



**American Hospital Association – Certification
Center**

Request for Proposal

Test Development and Administration

American Hospital Association Certification Center (AHA-CC)

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Executive Summary

The AHA-CC invites proposals from testing vendors to provide comprehensive services for following AHA-CC certification examinations:

- [Certified Healthcare Constructor](#), CHC, sponsored by the American Society for Healthcare Engineering (ASHE)
- [Certified Healthcare Facility Manager](#), CHFM, sponsored by the American Society for Healthcare Engineering (ASHE)
- [Certified Healthcare Environmental Services Professional](#), CHESP, sponsored by the Association for Healthcare Environment (AHE)
- [Certified Material & Resource Professional](#), CMRP, sponsored by the Association for Healthcare Resource and Materials Management (AHRMM)
- [Certified Professional in Healthcare Risk Management](#), CPHRM, sponsored by the American Society for Healthcare Risk Management (ASHRM)
- [MECH](#), MECH, sponsored by the American Society for Healthcare Engineering (ASHE)
- [SRMECH](#), sponsored by the American Society for Healthcare Engineering (ASHE)
- [Certified Nurse Manager and Leader](#), CNML, sponsored by the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL)
- [Certified in Executive Nursing Practice](#), CENP, sponsored by the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL)

Timeline

The AHA-CC has established the following schedule for submission of proposals and awarding of the contract:

January 18, 2024:	RFP notification and distribution
January 31, 2024:	Deadline for intent to submit a proposal
February 1 – February 16, 2024:	Question and answer phase
March 1, 2024:	Deadline for submitting proposals
April 12, 2024:	Notification of finalists
May 14 – 17, 2024:	Finalist presentations
June 7, 2024:	Final decision and notification

This schedule is further described as follows:

Deadline for proposal letter of intent: Interested vendors must submit their intent to bid in writing. This can be submitted by mail or E-Mail and must be received by the AHA-CC no later than January 31, 2024. Interest expressed by telephone will not be considered.

Question and answer phase: Those vendors having expressed their interest to submit a proposal, will have the opportunity to submit questions they have regarding the RFP between February 1 and February 16, 2024. The AHA-CC will respond within two (2) weeks of receipt to all questions submitted. Responses to questions received will be distributed to all vendors as a communiqué. Vendors are expected to raise any and all questions they have concerning the RFP no later than February 16th, such that the AHA-CC can distribute a final communiqué with responses by February 21, 2024.

In the event that it becomes necessary for the AHA-CC to provide additional clarifying data or information, or to revise any part of this RFP, the AHA-CC will distribute either a revised RFP, or a supplement to the original RFP to vendors participating in the proposal bidding process.

Deadline for receipt of proposals: The deadline for submission of bids is March 1, 2024. No extensions will be granted under any circumstances. Vendors should submit three (3) copies of their proposals, as well as an electronic copy in PDF format (Flash drive preferred). A recommended proposal format appears on page 20 of this RFP.

Notification of finalists: The proposals submitted will be reviewed by the AHA-CC. Up to three (3) finalists will be determined. The finalists, as well as all other vendors no longer being considered, will be notified no later than April 12, 2024.

Finalist presentations: Each of the finalists will be requested to present their proposal in person, at the AHA office in Chicago, Illinois, at a mutually agreed upon date and time, during the week of May 14-17, 2024. Upon notification that vendors have been selected as finalists, the AHA-CC reserves the right to provide each with the format of presentation which will address specific areas of concern and/or scenarios related to test development, exam administration, score reporting, security, etc.

Final decision and notification: A final decision will be made on or before June 7, 2024. All finalists will be notified no later than June 11, 2024.

The AHA-CC's contractual obligation with the current vendor concludes on **December 31, 2024**. A new master contract, beginning on **January 1, 2025**, is expected to be negotiated, codified, and signed, subject to review by the AHA legal counsel, utilizing the components of the selected vendor's final proposal as an initial basis for contract negotiations.

Background Information

The American Hospital Association Board of Trustees retains ultimate authority and responsibility for the certification programs and developed the American Hospital Association Certification Center (AHA-CC) to provide the management and professional staff support for these programs.

The mission of the AHA Certification Center is to develop and administer the health care field's premier certification programs and to contribute to organizational and operational excellence through qualified certificants.

The AHA-CC works collaboratively with the Exam Development Committees (EDCs), the Professional Membership Groups (PMGs), and the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) to carry out the mission and objectives of the certification programs. The certification programs are not separate legal entities and must operate in a manner consistent with AHA's policies and the mission and purpose of the respective PMGs. The AHA-CC, in collaboration with the EDCs, maintains autonomy for essential certification decisions.

The AHA-CC is responsible for the administrative matters directly related to the certification process. Administrative matters are not subject to review by the PMGs.

