REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



**Temporary Staffing Services for Call Center RFx: 3120002311**

**The Mississippi Department of Education Central High School Building**

**359 North West Street Jackson, Mississippi 39201**

**Contact: Dr. Cory Murphy, Ph.D. Date of Release: October 18, 2021**

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#### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**The Mississippi Department of Education Temporary Staffing Services for Call Center**

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) through the Office of Teaching and Leading is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified vendors for Temporary Staffing Services for a Call Center. The Staffing Agency will provide hiring of staff for Customer Services Professionals in a Call Center for the Division of Educator Licensure. The Educator Licensure - Call Center will support high volumes of inquiries via calls and electronic mail from both prospective educators who are interested in initial licensure and current educators who are seeking changes to an existing license.

The Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development was created under the Mississippi Education Reform Act of 1982 and is charged with the responsibility of making recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding standards for the preparation, licensure, and continuing professional development of those who teach or perform tasks of an educational nature in the public schools of the State of Mississippi. In compliance with Miss. Code Ann. §37-3-2, as amended by Mississippi Laws 1997, Ch. 545, the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development and the State Board of Education have approved guidelines for licensure. The members of the Office of Teaching and Leading Division of Educator Licensure team are responsible, in part, for the implementation of all policies and procedures established by the Licensure Commission and ultimately approved by the State Board of Education. Communications regarding educator licensure requirements, application process, and the evaluation process of licensure applications received are conducted through the services provided by trained Customer Service Professionals in a Call Center within the Office of Teaching and Leading’s Division of Educator Licensure

## DUE DATES FOR PROPOSALS

The sealed proposals shall be received by **2:00 PM Central Standard Time (CST)** on **Tuesday, November 2, 2021,** at the following address based upon the delivery method used. **In person deliveries of proposals will not be accepted or considered for an award.**

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR DELIVERY

## Submission Requirements

For proposals that are shipped/mailed, the proposal shall be submitted in two (2) separate notebook binders. Notebook one (1) as an original (non-redacted) version and notebook two (2) as the “blind” (redacted) version using the Required Format in the section below. For proposals that are submitted in the Mississippi Accountability Governmental Information Collaboration System (MAGIC),the proposal shall be submitted using the Required Format in the section below.

**Each page of the proposal must be numbered**. Multiple page Appendixes and samples should be numbered internally within each document and not necessarily numbered in the overall page number sequence of the entire proposal. The intent of this requirement is for the Offeror to submit all information in a manner that it is clearly referenced and easy to locate.

***Notebook One (1) or MAGIC Submission Required Format:***

The Offeror shall provide the required format for shipping/mailing responses as follows:

1. An original hard copy (**non-redacted version**) of the proposal shall include all Appendixes required. Notebook one (1) shall be labeled **ORIGINAL.**

The Offeror shall provide the required format for submitting responses in MAGIC as follows:

1. one (1) electronic copy (**non-redacted version**) of the proposal including all Appendixes in a searchable Microsoft Office® format, preferably in Word® or Portable Document Format (PDF®). The file name shall be labeled **ORGINAL**.

***Section components must be clearly distinguished as follow:***

**COVER PAGE Proposal Cover Sheet (Appendix A)**

**COMPONENT 1 - TECHNICAL FACTORS**

* 1. **Tab 1** ***– Cover letter and Management Summary*** must provide the MDE a summary of the Offeror’s philosophy for providing the specified services.
  2. **Tab 2 – *Production/Detailed Service Plan*** shall provide clear and concise plan of action to encompass the minimum qualifications, implementation, deliverables, and expected outcomes/results to achieve the scope of work. Any required information that is omitted and not addressed in the minimum qualifications section will disqualify submission and will not be considered for an award.

**COMPONENT 2 - MANAGEMENT FACTORS**

* 1. **Tab 3** ***–*** **Corporate Experience and Capacity** which shall provide satisfactory evidence of the vendor’s years of experience, capability to manage and coordinate the types of activities and provide the services described in this solicitation in a timely manner, and a statement on the extent of any corporate expansion required to handle the service. A description shall include the vendor’s background and relevant experience as related to the described activities.
  2. **Tab 4*–*** ***Resumes for Key Personnel*** must include qualifications and experiences for all key personnel assigned to this project.

***References*** List up to a minimum of three (3) clients, including government clients, for whom your company has performed services similar to those requested in this solicitation. The Program Office staff, and the Office of Procurement must be able to contact two (2) trade references within five (5) business days of proposal opening to ensure the Offeror is responsible, if the MDE requires additional information. Two references for current contracts or awarded in the past three (3) years. The two (2) references can be inclusive of the three references at the Offeror discretion. (Appendix E)

**COMPONENT 3 – COST DATA**

* 1. **Tab 5 *–*** ***Budget***

**COMPONENT 4 - OTHER**

* 1. **Tab 6** ***–*** Signed Appendixes.
  2. **Tab 7** ***–*** Any additional relevant information (not to exceed five (5) pages)

***Notebook Two (2) or MAGIC Submission Required BLIND (Redacted) Format:***

The Offeror shall provide the required format for shipping/mailing responses as follows:

1. A hard copy (**redacted version**) of the proposal shall include all Appendixes required. Notebook two (2) shall be labeled **BLIND EVALUATION.**
2. one (1) **BLIND** hard copy of COMPONENT 1 - TECHNICAL FACTORS of the proposal. **All** vendor-identifying information shall be removed. **Vendor-identifying information includes but is not limited to any prior, current and future names or addresses of the vendor, any names of incumbent staff, any prior work or current work with the MDE or staff, any prior, current and future logos, watermarks, and company colors, any information, which identifies the vendor as an incumbent, and any other information, which would affect the blind evaluation of technical or cost factors**. The “blind” Technical Factors shall *not* include pricing information, or Résumés for Key Staff. This requirement is necessary to help ensure the anonymity of the Offerors from the evaluation team that will review the aforementioned sections and components of your proposal. The “blind” hard copy must align with the searchable Microsoft Office® format, no exceptions. **Blind section for the proposal containing vendor-identifying information SHALL be disqualified and not be considered for an award.**

