approval to print the final report. The contractor will provide the final report to ASWB by July 31 of the following year (i.e. the final report for 2011 will be provided to ASWB by July 31, 2012). The deadlines for completion of these deliverables are also listed in Appendix D of this RFP.
- c. *Execute comprehensive quality control procedures to ensure the accuracy of the data reported in technical reports.* The contractor will conduct comprehensive quality control checks on the bimonthly and annual technical reports to ensure the accuracy of the data to be included in these reports prior to the delivery of draft reports to ASWB for approval.

C. General Services

In addition to the Examination Development/Item Bank Maintenance Services and Examination Administration Services described in sections A & B of this Scope of Work section of the RFP, there are a number of additional activities in support of the examination program for which the contractor will also be responsible. The contractor will prepare a Plan for Materials Retention and, after securing the approval of ASWB, will execute the agreed-upon document and data retention policies. The contractor will maintain reliable back-up systems for key program components. And the contractor will cooperate fully with any examination program evaluation or Security Audit implemented by ASWB.

Finally, on an ongoing basis throughout the contract term, ASWB will provide the contractor with the dates and locations of any meetings of the ASWB Board of Directors, Delegate Assembly meetings, or ad hoc committee meetings at which the contractor will need to plan to be represented. Requests for

representation at ASWB meetings will be limited, and will typically be provided by ASWB to the contractor no later than three months prior to the scheduled meeting.

Activity C-1 Maintain Documentation of Exam Program Activities.

- a. *Develop Materials Retention Plan.* During 2010, the contractor for the new contract period will develop a Plan for Materials Retention that will provide a detailed description of the policies that will be followed by the contractor for the retention and storage of documents, data, and other materials associated with the contractor's ASWB examination program activities. The plan will function as a more detailed account of the contractor's agreement with ASWB, since it will discuss the contractor's tasks outlined in section C-1 of this RFP. The plan will be reviewed by ASWB, revised as necessary by the contractor, and approved by ASWB. The deadline for completion of the plan is listed in Appendix D of this RFP. Once established, the plan will govern the contractor's procedures for materials retention for the duration of the contract period, unless procedures need to be revised for any reason by the contractor or ASWB. If procedures change, then the plan will be updated by the contractor and approved by ASWB.
- b. *Maintain comprehensive documentation of the contractor's ASWB-related activities.* The contractor will maintain comprehensive documentation of all of the contractor's activities related to the ASWB Examination Program. In the event of a legal action, historical research associated with a new ASWB initiative, or other activities that may require historical documentation, the contractor will promptly provide to ASWB any requested information from the contractor's Program Files. The contractor's retention policies for the program will be established in conjunction with ASWB approval of the Plan for Materials Retention.
- c. *Maintain backup systems.* The contractor will establish and maintain backup systems to protect against the loss of any electronic data files associated with the ASWB examination program.

Activity C-2 Fully Cooperate with Security Audits/Program Evaluations.

- a. *Provide written answers to security-related questions regarding the ASWB examinations.* At some point during the new contract term, ASWB may engage a 3rd party contractor who specializes in test security (separate from the ASWB contractor for the examination development and administration services described in this RFP) to conduct an audit of the security of the ASWB examination program. If a Security Audit is conducted, the examination development and administration contractor will be contacted by the Security Audit contractor and will be asked to provide written answers to a series of security-related questions regarding the functions the examination development and administration

contractor performs for ASWB. The examination development and administration contractor will comply with such requests from the Security Audit contractor, accommodate an on-site visit of the Security Audit contractor (if necessary) and provide answers to any follow-up questions and/or documentation requests needed to complete the Security Audit.

- b. Provide full cooperation with independent psychometric evaluations of ASWB exam program.* At some point during the new contract term, ASWB may engage an independent psychometrician to conduct a comprehensive review and evaluation of the ASWB examination program. If an independent psychometric evaluation is conducted, the examination development and administration contractor will be contacted by the reviewing psychometrician and will be asked to provide a variety of information and documentation regarding the functions the examination development and administration contractor performs for ASWB. The examination development and administration contractor will comply with such requests from the psychometrician conducting the evaluation, accommodate an on-site visit of the psychometrician (if necessary) and provide answers to any follow-up questions and/or documentation requests needed to complete the comprehensive review and evaluation.

Activity C-3 Provide Representation at ASWB Meetings.