The responsibilities listed below define each entity's role in relationship to the certification programs.

American Hospital Association Certification Center (AHA-CC)

This section defines responsibilities of AHA-CC staff.

- Manages the certification programs based on industry standards following the NCCA Accreditation Standards as a guide. This includes both certification and recertification.
- Ensures that the structure and governance of the certification programs protects the integrity of the exams and autonomy of the programs with respect to essential certification decisions.
- Selects qualified candidates for the EDC, including individuals representing the demographics of the profession.
- Demonstrate strong stewardship of PMG financial resources including sound financial management and transparency.
- Develops annual budgets for the certification programs with the Executive Directors of the PMGs. Utilize input from stakeholders in budgeting process and decision-making.
- Collaborates with the EDCs and the PMGs to ensure consistent and accurate information is received by all parties related to the certification programs in keeping with industry standards.
- Ensures appropriate training and onboarding of EDC members.
- Selects a qualified certification services company to provide exam administration, development, and maintenance for the certification programs.

Professional Membership Groups (PMGs)

This section defines responsibilities of PMG advisory boards and PMG staff.

- Set the vision, purpose, and strategic direction of the respective certification program.
- Collaborate with the AHA-CC staff to develop performance metrics for the program.
- Provide financial support and educational resources, consistent with available PMG resources, for the certification program.
- Provide marketing for the certification program.

- Support alignment with NCCA Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs.

Exam Development Committees (EDCs)

This section defines responsibilities for the Exam Development Committees which are comprised of volunteers (non-staff.)

- Assure that the exam is designed to assess competency of a specific healthcare profession based on the content areas within the Job Analysis.
- Work with the AHA-CC and the certification services company to develop, administer, and maintain the exam. This includes item bank analysis, item writing and review, and evaluation of pass rates.
- Work to improve exam performance within industry standards.
- Recommend policy changes to the AHA-CC.
- Provide feedback to the AHA-CC staff on performance of exam development vendor.
- Assist in the appeals process.
- Assist in the job analysis.

Independent Certification Programs Supported by the AHA-CC

Currently, the AHA-CC has an agreement with the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) to provide project management for the CENP and CNML certification programs serving nurse managers and nurse executives.

Like the AHA certification programs, the CENP and the CNML programs engage both subject-matter experts (SMEs) and the psychometric expertise and exam administration services of a vendor in the development and delivery of the certification exams.

AHA-CC Exam Development Process

Job Analysis and Test Specifications

A job analysis study shall be performed every 5 to 7 years. The purpose of the study will be to identify the day-to-day responsibilities performed and the knowledge required to perform these responsibilities. The study findings shall serve as the foundation for developing the examination specifications. These specifications will identify the linkages between the responsibility and knowledge areas and will outline the following:

- Content domains and tasks to be covered on the examination,
- Number of questions per Content area to be included on each examination, and
- Cognitive level at which questions for each topic area should be written

The examination specifications shall be reviewed and adjusted by the Job Analysis Committee, as necessary, to reflect current professional practice, government regulations, etc. All examination forms shall be assembled in accordance with the examination specifications.

Item and Test Form Development

Questions on the exam shall be written by certificants who have been trained in preparing multiple-choice items by the AHA-CC's testing agency. Questions written are assessed for content, level of difficulty, accuracy, and correctness. Once approved, the questions go to the AHA-CC's testing agency for style editing to ensure consistency of question format and to be included in the bank of examination questions. From that bank, AHA-CC's testing agency prepares a draft examination based on the exam

specifications. The Exam Committee then meets and reviews the draft exam, substituting questions as needed to further balance and match the content of the examination to the test blueprint.

Pretesting of Items

To enable the addition of new items with proven sound statistical attributes to the active item bank, new items will be pre-tested on each examination form. Pre-test items will not be scored. Pre-test items will be intermingled among the active items and candidates will not know which items are being pre-tested. Candidates will be notified that a specific number of test items are pre-test items.

Passing Standards and Equating

The passing standard shall be set using an industry accepted method (e.g., Modified-Angoff methodology). Whenever examinee volumes permit, equating will be used to maintain the passing standard across different examination forms and to statistically adjust scores, as necessary, to compensate for differences in difficulty across examination forms.

Scoring the Examination

All test questions shall undergo a preliminary item analysis prior to release of the test results. Any question that does not meet accepted statistical criteria shall be reviewed by the respective Examination Development Committee, which will determine whether the item should be: (a) scored “as is,” (b) scored with an alternate key(s), or (c) deleted from scoring entirely.