The Offeror shall provide the required format for submitting responses in MAGIC as follows:

1. one (1) electronic copy shall include the **TECHNICAL FACTORS** as **redacted (BLIND),** the **MANAGEMENT/COST FACTORS, OTHER, and ALL Appendixes** as **unredacted**, and shall be in a searchable Microsoft Office® format, preferably in Word® or Portable Document Format (PDF®). The file name shall be labeled **BLIND EVALUATION** .
2. one (1) **BLIND** electronic copy of COMPONENT 1 - TECHNICAL FACTORS of the proposal in a searchable Microsoft Office® format, preferably in Word® or Portable Document Format (PDF®). **All** vendor-identifying information shall be removed. **Vendor-identifying information includes but is not limited to any prior, current and future names or addresses of the vendor, any names of incumbent staff, any prior work or current work with the MDE or staff, any prior, current and future logos, watermarks, and company colors, any information, which identifies the vendor as an incumbent, and any other information, which would affect the blind evaluation of technical or cost factors**. The “blind” Technical Factors shall *not* include pricing information, or Résumés of Key Staff. This requirement is necessary to help ensure the anonymity of the Offerors from the evaluation team that will review the aforementioned sections and components of your proposal. The “blind” copy should be provided in a searchable Microsoft Office® format, preferably in Word®. **Blind section for the proposal containing vendor-identifying information SHALL be disqualified and not be considered for an award.**

***Section components must be clearly distinguished as follow:***

**COVER PAGE Proposal Cover Sheet (Appendix A)**

**COMPONENT 1 - TECHNICAL FACTORS *(BLIND)***

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  2. **Tab 2 – *Production/Detailed Service Plan*** shall provide a clear and concise plan of action to encompass the minimum qualifications, implementation, deliverables, and expected outcomes/results to achieve the scope of work. Any required information that is omitted and not addressed in the minimum qualifications section will disqualify submission and will not be considered for an award.

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**COMPONENT 3 – COST DATA**

* 1. **Tab 5 *–*** ***Budget***

**COMPONENT 4 - OTHER**

* 1. **Tab 6** ***–*** Signed Appendixes.
  2. **Tab 7** ***–*** Any additional relevant information (not to exceed five (5) pages)

1. If the proposal contains confidential or trade information, one (1) additional confidential or trade electronic copy of the complete proposal including all Appendixes shall be submitted in a searchable Microsoft Office® format, preferably in Word® or Portable Document Format (PDF), shall be labeled CONFIDENTIAL, and shall redact the confidential or trade information only.

If a redacted copy, labeled CONFIDENTIAL is not submitted, the MDE shall consider the entire Proposal to be public record. Redacted copy should identify the section and information which has been redacted and the Offeror shall provide the specific statutory authority for the exemption. Per Mississippi Code Annotated §25-61-9(7), the type of service to be provided, the price to be paid and the term of the contract cannot be deemed confidential.

The “blind” copy shall be considered public record and immediately released, without notification to Offeror, pursuant to any request under the Mississippi Public Records Act, Miss. Code Ann. §§25-61-1 et seq. and Miss. Code Ann. §79-23-1. The “blind” copy shall also be used/released for any reason deemed necessary by the MDE, including but not limited to, submission to the PPRB, posting to the Transparency Mississippi website, etc.

Modifications or additions to any portion of the procurement document may be a cause for rejection of the Proposal. The MDE reserves the right to decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether to reject a proposal with modifications or additions as non-responsive. As a precondition to proposal acceptance, the MDE may request the Offeror to withdraw or modify those portions of the proposal deemed non-responsive that do not affect quality, quantity, price, or delivery of the service. The solicitation issued by the MDE is the official version and will supersede any conflicting solicitation language subsequently submitted in proposals.

All documentation submitted in response to this solicitation and any subsequent requests for information pertaining to this solicitation shall become the property of the MDE and will not be returned to the Offeror.

If you have additional information you would like to provide, include it as Component 4 of your proposal. (See Component 4(b)). Failure to provide all requested information and in the required format may result in disqualification of the Proposal. All requested information is considered important. The MDE has no obligation to locate or acknowledge any information in the proposal that is not presented under the appropriate outline and in the proper location according to the instructions herein.

## PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PERIOD

A signed proposal packet shall be submitted via the [Mississippi Accountability Governmental Information Collaboration System (MAGIC)](https://www.dfa.ms.gov/dfa-offices/mmrs/mississippi-suppliers-vendors/) no later than Tuesday, November 2, 2021, 2:00 PM Central Standard Time (CST). Proposals shall be submitted in the Mississippi Accountability Governmental Information Collaboration System (MAGIC). Please visit and register at DFA: Mississippi Suppliers (Vendors) (ms.gov). If assistance is required, contact MASH help desk at 601-359-1343 at least 72 hours in advance of the due date for submission. Proposals received after the time designated in the solicitation shall be considered late and shall not be considered for award.

