

Request for Proposal

To Research Education Equivalency for Professional Certification Program



I. INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT

The International Association of Emergency Managers maintains the Associate Emergency Manager (AEM) and the Certified Emergency Manager (CEM) Program. The IAEM Certification Program was launched in 1993 and IAEM has certified over 4,000 candidates since the program inception. Currently there are 2,761 emergency managers who hold either the Associate Emergency Manager (AEM®) or Certified Emergency Manager (CEM®) designation worldwide. This program elevates the professional standards in emergency management and serves as a benchmark for individual achievement of excellence.

The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) is the non-profit organization representing comprehensive emergency management in all sectors and at all levels of government focusing on disaster issues. IAEM was established in 1952 to help its members protect property and lives and lessen the effects of disaster. Today, its membership roster includes about 5,000 professionals.

In 1988, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funded IAEM to establish and maintain standards for emergency management professionals. An advisory council of emergency management partner organizations (city managers, county officials, educational institutions, public works, fire, police, state EM, and others) determined that a certification program would be the best way to promulgate professional standards, and worked for five years with emergency management subject matter experts to assess current professional requirements in the field, conduct job analyses and identify knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) needed to perform key functions of emergency management. The certification requirements are based on these KSAs. The Certified Emergency Manager (CEM®) is the ultimate credential in the profession, and requires candidates to demonstrate a portfolio of knowledge, skills and abilities.

IAEM leadership has called for an evaluation of the current education requirement, which is that all USA applicants must document a baccalaureate/bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. The education requirement varies for other applicants based on geographic location outside of the United States.

II. SCOPE OF WORK

IAEM is investing in the services of an independent consultant to conduct the necessary research to make a well-documented recommendation regarding the Certified Emergency Manager (CEM®) education requirement.

The scope of work for this contract is:

Task 1: Project Communications & Plan Release

- Draft communications around project and ongoing updates.
- Draft talking points to address anticipated comments once decision is made.
- Create roll out plan timeline and communications.

Task 2: Research & Environmental Scan

Work may be combined to fulfill several steps in this task with a single survey and analysis.

- **Market Analysis & Cost-Benefit** —Research the key audiences’ (current and potential AEMs/CEMs) appetite for change. I.e., “If there was an alternative to the degree requirement, would you be more likely apply for the CEM?” “If there was an alternative to the degree requirement, would your perceived value of the CEM change?”
- **Establish a statement on the purpose of the IAEM Certification Program**—Facilitate consensus on the defined purpose of the Certification Program, working with the IAEM membership and IAEM-USA Board and engaging the Certification Commission. Is the Program intent to elevate the profession (aspirational), or is it to establish and maintain baseline standards for the emergency manager role?
- **Identify the impact on partners who use IAEM Certification as a standard**—Some state certification programs mirror the IAEM CEM requirements or offer reciprocity to individuals who have earned IAEM certification. And, there are public, private and non-governmental organizations including companies and jurisdictions that require CEM for job eligibility.
- **Provide strategies to address a potential perception that an education equivalency lowers the CEM standards** – Use consultant expertise plus research to address concerns about lowering the CEM standards if an education equivalency is established. Consider that the essay requirement was recently removed from the certification requirements with the understanding that a degree was required.
- **Identify and Address DEI considerations** – Deliberate DEI considerations if a bachelor’s degree is deemed an unnecessary barrier to IAEM certification. Include conclusions in final recommendation.
- **Outline requirements for comparable professional certifications** – Research comparable professional certifications (PMP, CAE, etc.). Address findings in final recommendation.

Task 3: Recommendation regarding degree requirement/equivalency

- Provide a research-based recommendation for keeping the education requirement as is, establishing an education equivalency and/or establishing an experience equivalency. If an equivalency is recommended, develop a specific solution for the CEM program.

III. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

Funding is through a grant to IAEM from FEMA, EMW-2023-CA-05128. The award is contingent upon the availability of those funds.

IV. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should include the following:

1. **Demonstration of Contractor's capacity and staffing expertise** to provide all of the services necessary and appropriate for the project. Help us get to know you better by detailing any relevant third-party certifications, number of FTEs on staff, office(s) location, date the company was founded, names of all principals, directors, managers, owners or other major figures in the organization's control group, primary markets served, number of customers served to date with similar services, indicate if any of the offered services provided by subcontractors, and awards, recognitions or commendations for related work over the past five years.
2. **Ability to initiate** the project within six (6) weeks of award.
3. Indication of contractor's **experience, credentials and specialized knowledge** in establishing education equivalencies (for both domestic and international groups), professional worldwide certification programs, work with federal funding, and work with emergency management-related entities. Contractor should provide an outline of background and experience with examples of similar work done by the contractor and a list of personnel who will conduct the project, detailing their training and work experience.
4. **Three Client references** including description of work performed and contact details.
5. **Proposed fees** for the defined tasks and pricing details for any recommended additional projects/activities.
6. **A brief strategy** detailing proposed outcomes, audience, budget plan, and how you plan to execute (describe specific methodology). Include a demonstration of ability to provide communication templates for regular member updates and to otherwise accomplish project milestones and deliverables.
7. An **estimated timeline to complete all services by July 15, 2024** including key milestones and completion dates.
8. Identification of responsibilities/involvement needed of **IAEM Staff**.
9. **Additional tasks or activities**. Responders are encouraged to propose additional tasks or activities above and beyond the scope of what is requested in this solicitation if they will substantially improve the results of this procurement. Any costs associated with these additional tasks or activities should be clearly marked and separated from the costs associated with the tasks and activities specifically requested under this solicitation.

V. SUBMISSION PROCESS

All proposals are to be submitted **by 5:00 pm Eastern on Wednesday, January 24** to:

International Association of Emergency Managers
Kate McClimans
Submitted electronically to Kate@iaem.com

Conditions for Submission: Proposals must include a cover sheet that includes the applicant's name, address, phone number, and e-mail, with a section for each area defined in Section IV Proposal Requirements.

IAEM may reject any and all bids, or award the contract to the lowest qualified bidder, or to the bidder who provides the requested services most closely aligned with IAEM's needs, in IAEM's sole determination. IAEM will not be responsible for any costs associated with preparing or presenting proposal and materials.

While subcontracting any phase of the work may be considered in the discretion of IAEM, the contractor submitting the proposal must assume full responsibility of the end-to-end process. The contractor must disclose if they will use subcontracted services as part of the proposal.

Time frames:

- All questions need to be submitted in writing to Program Manager Kate McClimans by 5:00 PM Eastern on Friday, January 19, 2024.
- Proposals are due by 5:00 PM Eastern on Wednesday, January 24, 2024.
- Estimated date of award is February 2, 2024
- Work to begin February 2024/early March 2024.
- Monthly reports in a prescribed format and satisfactory progress will be required for payment.
- All tasks must be completed and deliverables submitted by July 15, 2024.