Psychometric Requirements

The AHA-CC adopts the following requirements for creating and selecting optimal items for inclusion in the examinations:

- The p-value is used to determine item difficulty, but p-values alone are insufficient for most item interpretations: Individual item p-values represent neither an absolute, repeatable value nor warrant a concrete interpretation by themselves. P-values should fall within the range of 0.30 – 0.89.
- The point biserial (rp_{Bis}) is used to determine the discrimination power of each item. If an item’s p-value is questionable, the next step is to evaluate the item’s point biserial value. All basic item reviews incorporate p-values and rp_{Bis} prior to making decisions regarding an examination items. In some cases, low rp_{Bis} values can result from particularly high or low p-values, low item variance due to implausible distractors, low scoring variance due to homogeneity of candidates, or extremely skewed scoring distributions.
- The target for each multiple-choice exam form shall be a KR-20 value greater than 0.80.

Item Calibration

Prior to inclusion in the active item pool, items shall be administered to a sufficient number of candidates as trial items. For initial construction of an exam, items shall be administered as Beta items to a sufficient number of candidates before being included on an exam.

Item Selection Criteria

Anchor items shall constitute between twenty and thirty percent of each test form. Anchor items shall be selected for appropriate content distribution, ideal discriminating power and optimal difficulty distribution.

Item discrimination shall be measured according to Classical Test Theory. The target for items included in the exam shall be a P Value no less than 0.25 and no greater than 0.90. The target for items included in the exam shall have a Point-biserial coefficient no less than 0.15 with no maximum limitation.

Current Specifications of the Certification Examinations

Certified Healthcare Constructor, CHC Exam

Exam Duration: 2 Hours
Number of Items: 115 four-option, single response multiple-choice question examination consisting of 100 scored questions and 15 pretest questions.
Number of forms currently being administered: 1

Eligibility Requirements:

Candidates meeting CHC eligibility requirements and passing the CHC Examination attain the CHC designation. The AHA-CC reserves the right, but is not obligated, to verify eligibility information supplied by or on behalf of a candidate. Eligibility for the CHC Examination requires fulfilling one (1) of the following requirements:

- Baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited college or university plus five (5) years of associated construction experience*, five (5) years of which must have been working on healthcare construction projects, three (3) years of management/supervisory/administrative experience, and work experience on healthcare construction projects within the last three (3) years.
- Associate degree from an accredited college or university plus seven (7) years of associated construction experience*, five (5) years of which must have been working on healthcare construction projects, three (3) years of management/supervisory/administrative experience, and work experience on healthcare construction projects within the last three (3) years.
- High school diploma or equivalent plus ten (10) years of associated construction experience*, five (5) years of which must have been working on healthcare construction projects, three (3) years of management/supervisory/administrative experience, and work experience on healthcare construction projects within the last three (3) years.

**Associated construction experience refers to work experience in the following functional areas: Construction/project management, estimating, planning, marketing, project superintendent or foreman, architect/engineer design, or design and construction position within a healthcare organization.*

Certified Healthcare Facility Manager, CHFM Exam

Exam Duration: 2 hours
Number of Items: 110 four-option, single response multiple-choice question examination consisting of 100 scored questions and 10 pretest questions.
Number of forms currently being administered: 1

Eligibility Requirements:

Candidates meeting CHFM eligibility requirements and passing the CHFM Examination attain the Certified Healthcare Facility Manager (CHFM) designation. The AHA-CC reserves the right, but is not obligated, to verify eligibility information supplied by or on behalf of a candidate. Eligibility for the CHFM Examination requires fulfilling one (1) of the following requirements:

- Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university plus three (3) years of associated engineering experience*, three (3) years of which must have been in a healthcare setting; and

including three (3) years of management/supervisory/administrative experience in a healthcare setting.

- Associate degree from an accredited college or university plus five (5) years of associated engineering experience*, three (3) years of which must have been in a healthcare setting; and including five (5) years of management/ supervisory/administrative experience in a healthcare setting.
- High school diploma or equivalent plus seven (7) years of associated engineering experience*, three (3) years of which must have been in a healthcare setting; and including five (5) years of management/supervisory/administrative experience in a healthcare setting.

**Associated engineering experience refers to work experience in the following functional areas: facility management; operations and maintenance; clinical engineering; safety and security; planning, design and construction; or environmental management.*

Certified Healthcare Environmental Services Professional, CHESP Exam

Exam Duration: 2 hours
Number of Items: 110 four-option, single response multiple-choice question examination consisting of 100 scored questions and 10 pretest questions.
Number of forms currently being administered: 1

Eligibility Requirements:

Candidates who meet eligibility requirements fully and pass the CHESP Examination attain the CHESP designation. The AHA-CC reserves the right, but is not obligated to, verify accuracy of information supplied by or on behalf of a candidate. Eligibility for the CHESP Examination requires fulfilling one (1) of the following requirements:

- Baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited college or university plus three (3) years of environmental services experience* in a healthcare setting** of which two (2) of those years must have been in a management/supervisory/administrative role.
- Associate degree or equivalent from an accredited college plus four (4) years of environmental services experience* in a healthcare setting** of which three (3) of those years must have been in a management/supervisory/administrative role.
- High school diploma or equivalent plus five (5) years of environmental services experience* in a management/supervisory/administrative role in a healthcare setting**.