**OR**

An original signed proposal packet shall be shipped/mailed and received in a sealed envelope at the MDE no later than Tuesday, November 2, 2021, 2:00 PM Central Standard Time (CST). Shipping instructions are provided below:

**MONIQUE CORLEY**

**Office of Procurement**

**The Mississippi Department of Education**

**(Temporary Staffing Services for Call Center RFx-3120002311)**

**359 North West Street**

**Jackson, Mississippi 39201**

Timely submission of the proposal package is the sole responsibility of the Offeror. It is suggested that if the proposal is shipped to the MDE, it should be tracked to require an MDE mailroom staff signature and request a return receipt/notice with signature.  *Any proposal shipped or mailed* ***MUST*** *be verified, date and time stamped, and recorded by an* ***MDE mailroom staff****.* The time and date of the receipt will be indicated on the sealed proposal envelope or package by the MDE mailroom staff. The only acceptable evidence to establish the time of receipt at the MDE will be identified by the time and date stamp of the MDE mailroom staff on the proposal wrapper or other documentary evidence of receipt used by the mailroom.

**Packages that are received in person by the offeror or a representative will NOT be opened. Packages received by shipping/mail without the appropriate acceptance by the MDE mailroom staff or is received and recorded AFTER the submission deadline will NOT be considered for an award.**

The MDE will not be responsible for delivery delays or lost packets.  All risk of late arrival due to unanticipated delays – whether delivered by USPS, courier or other delivery service or method – is entirely on the Offeror. All Offerors are urged to take the possibility of delay into account when submitting the proposal and submit the packet via the [MAGIC](https://www.dfa.ms.gov/dfa-offices/mmrs/mississippi-suppliers-vendors/). The Offeror shall be notified as soon as practicable if their proposal was rejected and the reason for such rejection.

**Restrictions on Communications with the Office of Procurement**

At no time shall any Offeror or its personnel, contact or attempt to contact, any MDE staff regarding this solicitation. **Should it be determined that any Offeror has attempted to communicate or has communicated with any MDE employee in the Office of Teaching and Leading regarding this solicitation, the MDE, at its discretion, may disqualify the Offeror from submitting a proposal in response to this SOLICITATION.**

## RESPONSIVENESS AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OFFEROR

* Ensure that competitive proposals are received in the Office of Procurement by the deadline, **by 2:00 PM CST on Tuesday, November 2, 2021**, and assumes all risks of delivery.
* At the time of receipt of the proposals, the proposals shall be date stamped and recorded in the MDE mailroom.
* Proposals and modifications received after the time designated in the solicitation shall be considered **late** and shall not be considered for award.
* Incomplete proposals shall not be evaluated and shall not be returned for revisions. No faxed copies shall be accepted.
* **VERY IMPORTANT**: Proposals that do not include one (1) USB clearly marked with the name of the vendor to provide a single document in a **searchable** Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format according to the instructions above for the **redacted** version only shall not be evaluated. The submission must include the name of the vendor and provide a single document in a **searchable** Microsoft Word and the **redacted** version shall be submitted in an Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format according to the instructions above shall not be evaluated.
* The Proposals Cover Sheet and all required forms shall be signed in **blue ink** by an authorized official to bind the Offeror to the proposals provisions and must be included.
* The Offeror is responsible for ensuring that the **Technical Factors sections shall have no identifying information, logos, watermarks, etc**. If this is not followed, then that Offeror shall be immediately rejected as non-responsive.

## SCOPE OF WORK AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Mississippi Department of Education is seeking proposals for Temporary Staffing Services for a Call Center to fulfil the scope and requirements of work as described:

* Assign an experienced representative to oversee staffing needs and serves as the primary liaison to work directly with MDE representative(s) to ensure staffing requirements are always met;
* Responsible for timely recruiting/evaluating applications/ hiring qualified staff;
* Evaluate applicants and provide a shortlist of qualified candidates based on established criteria of the Call Center Project description including qualifications/educational/special and general experience;
* Ensure that the temporary staffing employee reports to work at the time and place specified by MDE;
* Conduct appropriate personnel procedures and replace any temporary staffing employee who is not performing satisfactorily;
* Obtain required background checks. Contractor will incur cost of fee(s);
* Ensure drug screening of staffing employee(s), if requested. Contractor will incur cost of fee(s);
* Administer and maintain all employment and payroll records, payroll processing and payment of payroll checks and taxes, including the deductions required by State, Federal and local laws such as social security and withholding taxes;
* Complete all required Federal and State Employment documents including but not limited to I-9, E-Verify, Tax and Verification documents, etc.; and
* Make all unemployment compensation contributions as required by Federal and State law(s) and process claims as required.

## CALL CENTER PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The MDE anticipates approximately 6,650 calls per month during the months of July through April with a possible increase to 41,700 per month during peak season in May through June. The average length of a call is three minutes and forty-three seconds (3:43).

The Customer Service Professionals for the Educator Licensure - Call Center, duties and responsibilities are expected to be performed onsite at the Mississippi Department of Education in Jackson, MS. The Customer Service Professionals will serve on one of two scheduled shifts, 8:30 AM CST– 5:30 PM CST or 9:30 AM CST – 6:30 PM CST or as assigned/ approved.

The Call Center is envisioned to include Customer Service Professionals to provide the following duties:

* Consistently demonstrate excellent communication and interpersonal skills across multiple social and cultural contexts;
* Maintain up-to-date knowledge of the educator licensure guidelines, standardized licensure assessment required for educators, and other related policies/statues, as adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) /State Legislature;
* Assist callers by providing accurate information related to current educator licensure guidelines, the licensure application process, pathways to educator licensure, and available resources for obtaining and maintaining a Mississippi educator license;
* Ability to assist with planning the activities of the Educator Licensure Call Center in order to achieve the program and SBE goals/objective;
* Assist with data analysis process regarding Educator Licensure Call Center activities to improve services rendered;
* Assist with special programs within the Division of Educator Licensure;
* Follow established document data entry procedures for supporting materials submitted to the Division of Educator Licensure as part of licensure application packet;
* Perform related or similar duties or assigned; and
* Staffing employee(s) to adhere to all MDE policies and guidelines, including but not limited to standards of employee conduct, trainings, orientation and or disclosures/non- disclosure forms.