- a. Provide representation at ASWB Meetings.* At the request of ASWB, the contractor will provide representation at up to two (total) ASWB meetings each year of the Delegate Assembly, Board of Directors, ad hoc committees, or member boards.

D. Accounting Services

ASWB will collect exam registration and other exam-related fees from candidates and will be responsible for all accounting services related to the examination program. However, the contractor will also be responsible for seeing that its billing of ASWB is properly reconciled with the number of candidates tested or with any specific activities for which the contractor's agreement with ASWB requires separate payments. The contractor will promptly provide ASWB with an invoice each month, to enable ASWB to pay the contractor on a monthly basis for services rendered.

Activity D-1 Conduct Systematic Quality Control for Monthly Bills.

- a. Conduct systematic quality control checks of billing of ASWB.* The contractor will conduct systematic quality control checks of its billing of ASWB to ensure that its billing is reconciled with the number of candidates tested, or any specific activities for which the contract requires separate payments to the contractor from ASWB.

- b. Promptly provide monthly invoices to ASWB. ASWB will pay the contractor on a monthly basis according to the financial arrangements established as the contract is finalized. Within 30 days after the last day of each month, the contractor will send ASWB an invoice for the payment owed to the contractor for the previous month (e.g. by March 30, 2011 the contractor will send an invoice to ASWB for the monthly payment owed for the month of February, 2011). ASWB will provide the monthly payment to the contractor upon receipt of the monthly invoice.*

PART 3: SUPPORTING INFORMATION REQUIRED FROM BIDDERS

A. Corporate Capability

The contractor will have significant experience and competence in the development and administration of large-scale testing programs for certification and/or licensure, as well as sufficient corporate resources for the products and services to be provided.

Appropriate computer testing centers must be available in each jurisdiction, completely staffed, and accessible according to ADA standards (and corresponding Canadian law). The testing centers must be available on enough dates during the year and in the number of geographic locations necessary to meet demand. Paper-and-pencil examinations, with adequate security and proctoring, must be available if needed because of an unreasonable distance between a group of candidates and a computer testing site. An appropriate number of trained proctors must be available at the test centers and at other special testing arrangements approved by ASWB. The contractor is solely responsible for all training materials for proctors, all hardware and software maintenance, and all security arrangements at each site.

Bidders should document their capability in these areas as described below.

1. Describe your corporate experience in examination development and administration of large-scale tests for certification or licensure. Emphasize work experience similar to that required in this Request for Proposals. Provide a brief summary of each relevant project that includes:
 - a. a description of the scope of work of the project;
 - b. reference information for the project -- the name and *current* position, address, and telephone number of your client agency's program manager or other key program monitor who can provide specific and objective information about your corporate performance and work products; and

- c. where applicable, the names of any members of your proposed management team and project staff for the ASWB project described in this RFP, who were or are involved in the project you have named, and a description of their roles and responsibilities for that project.
2. Describe your corporate facilities, equipment, and other resources that are available and useful in the work to be performed for ASWB. In addition to describing your main corporate facilities and/or regional offices from which your ASWB project management staff will work, your description of your corporate facilities should specifically include:
 - a. the total number of secure, standardized computer testing centers that you propose to use for the delivery of the ASWB examinations. Do not include 3rd party testing centers unless you are confident that such sites will meet the requirements for secure and standardized testing described in this RFP.
 - b. the locations of computerized testing centers, *listed by ASWB jurisdiction or prospective jurisdiction* (which includes all of the U.S. states, all of the Canadian provinces, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). Again, do not include the locations of your 3rd party testing centers unless such sites will meet the requirements for secure and standardized testing described in this RFP.
 - c. a description of your capacity for administering secure and standardized high-stakes exams for certification and/or licensure at sites in other countries outside of North America.
3. If you propose any subcontractors, provide similar information as that requested in 1 and 2 above for each subcontractor. For each subcontractor, include a letter of commitment to the project from the appropriate officer of the subcontractor.

B. Management and Staffing Plan

The names of key personnel assigned to the contract should be given, and a résumé provided for each. The amount of time each individual can be expected to give to the contract should be provided.

If more than one entity is involved in the proposal, it is imperative that the relationships among vendors be described in detail. ASWB prefers a single contractor to deliver all components of this RFP, but understands that subcontracting might be necessary to secure a comprehensive, high-quality proposal from some potential bidders. If a bidder will use a subcontractor, then any prior joint contract experiences should be described and references provided. Any serious adversarial relationships, such as pending lawsuits, between parties involved in the proposal must be disclosed. ASWB reserves the right to approve subcontractors.