** Environmental services experience refers to work experience in operations related to environmental sanitation, waste management and textile management.*

*** Includes experience with a provider of environmental services or products to a healthcare facility (e.g., Consultants, Manufacturers, Vendors, Contract Services Providers, etc.).*

Certified Material & Resource Professional, CMRP Exam

Exam Duration: 2 hours
Number of Items: 110 four-option, single response multiple-choice question examination consisting of 100 scored questions and 10 pretest questions.
Number of forms currently being administered: 1

Eligibility Requirements:

Candidates meeting eligibility requirements fully and passing the CMRP Examination attain the CMRP designation. The AHA-CC reserves the right, but is not obligated, to verify eligibility information supplied by or on behalf of a candidate. Eligibility for the Certified Materials & Resource Professional (CMRP) Examination requires fulfilling one (1) of the following requirements:

- Baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited college or university plus three (3) years of associated healthcare resource and materials management* experience.
- Associate degree or equivalent from an accredited college or university plus five (5) years of associated healthcare resource and materials management* experience.
- High school diploma or equivalent plus seven (7) years of associated healthcare resource and materials management* experience.

**Associated healthcare resource and materials management includes persons who are involved in the materials functions of healthcare facilities; or are active in the healthcare materials supply chain, including manufacturers, vendors, distributors, consultants and employees of group purchasing organizations.*

Certified Professional in Healthcare Risk Management, CPHRM Exam

Exam Duration: 2 hours

Number of Items: 110 four-option, single response multiple-choice question examination consisting of 100 scored questions and 10 pretest questions.

Number of forms currently being administered: 1

Eligibility Requirements:

Candidates meeting the CPHRM eligibility requirements fully and passing the CPHRM Examination attain the CPHRM designation. The AHA-CC reserves the right, but is not obligated, to verify the accuracy of eligibility information supplied by or on behalf of a candidate. To be eligible for the Certified Professional in Healthcare Risk Management (CPHRM) Examination, a candidate must fulfill one (1) of the following requirements for education/healthcare experience and meet the requirement for risk management experience:

Education/Healthcare Experience

- Baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited college or university plus five (5) years of experience in a healthcare setting or with a provider of services to the healthcare industry
- Associate degree or equivalent from an accredited college plus seven (7) years of experience in a healthcare setting or with a provider of services to the healthcare industry.
- High school diploma or equivalent plus nine (9) years of experience in a healthcare setting or with a provider of services to the healthcare industry.

Risk Management Experience

- 3,000 hours or 50 percent of full-time job duties within the last three years dedicated to healthcare risk management in a healthcare setting or with a provider of services (e.g. consultant, broker, or attorney) to the healthcare industry.

[Mechanical Evaluation and Certification for Health Care](#), MECH Exam

Exam Duration: 2 hours
Number of Items: 100 four-option, single response multiple-choice question examination.
Number of forms currently being administered: 1

Eligibility Requirements:

Two or more years of experience working as a mechanic in a health care facility.

[Senior Mechanical Evaluation and Certification for Health Care](#), SRMECH Exam

Exam Duration: 2 hours
Number of Items: 100 four-option, single response multiple-choice question examination.
Number of forms currently being administered: 1

Eligibility Requirements:

Four or more years of experience working as a mechanic in a health care facility

[Certified Nurse Manager and Leader](#), CNML Exam

Exam Duration: 2 hours
Number of Items: 115 four-option, single response multiple-choice question examination consisting of 100 scored questions and 15 pretest questions.
Number of forms currently being administered: 1

Eligibility Requirements:

Each eligibility requirement has been established to ensure that individuals certified by AONL-CC have an acceptable level of knowledge and skill. In establishing these requirements the Steering Committee acknowledges that a combination of both work experience and demonstrated knowledge are essential for individuals earning the CNML credential.

An individual who meets eligibility requirements and passes the CNML examination attains the Certified Nurse Manager and Leader (CNML) designation.

To be eligible for the Certified Nurse Manager and Leader (CNML) examination, a candidate must meet the target practitioner definition and fulfill one of the following requirements for education / work experience.

- Licensure Requirements
 - A valid and unrestricted license as a Registered Nurse; and
- Education Requirements
 - A baccalaureate degree or higher. At least one degree must be in Nursing from an accredited institution. Work Experience Requirement
- Work Experience Requirements
 - Have at least 2,080 hours of experience in a nurse manager/primary unit leader role
 - Have at least 4,160 hours of experience in a comprehensive nursing leadership support role.