Customer Service Professionals are also envisioned to hold the following minimum qualifications, educational requirements, and experiences:

**Minimum Qualifications/Educational Requirements**

* An Associate Degree or higher from an accredited college or university; AND related experiences; OR
* Graduation from a standard four-year high school or equivalent (GED) AND two (2) years of experience related to the described duties.

**Special Experience**

* Customer service experience;
* Data and document entry experience;
* Providing training and technical assistance; and
* Ability to provide bi-lingual services such as Spanish, preferred.

**General Experience**

* Developing and implementing day-to-day procedures;
* Assist caller and/or client with informational guidelines;
* Assist with data analysis process; and
* Computer skills in Microsoft Office Application (Excel/Word/Outlook/Teams).

## INSURANCE

Offeror shall maintain insurance which, at a minimum, shall include the following types of insurance and coverage limits:

* **Workers’ Compensation** as required by the state of Mississippi;
* **Comprehensive General Liability or Professional General Liability** with a minimal limit of $1,000,000.00 per occurrence;
* **Employee Dishonesty Insurance or Fidelity Bond insurance** with third party liability coverage and minimal limits of $1,000,000.00;
* All insurance policies shall list the State of Mississippi as an additional insured and upon request, the vendor will provide copies of any insurance documentation to MDE;
* All insurance policies shall be issued by companies authorized to do business under the laws of the State of Mississippi, meaning carriers must be licensed or hold a Certificate of Authority from the Mississippi Department of Insurance;
* Offeror shall submit to MDE within 7 days of notification of intend-to-award, certificates of insurance with the required coverage and limits and MDE may reserve the right to request from carriers; and
* Offeror shall submit renewal certificates as appropriate during the term of the Contract.

## TIME FRAME

The anticipated initial contract period shall be December 20, 2021, through September 30, 2023 with an option to renew the contract for up to three (3) optional one (1) year renewals not to exceed five (5) years.

Each year of the contract shall be determined annually and shall be contingent upon successful completion of the services in the preceding year’s contract, a performance evaluation, and availability of funds.

A contract shall be awarded to the vendor whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the State, taking into consideration the price and the evaluation factors set forth in the solicitation.

## TYPE OF CONTRACT

It is anticipated that this contract shall be a fixed price contract with payment made upon completion of tasks identified within the proposal.

## CONTRACTOR DELIVERABLES

The contractor shall be responsible for all tasks and deliverables required to complete the project as described in the Scope of Work. It is anticipated that this shall include but not be limited to:

* Offeror must have been in business and providing Temporary Staffing services for a minimum of three (3) years;
* Offeror must have provided a minimum of fifty (50) temporary staffing workers over the past three (3) years;
* Offeror must maintain a pool of workers (meeting MDE qualifications as described) to fill the requests from agency within forty-eight (48) hours;
* Offeror must replace any worker not performing satisfactorily within forty-eight (48) hours at no additional expense to MDE;
* Offeror must address staff retention to ensuring continuity of staffing employee(s); and
* Offeror to provide up to a projected number of 15 staffing employee(s) or as needed for the Call Center.

## THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The specific responsibilities of the MDE are as stated below:

* Provide a contact person to work with the Contractor to ensure quality control;
* Review and approve timeframes and work plans;
* Provide available information to assist the Contractor;
* Manage the Call Center and supervise the staffing employee(s);
* Training and educate staff on the licensure guidelines;
* Supply office space, equipment, computers/phones etc. for the Call Center;
* Communicate staffing employee termination decisions to the Contractor if expectations are not met;
* Pay the contracting agency and contracting agency will be responsible for paying the staffing employee(s); and
* Provide any confidentiality agreements, memorandums of understandings, and/or data sharing agreements as required.

## MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION

Except where expressly provided otherwise herein, each party shall bear its own cost incurred in performing its responsibilities hereunder. The contractor shall provide one person who shall be responsible for all activities required to fulfill said contract. This individual shall be invested with the authority to make decisions and commitments on behalf of the contracted party during the performance of the solicitation.

The MDE shall also designate one representative who shall act as the primary contact for this office. This representative shall be responsible for conferring with any and all parties necessary to resolve unanticipated issues or requirements that might occur during the course of the solicitation.

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) shall be required prior to the release of any student level data by the Mississippi Department of Education. Failure to adhere to the provisions of the MOU may result in termination of the contract and/or may result in denial of subsequent renewal requests.

## ETHICS

In compliance with State law, Contractor who is employed by a public entity agrees to make arrangements with his/her employer to take the appropriate leave (annual, professional, compensatory, etc.) during the period of service covered by this contract. Contractor also agrees not to utilize resources of the public employer to perform the services pursuant to this contract. Prior to execution of this contract, Contractor must submit to the MDE a Certification (on the MDE form) executed from his/her employer whereby the public employer acknowledges that it is aware of its employee working for the MDE.

## TERMINATION IN EVENT OF EMPLOYMENT

Contract shall be terminated immediately if Contractor becomes an employee of the MDE and is only subject to payment of services prior to effective date of employment at the MDE.

## AVAILABLE BUDGET

Because of the scope of this project, we believe it should be possible for different proposers to arrive at vastly differing estimates of resources required. It is anticipated that this shall allow the proposers to explain exactly what the State shall receive for this amount of funds and shall allow evaluators to determine the best proposals based upon the qualifications and the description of what the State shall receive in exchange for this amount.

## ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSALS

The Mississippi Department of Education reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in proposals. A minor irregularity is a variation of the **solicitation**, which does not affect the price of the proposal, or give one party an advantage or benefit not enjoyed by other parties, or adversely impacts the interest of the Department. Waivers, when granted, shall in no way modify the **solicitation** requirements or excuse the party from full compliance with the solicitation specifications and other contract requirements if the party is awarded the contract.

## REGISTRATION WITH MISSISSIPPI SECRETARY OF STATE

By submitting a proposal, the Offeror certifies that it is registered to do business in the State of Mississippi as prescribed by the Mississippi Secretary of State or, if not already registered, that it shall do so within seven (7) business days of being offered an award. Sole proprietors are not required to register with the Mississippi Secretary of State.

## REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

Any proposal shall be rejected in whole or in part when it is determined to be in the best interest of the State, as provided by the Public Procurement Review Board regulations. Reasons for rejecting a proposal include:

1. The proposal contains unauthorized amendments to the requirements of the solicitation.
2. The proposal is conditional.
3. The proposal is incomplete or contains irregularities, which make the proposal indefinite or ambiguous.
4. The proposal did not follow the Instructions for Delivery as required.
5. The proposal cover sheet is not signed by an authorized representative.
6. The proposal contains false or misleading statements or references.
7. The Offeror is determined to be non-responsive.
8. The proposal ultimately fails to meet the announced requirements of the State in some material aspect.
9. The proposal price is unreasonable.
10. The products or service item offered in the proposal is unacceptable by reason of its failure to meet the requirements of the specifications or permissible alternates or other acceptable criteria set forth in the solicitation.
11. The proposal is received late. Late proposals shall be maintained unopened in the procurement file.
12. The proposal included vendor specific information or evidence.
13. The Offeror did not include a USB with the name of the vendor to provide a single document in a searchable Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format.
14. The Offeror has filed bankruptcy, been implicated in fraud or been debarred.
15. The Offeror did not perform prior services in a proper, workmanlike, and/or dignified manner.
16. The Offeror currently owes the State money.
17. Objection with the Standard Terms and Conditions.
18. In person delivery.

#### EXCEPTIONS:

The MDE reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to negotiate with the best proposed Offeror to address issues other than those described in the proposal, to award a contract to other than the low Offeror, or not to make any award if it is determined to be in the best interest of the MDE.

## DISPOSITION OF PROPOSALS

All submitted proposals become the property of the Mississippi Department of Education and shall not be returned to Offeror**.**

## CONDITIONS OF SOLICITATION

The release of the solicitation does not constitute an acceptance of any offer, nor does such release in any way obligate the MDE to execute a contract with any other party.

The Offeror shall assure compliance with the following conditions of solicitation:

1. Any proposal submitted in response to the solicitation shall be in writing.
2. The MDE accepts no responsibility for any expense incurred by the Offeror in the preparation and presentation of an offer. Such expenses shall be borne exclusively by the Offeror.
3. The award of a contract for any proposal is contingent upon the following:
   * Favorable evaluation of the proposal,
   * Approval of the proposal by the Office of Teaching and Leading, The Mississippi Department of Education,
   * Successful negotiation of any changes to the proposal as required by the MDE,
   * The State Board of Education approval, if required,
   * The Public Procurement Review Board approval, if required.
4. Likewise, the MDE also reserves the right to accept any proposal as submitted for contract award, without substantive negotiation of offered terms, services, or prices. Therefore, all parties are advised to propose their most favorable terms initially. Discussions may be conducted with Offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for the award for the purpose of clarification to assure full understanding of, and responsiveness to, the solicitation requirements, but proposals may be accepted without such discussions.
5. The MDE reserves the right to cancel this solicitation when it is determined in writing to be in the best interest of the State as provided by the Public Procurement Review Board.
6. The RFP, its amendments, the offeror’s proposal and the Best and Final Offer shall constitute the contract.
7. Any proposal received after the time and date set for receipt of proposals is late. Any withdrawal or modification of a proposal received after the time and date set for receipt of proposals at the place designated for receipt is late. No late proposal, late modification, or late withdrawal shall be considered unless receipt would have been timely but for the action or inaction of State personnel directly serving the procurement activity.
8. Offerors shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to the solicitation by signing and returning the form with the proposal, by identifying the amendment number and date in the space provided for this purpose on the proposal form, or by letter. The acknowledgment must be received by the Mississippi Department of Education by the time and at the place specified for receipt of proposals.
9. The Offeror certifies that the prices submitted in response to the solicitation have been arrived at independently and without – for the purpose of restricting competition – any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other Offeror or competitor relating to those prices, the intention to submit an offer, or the methods or factors used to calculate the Offeror’s prices.
10. The Offeror shall submit in writing any trade secrets or other proprietary data contained in the proposal which the Offeror wishes to remain confidential in accordance with Section 25-

61-9 and 79-23-1 of the Mississippi Code. Offer must complete Appendix C with the proposal identifying any such information.

## QUALIFICATIONS

The Offeror shall provide the following minimum information:

* + The name of the Offeror, the location of the Offeror’s principal place of business and, if different, the place of performance of the proposed contract;
  + The Vendor shall provide all services directly related to this contract from an office(s) located in the United States. Indicate your agreement with this requirement and identify any locations outside the State of Mississippi in which you propose to provide the services described in this solicitation.
  + The age of the Offeror’s business and average number of employees over a previous period of time, as specified in the solicitation;
  + The abilities, qualifications, and experience of all persons who would be assigned to provide the required services;
  + A listing of other contracts under which services similar in scope, size, or discipline to the required services were performed or undertaken within a previous period of time, as specified in the solicitation; and
  + A plan giving as much detail as is practical explaining how the services shall be performed.

## CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

The MDE shall ensure fair and equitable treatment of all persons and Offeror’s in regard to the evaluation process. The process provides for the selection of the best Offeror in accordance with State and Federal laws and regulations. Specifically, by the provisions of the Mississippi Public Procurement Review Board Office of Personal Service Contract Review Rules and Regulations. A copy of which is available at 501 North West Street Suite 701E; Jackson, MS 39201 for inspection, or downloadable at [http://www.dfa.ms.gov](http://www.dfa.ms.gov/).

The MDE reserves the right to accept, reject, or negotiate any or all offers on the basis of the evaluation criteria contained within this document. The final decision to execute a contract with any party rests solely with the MDE.

Proposals submitted by the specified time and containing the information described in the Instructions for Delivery section found on page 4 shall be evaluated by an Evaluation Committee selected by the MDE.

*The committee evaluates the proposal in three (3) phases:*

1. The evaluation committee will review and score the technical factor sections. The vendor’s identifying information is kept confidential during this phase of the evaluation.
2. The evaluation committee will review and score the management factor sections. The vendor’s identifying information is revealed during this phase of the evaluation
3. The budget is reviewed, and a formula applied awarding the lowest bid with the maximum points allowed for the cost factor.

The specific criteria that shall be used in evaluating the merits of the solicitation are listed below.

The criteria are weighted to yield a total of 100 points and shall include the following:

1. **TECHNICAL FACTORS - 33 Total Points**
2. Management Summary and philosophy
   * Underlying philosophy - Proposal includes a letter which demonstrates a philosophy and clear understanding of the scope of work and services required
3. Production Proposal
   * Plan describing abilities to accomplish the work
   * Tasks to be accomplished, processes to be undertaken to accomplish those tasks and a proposed timeline for completion
   * Past performance that demonstrates the quality of work completed on similar projects
4. Additional Data
   * Additional information to support achieving services
5. **MANAGEMENT FACTORS - 22 Total Points**
6. Corporate Experience and Capacity
   * Satisfactory evidence of the vendor’s years of experience, capability to manage and coordinate the types of activities and provide the services in a timely manner
   * Vendor’s background and relevant experience as related to the described activities.
   * Sample of previous work, may include letters of recommendations from current customers
   * Project management plan
7. Personnel
   * Resumes that include experiences for (all proposed key management and staff) in the area of service delivery
   * Level of involvement of staff in the day-to-day operations
   * Contract or in-house resources
8. References and history of performing work
   * At least three (3) references for contracts of similar size and scope
   * Two references for current contracts or awarded in the past three (3) years
9. **PRICE /COST FACTORS - 45 points**

A formula shall be applied to determine the points awarded to each Offeror. Points shall be given based on the Offeror’s costs in relation to the lowest offer.

Discussions may be conducted with Offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award. Likewise, the MDE also reserves the right to accept any proposal as submitted for contract award, without substantive negotiation of proposed terms, services, or prices. For these reasons, all parties are advised to propose their most favorable terms initially.

Awards shall be made to the responsive and responsible Offeror whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the State, taking into consideration the price and the evaluation factors set forth. Results of the evaluation and the recommendation of the evaluation team shall be forwarded to the State Board of Education (if applicable), and the Public Procurement Review Board (if applicable) for approval.

## PRE-CONFERENCE

A pre-conference shall not be held for this procurement.

## ORAL PRESENTATIONS

An oral presentation shall not be held for this procurement.

## NOTICE OF INTENT TO AWARD

Award shall be publicly posted on the MDE’swebsite and MAGIC for 48 hours prior to Official award notices. After public posting, the MDE shall notify in writing to the responsible Offeror(s) whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the State taking into consideration evaluation factors set forth in the solicitation. The notice of intended Contract award shall be sent confirmation to the winning Offeror. Unsuccessful Offerors shall be notified in the same manner after the award has been accepted or declined.

## POST-AWARD VENDOR DEBRIEFING

Vendors shall be given the opportunity to request a debriefing. Upon notification of intent to award or notification of unsuccessful Offeror, vendor shall have three (3) business days to request a post-award debriefing in writing, by U.S. mail or electronic submission. At a minimum, the debriefing should occur within three (3) business days after receipt of the vendor request. The debriefing shall include the following:

* 1. Evaluation of significant weaknesses or deficiencies in the proposal;
  2. Overall evaluated cost or price and technical rating, if applicable, of the successful vendor(s) and the debriefed vendor;
  3. Overall ranking of all vendors, when any ranking was developed by the agency during the selection process;
  4. Summary of the rationale for award; and,
  5. Reasonable responses to relevant questions about selection procedures contained in the solicitation, applicable regulations, and other applicable authorities that were followed.

## RIGHT TO PROTEST

1. Interested Party means an actual or prospective Offeror that may be aggrieved by the solicitation or award of a contract, or by the protest.
2. Protestor means any actual or prospective Offeror who is aggrieved in connections with the solicitation or the award of a contract who files a protest.
3. Special Assistant Attorney General shall mean the individual assigned by the Attorney General to provide legal assistance to the State agency.

**Procedures for Filing Protests**

Protestors should seek resolution of their complaints initially with the office that issued the solicitation.

Any actual or prospective Offeror who is aggrieved in connection with the solicitation or award of a contract may protest to the Agency Head and provide a copy the Department of Finance and Administration Director of the Office of Personal and Professional Service Contract Review. The protest shall be submitted in writing within seven (7) calendar days of the intent to award or within seven (7) calendar days of the solicitation posting if the protest is based on the solicitation.

A protest is considered filed when received by the Agency head. Protests filed after the seven

1. day period shall not be considered.

To file a protest directly to the PPRB, the aggrieved party shall file a protest with the Office of Personal Service Contract Review within seven (7) calendar days after the aggrieved party knew or should have known of the facts and circumstances upon which the protest is based, but in no event later than seven (7) days of the solicitation posting or the intent to award.