Besides meeting legal requirements, including the EEOC and ADA (and corresponding Canadian laws), each contractor should have in place an affirmative action policy and a drug-free workplace policy.

Personnel at computer testing sites must be made very familiar with ASWB testing processes, especially special accommodations, and there must be a mechanism for informing computer testing center staff of changes and updates in those procedures.

The bidder must:

1. Present a plan for managing and staffing all of the project work outlined in this RFP that would be performed by the bidder, as well as work that would be performed by each subcontractor. The management and staffing plan is to include:
 - a. a list of the key project staff by name, position, and their area(s) of responsibility;
 - b. the percent of full-time equivalency for each key project staff person for each contract year;
 - c. verification of the qualifications of each project staff person via résumés (to be included in an appendix to the bidder's proposal) *and* brief narratives linking expertise and prior experience to corresponding project tasks;
 - d. an organization chart for the project showing the relationships and lines of authority (1) among the bidder and proposed subcontractors, if any, and (2) among the bidder's project management and staff;
 - e. identification of the locations at which key project personnel would work; and
 - f. the criteria for replacing or reassigning any staff and how and when ASWB would be notified about any change in staff.
2. Describe, for the project director and other personnel responsible for key components of the project, the extent (minimum requirement of two years) and appropriateness of recent experience in a comparable capacity with a testing program similar in nature and scope to the ASWB program.
3. Provide a summary of the screening process (including criminal background checks), training and qualifications of computer testing center staff, the process for acquainting them with ASWB testing processes (including special testing arrangements) and the mechanism for informing them of changes and updates in those procedures.

C. Cost Detail and Financial Arrangements

ASWB's goal is to enter into a contract through which the contractor provides the highest quality examination development and administration services and products at the lowest possible cost. Therefore, contract costs are a significant factor in the evaluation of proposals

The contract term will be from January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2013. ASWB may extend the contract for two additional years through December 31, 2015, contingent on the satisfactory performance of the selected contractor.

ASWB is soliciting a fixed total price contract, which may include a per-candidate fee.

The section of the bidder's proposal detailing the bidder's response to the requirements of this RFP Section C, Cost Detail and Financial Arrangements, should be separate from the main body of the proposal.

The bidder must:

1. Provide the budget for operating the program in as much detail as possible. The costs of personnel, computer testing centers, and technology use should be included. Single-figure budget statements will not be acceptable.
2. Delineate costs for each portion of the work to be provided.
3. Break out costs that are one-time and development costs for the project, so that those costs are differentiated from costs that will be affected by candidate volume.
4. Be prepared to discuss separate costs for various aspects of the proposed services in the event that ASWB elects to not contract for all services or to contract separately for some services.

PART 4: (OPTIONAL) BIDDERS' SUGGESTIONS FOR PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS

Because the ASWB Board of Directors, Examination Committee, and staff have the ultimate responsibility for the validity and reliability of the examinations, it is important that ASWB has as much information as possible about new developments in the field of psychometrics and in the methods, procedures, technology, and other resources available to enhance the test development and administration of a large-scale program for licensure examinations. Suggested program enhancements that the bidder could provide ASWB at no additional cost should be integrated into the bidder's description of their response to the Scope of Work outlined in Part 3 of this RFP.

The bidder may include an additional OPTIONAL (not scored) section of the proposal narrative that, based on the bidder's understanding of the needs of the ASWB examination program, provides a detailed description of suggested program enhancements that the bidder could provide to ASWB for an additional cost.

Proposed cost detail and financial arrangements for each suggested program enhancement should be presented in this section (in response to Part 4 of the RFP) with the associated narrative related to each optional program enhancement. These costs should be presented separately from the cost detail and

financial arrangements provided in response to the requirements of Part 3 of the RFP, which are associated with the bidder's base costs for the scope of work outlined in Part 2.

PART 5: PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

A. Compliance with Proposal Eligibility Requirements

ASWB will determine whether or not each of the following criteria is met by checking “yes” or “no” in the appropriate row. Proposals lacking one or more of the following requirements will be deemed incomplete and may not be evaluated further.