Certified in Executive Nursing Practice, CENP Exam

Exam Duration:	3.5 hours
Number of Items:	175 four-option, single response multiple-choice question examination consisting of 150 scored questions and 25 pretest questions.
Number of forms currently being administered:	1

Eligibility Requirements:

Each eligibility requirement has been established to ensure that individuals certified by AONECC have an acceptable level of knowledge and skill. In establishing these requirements the Steering Committee acknowledges that a combination of both work experience and demonstrated knowledge are essential for individuals earning the CENP credential.

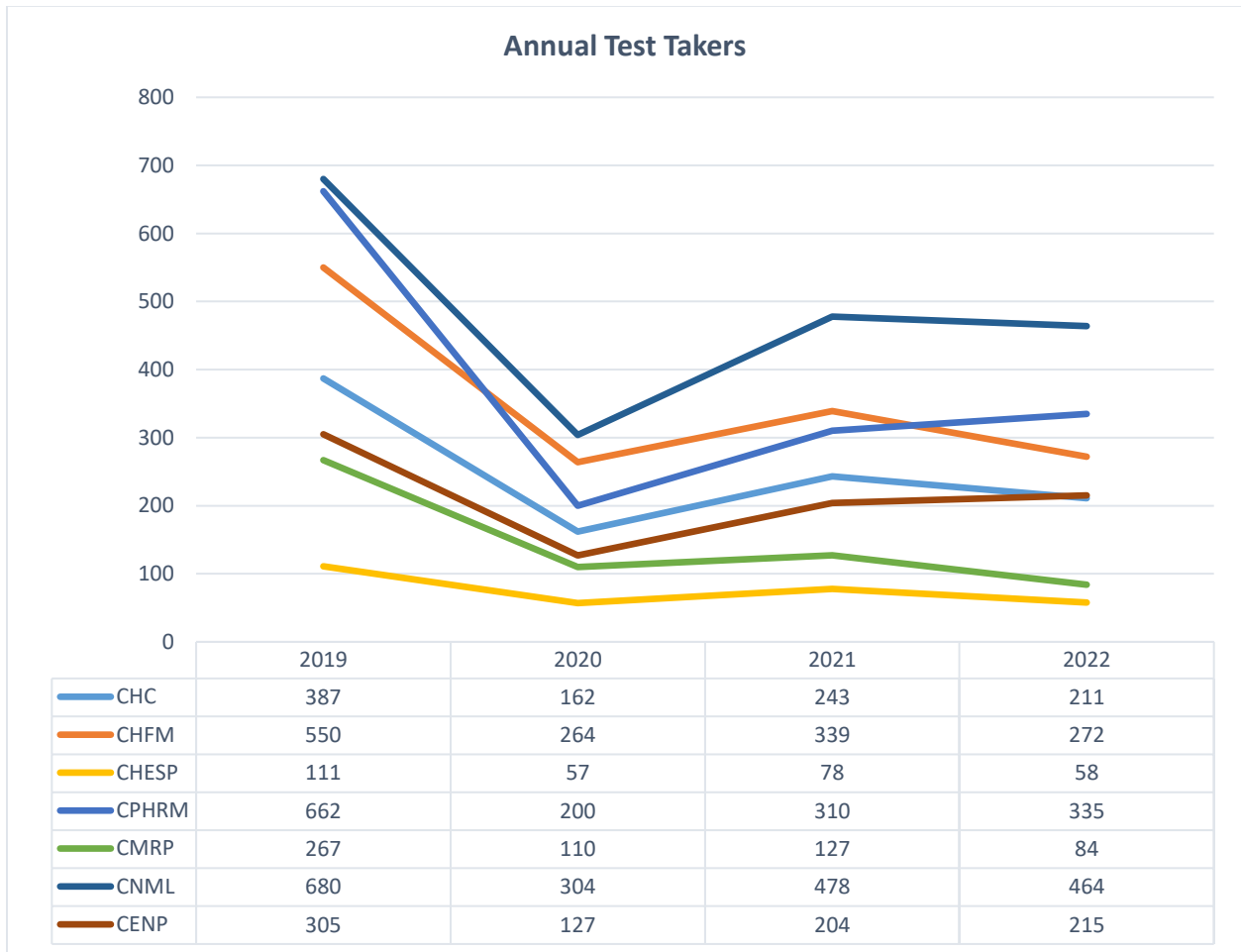
An individual who meets eligibility requirements and passes the CENP examination attains the Certified in Executive Nursing Practice (CENP) designation.

To be eligible for the Certified in Executive Nursing Practice (CENP) examination, a candidate must meet the target practitioner definition and fulfill one of the following requirements for education / work experience.