**Content of Protest**

The written protest letter shall contain:

* 1. The name and address of the protester.
  2. An appropriate identification of the procurement, the procurement number and if a contract has been awarded.
  3. An explanation of the specific basis for the protest.
  4. The protesting Offeror must provide facts and evidence to support the protest.
  5. Provide statement of reason for the protest, supporting exhibits, evidence, or documents to substantiate any claim unless not available within the filing time in which case the expected availability date shall be indicated.
  6. Place protest letter in an envelope clearly marked “Protest”
  7. A protest is considered filed when received by the MDE, or designee. Protests filed after the seven (7) calendar days established above shall not be considered.
  8. The protest letter must be mailed to:

The Mississippi Department of Education c/o Dr. Carey Wright

Protest Letter (RFx Number)

P.O. Box 771

Jackson, Mississippi 39201

**Protest Decision**

The MDE in collaboration with the Special Assistant Attorney General shall promptly issue a decision in writing. The decision shall:

1. state the reason for the action taken and
2. inform the protestant of its right to administrative review.

## AUDIT

The MDE may conduct random audits to monitor Contractor performance. There shall be no restrictions on the right of the State or Federal government to conduct whatever inspections and audits are necessary to assure quality, appropriateness or timeliness of services and reasonableness of their cost. Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 3731(b)(2), claims may be brought up to ten (10) years after the date on which a violation is committed. The right to audit exists for ten

(10) years from the final date of the contract period or from the date of completion of any audit, whichever is later.

## STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Certain terms and conditions are required for contracting. Therefore, the Offeror shall assure agreement and compliance with the following standard terms and conditions.

#### ACCESS TO RECORDS

Contractor agrees that the MDE, or any of its duly authorized representatives, at any time during the term of this agreement, shall have access to, and the right to audit and examine any pertinent books, documents, papers, and records of Contractor related to Contractor’s charges and performance under this agreement. Such records shall be kept by Contractor for a period of three

(3) years after final payment under this agreement, unless the MDE authorizes their earlier disposition. Contractor agrees to refund to the MDE any overpayment disclosed by any such audit. However, if any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action involving the records has been started before the expiration of 3-year period, the records shall be retained until completion of the action and resolution of all issues which arise from it.

#### ANTI-ASSIGNMENT/SUBCONTRACTING

Contractor acknowledges that it was selected by the State to perform the services required hereunder based, in part, upon Contractor’s special skills and expertise. Contractor shall not

assign, subcontract, or otherwise transfer this agreement, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the State, which the State may, in its sole discretion, approve or deny without reason. Any attempted assignment or transfer of its obligations without such consent shall be null and void. No such approval by the State of any subcontract shall be deemed in any way to provide for the incurrence of any obligation of the State in addition to the total fixed price agreed upon in this agreement. Subcontracts shall be subject to the terms and conditions of this agreement and to any conditions of approval that the State may deem necessary. Subject to the foregoing, this agreement shall be binding upon the respective successors and assigns of the parties.

#### APPLICABLE LAW

The contract shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Mississippi, excluding its conflicts of law provisions, and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the courts of the State. Contractor shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

#### APPROVAL

It is understood that if this contract requires approval by the Public Procurement Review Board and/or the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration Office of Personal Service Contract Review and this contract is not approved by the PPRB and/or OPSCR, it is void and no payment shall be made hereunder.

#### ATTORNEY’S FEES AND EXPENSES

Subject to other terms and conditions of this agreement, in the event Contractor defaults in any obligations under this agreement, Contractor shall pay to the State all costs and expenses (including, without limitation, investigative fees, court costs, and attorney’s fees) incurred by the State in enforcing this agreement or otherwise reasonably related thereto. Contractor agrees that under no circumstances shall the customer be obligated to pay any attorney’s fees or costs of legal action to Contractor.

#### AUTHORITY TO CONTRACT

Contractor warrants (a) that it is a validly organized business with valid authority to enter into this agreement; (b) that it is qualified to do business and in good standing in the State of Mississippi; (c) that entry into and performance under this agreement is not restricted or prohibited by any loan, security, financing, contractual, or other agreement of any kind; and (d) notwithstanding any other provision of this agreement to the contrary, that there are no existing legal proceedings or prospective legal proceedings, either voluntary or otherwise, which may adversely affect its ability to perform its obligations under this agreement.

#### AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligation of the MDE to proceed under this agreement is conditioned upon the appropriation of funds by the Mississippi State Legislature and the receipt of state and/or federal funds. If the funds anticipated for the continuing time fulfillment of the agreement are, at any time, not forthcoming or insufficient, either through the failure of the federal government to provide funds or of the State of Mississippi to appropriate funds or the discontinuance or material alteration of the program under which funds were provided or if funds are not otherwise available to the MDE, the MDE shall have the right upon

ten (10) working days written notice to Contractor, to terminate this agreement without damage, penalty, cost or expenses to the MDE of any kind whatsoever. The effective date of termination shall be as specified in the notice of termination.

#### BACKGROUND CHECKS

Contractor and/or its employees represents neither has ever been convicted or pled guilty or entered a plea of nolo contendere to a felony in any court of the state of Mississippi, another state, or in federal court in which public funds were unlawfully taken, obtained or misappropriated in the abuse of misuse of any office or employment or money coming into its hands by virtue of any office or employment. Contractor and/or its employees agrees to an initial criminal background check to be performed as well as subsequent criminal background checks that may be necessary and all charges associated with these criminal background checks will be the responsibility of Contractor, if applicable. Any disqualifying information received from the criminal background check will render this agreement null and void.