Table 3: Proposal Eligibility Requirements

Requirement	Yes	No
Completed “Intention to Submit a Proposal” Form was received by ASWB by September 11, 2009 .		
Proposal was received by ASWB on or before November 30, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. EST .		
An original hard copy of the proposal, eight additional numbered hard copies of the proposal, and a CD-ROM of the proposal were received.		
The proposal has the following required elements as described in Part 1 of the RFP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The cover sheet of the proposal: (1) clearly identifies the bidder; (2) clearly identifies the name and title of the person authorized to contractually obligate the organization; (3) clearly identifies the name, title, and contact information of the person(s) to be contacted for clarification during the proposal review period; (4) indicates the price for services offered; and (5) is signed by the person authorized to contractually obligate the organization. b. Table of Contents c. Introduction d. Completed Statement of Assurances 		
The proposal addresses Part 2, Section A: Examination Development and Item Bank Maintenance Services.		
The proposal addresses Part 2, Section B: Examination Administration Services.		
The proposal addresses Part 2, Section C: General Services.		
The proposal addresses Part 2, Section D: Accounting Services.		
The proposal addresses Part 3, Section A: Corporate Capability.		
The proposal addresses Part 3, Section B: Management and Staffing Plan.		
The proposal addresses Part 3, Section C: Cost Detail and Financial Arrangements.		
The proposal provides the Corporate Status/Governance Information described in Part 1 of the RFP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. An identification of the legal corporate status of the bidder, along with any parent company or subsidiaries b. The name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and fax number of the individual(s) authorized to discuss contract terms. 		

B. Compliance with Proposal Program Requirements

A Proposal Review Team will use a point-count method for evaluating proposals, as described in Part 6. The criteria and maximum score possible for each criterion are provided in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Proposal Evaluation Criteria

	Criterion	Maximum Score
I	<u>Examination Development & Item Bank Maintenance – Task A.</u> The proposal provides sound, feasible, and complete plans for the examination development and item bank maintenance work in Task A, as described in Part 2 of this RFP. Sufficient detail is provided to know what the bidder will do and how the bidder will do it. The proposal presents clear evidence that the bidder will provide high quality examination development & item bank maintenance products and services.	15
II	<u>Examination Administration – Task B.</u> The proposal provides sound, feasible, and complete plans for the administration of the examination program work in Task B, as described in Part 2 of this RFP. Sufficient detail is provided to know what the bidder will do and how the bidder will do it. The proposal presents clear evidence that the bidder will provide high quality examination administration products and services.	50
III	<u>General Services – Task C.</u> The proposal presents clear evidence that the bidder will provide high quality services for the work in Task C, as described in Part 2 of this RFP.	5
IV	<u>Accounting Services – Task D.</u> The proposal presents clear evidence that the bidder will provide high quality services for the work in Task D, as described in this RFP.	5
V	<u>Corporate Capability.</u> The proposal demonstrates that the bidder has sufficient and appropriate experience and resources to provide the required products and services with high quality. The bidder possesses expertise in all areas essential to the project. If subcontractors are proposed, they too have the experience, resources, and expertise to provide the products and services for which they would be responsible.	10
VI	<u>Management & Staffing Plan.</u> The proposal includes a sound, feasible plan to organize managers and staff members (including subcontractors, if proposed) to deliver the required products and services efficiently and with high quality. Key duties would be assigned to individuals with essential expertise, experience, and time to complete their responsibilities.	10
VII	<u>Overall Presentation.</u> The proposal is clearly written, concise, and well-organized. Ideas are presented logically and all requested information is presented skillfully.	5
VIII	<u>Cost Detail & Financial Arrangements.</u> The proposed contractor's prices are reasonable in relation to the products and services to be provided. Fiscal processes are sound and comprehensive.	100
	Maximum Possible Score	200

PART 6: PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

Each proposal will be evaluated to determine its responsiveness to the needs of ASWB as described in this RFP. ASWB reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. ASWB will not award a contract if, in its judgment, no acceptable proposals have been submitted. Proposals received after the Proposal Submission Deadline time and date noted in Key Action Dates, Section C of Part 1 will be rejected and will not be evaluated.