- Licensure Requirement
 - A valid and unrestricted license as a Registered Nurse, and
- Education and Work Experience Requirement
 - Hold a Master's degree or higher. At least one of the degrees must be in Nursing from an accredited institution. Have at least 4,160 hours of experience in an executive/senior nursing role
 - OR
 - Hold a baccalaureate in nursing degree from an accredited institution. Have at least 8,321 hours of experience in an executive nursing role/senior nursing role.

Certification Program Metrics

Candidate Volume



Note: The MECH and SRMECH exams were launched in 2023

Item Pool Status Report

Exam	Approved/Scored	Experimental
CHC	157	209
CHFM	228	195
CHHR	116	80
CHESP	222	222
CPHRM	261	186
CMRP	231	258
CNML	165	279
CENP	254	147

Services Required

The following sections delineate the services required from potential vendors. Each vendor should respond in detail, indicating how the vendor proposes to meet the requirements outlined in each section.

1. Exam Administration

a. Candidate Registration

Processing of applications from candidates to take the exams, including verification of eligibility, will be performed by the AHA-CC. A registration system administrated by the AHA will be utilized to ensure candidate confidentiality. Vendors should have published APIs to accept candidate applications from AHA's registration system (Community Brands NetForum) and should include all details of their APIs.

b. Exam Scheduling

Vendors should include detailed information on the candidate registration/exam scheduling process, including scheduling an exam appointment, reschedules, etc. Vendors are required to integrate with AHA's Identify Access Management solution, Ping Identity to enable applicants to utilize the single sign-on (SSO) functionality for scheduling or rescheduling an exam appointment. The integration must adhere to SAML2 standards. Additionally, AHA's NetForum application has an API to receive exam booking information. Vendors should provide details on how they will support this SSO integration requirement and integrate with the exam booking API.

c. Test Delivery

The AHA-CC desires to maintain the primary method of delivery of all exams in an on-demand, CBT format and to continue receiving exam results through our existing Exam Score API. Vendors should include details on how they can integrate with this API. Vendors should include details for all components of their examination distribution channel(s), including: Proposed test center locations, typical site availability for exam scheduling, accessibility, staffing/proctoring, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), compliance with other federal, state and local laws as applicable, in-person registration at test sites, admission policies, candidate identification procedures such as photos and/or fingerprints, site security, proctoring/monitoring of candidates, and hardware availability.

Upon request, the Vendor must have capability to administer an examination outside of the United States. The Vendor also must be able to convert the exam to a secure web-based format that can be offered remotely and securely to candidates.

If the vendor has multiple distribution channels, then the details for each channel, including their respective benefits and limitations, should be addressed. The AHA requires distribution channels for the following:

- Upon request from the AHA-CC, the vendor must be able to provide a special paper-and-pencil or laptop administration of the examination, including providing a test supervisor, proctors and all test materials at education conferences or other events

(e.g., annual conferences, meetings, etc.). There may be occasions when more than one of the program certification examinations will be offered.

- International test sites and test sites outside of the Continental U.S. Vendors should provide detail for all test center locations by country as well as policies and procedures regarding the security and administration of the AHA-CC exams in any international testing center, as applicable.

2. Exam Development and Psychometric Services (see also AHA-CC Exam Development Process)

a. Transition

It is preferable that the vendor owns and licenses its own item-banking software. If the vendor intends to subcontract or outsource these services, then a detailed explanation of the arrangements and relationships must accompany the proposal.

All vendors will be required to provide a detailed plan of transition of items into their systems and test development plans to ensure a January 1, 2020 launch date for all certification exams

b. Job Analyses

In order to ensure the continued validity of its exams, the AHA-CC requires that a Job Analysis be conducted every 5 - 7 years. Based on the results of the survey, new exam blueprints and subsequent competency statements or tasks are developed. New exam forms are constructed and passing standards are set. Vendors should provide detailed information on its procedures related to conducting Job Analyses.

c. Item Banking and Item Authoring

The AHA-CC does not manage its item banks internally and has relied on its vendor to maintain its item pools. Vendors should provide detailed information on how it will maintain and track questions within the AHA-CC's item pools. They should also provide detail as to how transfers between the current item banks to their system will be accomplished. Again, it is preferable that the vendor owns and licenses its own item banking software. If the vendor intends to subcontract or outsource these services, then a detailed explanation of the arrangements and relationships must accompany the proposal.

d. Item Bank Review

A review of each of the exam pools will be conducted at least annually. Vendors should present estimates and procedures for conducting such reviews. Information provided should include estimates and procedures for both virtual/web-based and in-person item review meetings.

e. New Item and Form Development

Vendors are to recommend procedures for the integration of new items into the system. Include a discussion on item writing process, development of items, review of new items, addition of new items to the item pool, selection of items to assemble a form, and ways of increasing the number of pretest items to further replenish the item pools. Information provided should include estimates and procedures for all these processes conducted via virtual/web-based and in-person meetings.

3. Reporting

a. Candidate Score Reports

Candidate test scores are the property of the AHA-CC and the candidates taking the exams. In proposed CBT test score reporting systems, test results must be provided to candidates at the test site upon completion of the exam administration. At that time, candidates are provided with a pass/fail score as well as information on how they performed in each

content area/domain (total number of questions and number of questions answered correctly in each content area).

b. Test Results/Reporting

Candidate test scores for all exams should be reported to the AHA-CC. Vendors should include any and all details for integration with the AHA's association management system (Abila NetForum) for exporting candidate exam results files that maintains security and confidentiality at all times throughout this data management process. It is important to note that the AHA-CC recertification (renewal) program offers re-examination as an additional option for recertification. As such, candidate exam results files must distinguish between candidates who take the exam for initial certification and those who take the exam for recertification.

The test scoring system must also have the functionality for generating periodic detail and summary statistical reports, as well as other reports, as defined by the AHA-CC. Recommendations should be made as to the types of diagnostic feedback that might be available to candidates based on the exam content outline.

c. Archiving of Test Results

Vendors will be expected to maintain a complete historical record of each candidate's test to include the items administered and the candidate's responses such that the candidate's individual test could be reconstructed at a future date

4. Client and Candidate Support

a. Testing Company and Personnel

- As part of the proposal, please provide a brief history of your organization.
- **Explain your organization's philosophy on communications with clients and continuity of staff on delivery of solutions and services throughout the life of the partnership.**
- Provide the names and resumes of individuals who will work on the project, indicate the percentage of their time that will be devoted to the project, and designate the individual who will have responsibility for leading the project.
- Identify the key points of contact who will provide ongoing client and candidate support
- Describe your expectations of the AHA-CC team and other AHA staff

b. Client and Candidate Service

- Please describe your approach to providing and maintaining a high level of customer service to your client and exam candidates.
- Please describe how your organization demonstrates commitment to meeting client expectations, and indicate whether you would be willing to commit to mutually agreed upon Service Level Agreements (SLAs) as part of the contracting process

c. Growth and Innovation Support

- Describe your organization's experience in supporting clients who have grown their programs over time; either by adding new programs and/or expanding existing programs. Please also reference any experience you have in working with clients who have developed new programs in partnership with other organizations.

- Explain your approach and experience in contributing innovative, forward-looking strategies to help clients continue to improve testing strategies, processes, systems, and the overall candidate experience.

5. Other Services

a. Development, Administration, and Delivery of Self-Assessment Examinations (SAEs)

An SAE is a 100-item, online practice test based on the examination content outline and is available for the CHC, CHESP, CHFM, CMRP, CPHRM, CNML, and CENP programs. Currently, a candidate purchases an SAE online through our current vendor with payment by credit card or use a voucher (generated by vendor) . Within 24 hours of purchase, the candidate is provided login information to access the SAE. The candidate is allowed 90 days and multiple sessions to use this study aid but may complete the SAE at any time before expiration of the 90 days. Upon completion of the SAE, the candidate can no longer access the SAE and receives the following three (3) reports:

- Overall performance and performance by major content category
- A mapping of test items to major content categories
- All SAE items with explanations of correct and incorrect options

In the event that a job analysis leads to a change in the examination content outline for a certification program for which an SAE is available, the vendor must support updating of the SAE and the reports listed above to reflect the new examination content outline.

Further, if the AHA-CC elects to develop an SAE for one or more of the other programs described, the vendor must support development and implementation of the new SAE. In development or revision of an SAE, the rigors of normal test development procedures must be employed, except that a cut score need not be determined.

a. Certificates

The processing of certificates awarded to those who initially pass the exam is currently done in-house. The AHA-CC is looking for vendors with the ability to provide this service. This includes printing and mailing of paper certificates to new credentialed individuals.

This concludes the section on services required. Vendors are encouraged to comment on the services we are requesting and to describe in detail the processes recommended in meeting these requirements. Vendors should feel free to make recommendations for additional technical services that they feel would enhance the implementation of CBT and paper and pencil testing systems.

Conditions of Request for Proposal

This document is a request for proposal issued by the AHA-CC for test development and administration services for its certification programs. Please be advised that by receiving and replying to the Request for Proposal you agree never to claim or file a cause of action or otherwise assert that the AHA-CC is responsible or liable in any manner or under any theory of liability for any risks, costs, or expenses incurred by you in connection with this RFP or any proposal submitted by you, and that this RFP in no way obligates the AHA-CC to enter into a business arrangement or other arrangement with you. This document is for use solely in conjunction with the preparation of proposals for this project and should not be shared with others without the express written consent of the AHA-CC.