A. The Proposal Review Process

ASWB will use a point-count method for evaluating proposals and awarding a contract. After 5:00 p.m. EST on November 30, 2009, all proposals that have been successfully submitted by the deadline will be evaluated as follows:

1. ASWB will determine the compliance of each proposal with the Proposal Eligibility Requirements as listed in Part 5, Section A of this RFP. Proposals that are incomplete may be eliminated from further consideration.
2. Each remaining proposal will be independently reviewed and rated by members of a Proposal Review Team on the basis of the Proposal Program Requirements as listed in Part 5, Section B of this RFP. Each Proposal Review Team member will independently read the proposals (except for the Cost Detail and Financial Arrangements & OPTIONAL Bidders' Suggestions for Program Enhancements, which will each be removed from the proposals read by the Proposal Review Team) and tabulate initial scores from the earned points for each criterion. Team members will then meet to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal and either develop written questions for bidders, or, if the team has no questions for a bidder, then individual scores from team members will be averaged to assign the final score to that bid. If the team has questions, the questions will be e-mailed to the bidder as soon as possible with an indication of when the written responses will be due (typically within 24 hours). Following this discussion of the proposals, and if applicable, receipt and discussion of the bidders' answers to questions, scores for each proposal will be averaged across team members.

Proposal Review Team Members will then review the Cost Detail and Financial Arrangements, tabulating the earned points for that part of each proposal.

3. After the proposal evaluation process is complete, one or more bidders may be selected based on the total proposal score awarded. If it is determined to be necessary by ASWB, negotiations with those bidders may occur. If it is determined to be necessary by ASWB, one or more bidders may also be invited to present their proposals and answer questions about the proposals on **January 28, 2010**. A site visit to the offices or computer testing centers of finalists may be made, if appropriate.

B. Decisions on Contract

A final decision on the proposals will be made by the ASWB. ASWB will discuss with the selected contractor any optional suggested program enhancements proposed and negotiate the final terms of the contract before entering into contractual agreement. Timelines and price will also be finalized during contract negotiations. The contract will include a penalty clause for non-performance.

The successful contractor will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement with ASWB.

APPENDIX A
INTENTION TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL
FOR EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION SERVICES FOR
THE ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORK BOARDS

We intend to submit a proposal to the Association of Social Work Boards for services related to its examinations.

NAME OF FIRM: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

CONTACT PERSON: _____

TITLE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Please send intention to submit form by e-mail, fax, or registered mail to:

Phil Gullion

Examination Program Manager

Association of Social Work Boards

400 South Ridge Parkway, Suite B

Culpeper, VA 22701

E-mail: pgullion@aswb.org

Fax: 540-829-0562

Phone: 540-829-6880 x3031

DEADLINE: September 11, 2009

APPENDIX B

Cover Sheet

Proposal #: _____

Association of Social Work Boards
400 South Ridge Parkway, Suite B
Culpeper, VA 22701

1. _____

Offeror

Address

City

State

Zip Code

2. Project Director

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

3. Financial Officer

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

4. Contact person for proposal, if different than Project Director:

5. Federal Tax Identification Number: _____

6. State Tax Identification Number: _____

7. Total Fixed-Price Bid for Three Years (Jan. 1, 2011 - Dec. 31, 2013)

The offeror certifies that, to the best of his/her knowledge and belief, the data in this proposal are true and correct.

Name of authorized official: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Number of Pages in Proposal _____

APPENDIX C
STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

The offeror agrees to comply with all federal (U.S. & Canada), state, and provincial legal requirements under the provisions of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and corresponding Canadian laws.

Authorized Representative

Signature

The Statement of Assurances indicates the intention of the offeror to comply with applicable regulations, and failure to complete it will result in the rejection of the proposal.

APPENDIX D

DUE DATES FOR

EXAMINATION PROGRAM PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS

Deliverable	Due Date
Plan for Test Form Construction	June 1, 2010
Test Administration Plan	July 1, 2010
Plan for Results Analyses and Score Reporting	August 1, 2010
Plan for Support of Examination Committee Meetings	September 1, 2010
Plan for Pretesting of Items	October 1, 2010
Plan for Item Bank Maintenance	November 1, 2010
Plan for Materials Retention	December 1, 2010
(Shell) Bimonthly Administration Report	December 31, 2010
(Final) First Bimonthly Administration Report	April 30, 2011
(Shell) Annual Technical Report	December 31, 2011
(Draft with Data) First Annual Technical Report	May 31, 2012
(Final) First Annual Technical Report	July 31, 2012

APPENDIX E

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