The AHA-CC reserves the absolute right to withdraw this RFP, by written notice or to reject any or all proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The AHA-CC further reserves the right to accept proposals from and award business to one or more prospective vendors, and the AHA-CC shall not incur any liability whatsoever by reason of such withdrawal, rejection, or acceptance. If the RFP includes any estimation of volumes or requirements, the AHA-CC reserves the right to modify any estimated requirements prior to signing an agreement with the selected vendor. No prospective vendor shall have a claim against the AHA-CC in the event that any estimated requirements are modified for whatever reason. All proposals and any other materials submitted in response to this RFP will be retained by the AHA-CC.

Confidentiality

The information contained in the proposal will not be treated as confidential unless otherwise indicated by the vendor. The AHA-CC will treat as confidential the names of all vendors responding to this RFP as well as all pricing.

All information contained in the RFP as well as any subsequent oral or written communications shall be treated as confidential, and is to be used by the vendor and its staff for the express purpose of preparing a response to this RFP.

Recommended Proposal Format

Proposals must contain the following sections containing the information requested:

1. **Understanding** – Briefly establish a general understanding of the entire project.
2. **Statement of Work** – Please describe all proposed procedures, methodologies, and supporting rationale you intend to use in completing each task as described in this request for proposal “services required” section.
3. **Background Information** – Please include as much of the following information as possible in support of your proposal:

- Provide a brief history of your company, including the number of years your firm has been in business, as well as the number of years of experience directly related to the scope of work described herein.
 - Describe your company's mission.
 - Describe your company's approach to innovation and creativity in furthering the best interests of your clients.
 - Provide a brief summary of your operations, including your organizational structure.
 - How many employees work for your company and how many would be dedicated to this project, both temporarily and permanently, through the duration of the contract?
 - Do you offer any feature(s) services that differentiate you from others that can add value to the proposed scope of work?
 - What distinguishes your company, services and products from your competition?
4. **Project Management Plan and Deliverables** – Please provide a comprehensive project management plan, inclusive of task sequencing, assignments of responsibility, ongoing monitoring, milestones, outcomes, and deliverables, especially as they reflect a transition plan of all the AHA-CC certification exams from the current vendor to the new vendor (if applicable).
 5. **Staffing** – Please include names of both professional and nonprofessional staff assigned to the project, including name, educational credentials, job title, work experience relative to the tasks to be performed, and time allocated to the project.
 6. **Professional References** – include a list of references (minimum of three) whose size, program specifications, and technical requirements most closely resemble the AHA-CC. Please include the organization name, address, telephone number, and contact person.
 7. **Budget/Billing** – Costs must be delineated by each exam. Vendors are expected to break out any costs that are (one-time or recurring) for all proposed services, by exam. Further, vendors should differentiate costs that are fixed from those that are variable, such as those that will be affected by candidate volume. Include a description of standard operating procedures for billing and payment processing.
 8. **Sample Memorandums of Understanding, Agreements, and Contracts** – Please include sample documents for services proposed.

Right of Rejection of Proposals—Cancellation of RFP

The AHA-CC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, at its sole discretion, in any manner that will best serve the interests of the AHA-CC. The AHA-CC will use an array of evaluation criteria in selecting a vendor, and is not obligated to accept the proposal with the lowest cost.

The AHA-CC may cancel this RFP, in whole or in part, for any reason before contract signature.

Evaluation Criteria

The AHA-CC will use the following criteria in evaluating vendor proposals:

1. **Technical Responsiveness** – The extent to which the proposal has adequately addressed all of the requested services.
2. **Costs** – Whether the proposed costs can be justified in terms of the quality and scope of services proposed.
3. **Vendor experience** – Whether the testing service has a proven record of providing the kinds of services required. Whether the personnel that would be devoted to the project are experienced in this mode of testing, the percent of their time that will be committed to the project, and the extent to which the testing service will stand behind and actively support the system developed.
4. **Service** - Documentation of how vendor plans to provide service in a timely manner and what actual services will be provided to assist the AHA-CC in the implementation and maintenance of the program.
5. **Customer Service (Client and Candidates)** – Documentation of the vendor’s customer service metrics including most recent reports of customer service level metrics regarding response time (phone and e-mail), phone hold times, test center staff professionalism and responsiveness, testing environment, etc.
6. Vendor capability to support growth and innovation – Whether the vendor has demonstrated experience in supporting clients who have experienced growth, and their ability to contribute innovative, forward-looking strategies to help the AHA-CC continue to improve testing strategies, processes, systems, and the overall candidate experience.

Use of Subcontractors

The AHA-CC recognizes that the primary vendor may consider it necessary and cost effective to use the services of a third party to fulfill a mandatory requirement. The use of subcontractors will not adversely affect a vendor’s proposal, but any subcontract relationships must be noted.