#### BOARD APPROVAL

It is understood that if this contract requires approval by the Mississippi State Board of Education, and this contract is not approved by the Mississippi State Board of Education, it is void and no payment shall be made hereunder.

#### CHANGES IN SCOPE OF WORK

The MDE may order changes in the work consisting of additions, deletions, or other revisions within the general scope of the contract. No claims may be made by Contractor that the scope of the project or of Contractor’s services has been changed, requiring changes to the amount of compensation to Contractor or other adjustments to the contract, unless such changes or adjustments have been made by written amendment to the contract signed by the MDE and Contractor.

If Contractor believes that any work is not within the scope of the project, is a material change, or will otherwise require more compensation to Contractor, Contractor must immediately notify the MDE in writing of this belief. If the MDE believes that the work is within the scope of the contract as written, Contractor will be ordered to and shall continue with the work as changes and at the cost stated for the work within the contract.

#### COMPLIANCE LAWS

Contractor understands that the MDE is an equal opportunity employer and therefore, maintains a policy which prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical handicap, disability, genetic information, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. All such discrimination is unlawful, and Contractor agrees during the term of the agreement that Contractor will strictly adhere to this policy in its employment practices and provision of services. Contractor shall comply with, and all activities under this agreement shall be subject to, all applicable federal, State of Mississippi, and local laws and regulations, as now existing and as may be amended or modified.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary contained herein, it is recognized that MDE is a public agency of the State of Mississippi and is subject to the Mississippi Public Records Act.

Miss. Code Ann. §§ 25-61-1 *et seq.* If a public records request is made for any information provided to MDE pursuant to this agreement and designated by the Contractor in writing as trade secrets or other proprietary confidential information, the MDE shall follow the provisions of Miss. Code Ann. §§ 25-61-9 and 79-23-1 before disclosing such information. The MDE shall not be liable to the Contractor for disclosure of information required by court order or required by law.

#### CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL

Contractor agrees that, at all times, the employees of contractor furnishing or performing any of the services specified under this agreement shall do so in a proper, workmanlike, and dignified manner.

The MDE shall, throughout the life of the contract, have the right of reasonable rejection and approval of staff or subcontractors assigned to the work by Contractor. If the MDE reasonably rejects staff or subcontractors, Contractor must provide replacement staff or subcontractors satisfactory to the MDE in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the MDE*.* The day-to- day supervision and control of Contractor’s employees and subcontractors is the sole responsibility of Contractor.

MDE reserves the right to request changes in personnel assigned to the project. The MDE Project Manager must pre-approve any changes in key personnel through the contract term. Substitutions are not permitted without written approval of the MDE Project Manager.

#### COPYRIGHTS

Contractor agrees the MDE shall determine the disposition of the title to and the rights under any copyright by Contractor or employees on copyrightable material first produced or composed under this agreement. Further, Contractor hereby grants to the MDE a royalty-free, nonexclusive, irrevocable license to reproduce, translate, publish, use and dispose of, and to authorize others to do so, all copyrighted (or copyrightable) work not first produced or composed by Contractor in the performance of this agreement, but which is incorporated in the material furnished under the agreement. This grant is provided that such license shall be only to the extent Contractor now has, or prior to the completion of full final settlements of agreement may acquire, the right to grant such license without becoming liable to pay compensation to others solely because of such grant.

Contractor further agrees that all material produced and/or delivered under this contract will not, to the best of Contractor's knowledge, infringe upon the copyright or any other proprietary rights of any third party. Should any aspect of the materials become, or in Contractor's opinion be likely to become, the subject of any infringement claim or suit, Contractor shall procure the rights to such material or replace or modify the material to make it non-infringing.

#### DEBARMENT AND SUSPENSION

Contractor certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it:

1. is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transaction by any federal department or agency or any political subdivision or agency of the State of Mississippi;
2. has not, within a three year period preceding this qualification, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction;
3. has not, within a three year period preceding this qualification, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for a violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;
4. is not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state or local) with commission of any of these offenses enumerated in paragraphs two

(2) and (3) of this certification; and,

(5) has not, within a three year period preceding this qualification, had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default.

#### DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

In the event that either party to this agreement receives notice that a third-party requests divulgence of confidential or otherwise protected information and/or has served upon it a subpoena or other validly issued administrative or judicial process ordering divulgence of confidential or otherwise protected information that party shall promptly inform the other party and thereafter respond in conformity with such subpoena to the extent mandated by law. This section shall survive the termination or completion of this agreement. The parties agree that this section is subject to and superseded by Miss. Code Ann. §§ 25-61-1 *et seq*.

#### E-PAYMENT

Contractor agrees to accept all payments in United States currency via the State of Mississippi’s electronic payment and remittance vehicle. The agency agrees to make payment in accordance with Mississippi law on “Timely Payments for Purchases by Public Bodies,” which generally provides for payment of undisputed amounts by the agency within forty-five (45) days of receipt of invoice. Mississippi Code Ann. § 31-7-301 *et seq.*

#### E-VERIFICATION

If applicable, Contractor represents and warrants that it will ensure its compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act of 2008 and will register and participate in the status verification system for all newly hired employees. Mississippi Code Ann. §§ 71-11-1 *et seq*. The term “employee” as used herein means any person that is hired to perform work within the State of Mississippi. As used herein, “status verification system” means the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 that is operated by the United States Department of Homeland Security, also known as the E-Verify Program, or any other successor electronic verification system replacing the E-Verify Program. Contractor agrees to maintain records of such compliance. Upon request of the State and after approval of the Social Security Administration or Department of Homeland Security when required, Contractor agrees to provide a copy of each such verification. Contractor further represents and warrants that any person assigned to perform services hereafter meets the employment eligibility requirements of all immigration laws. The breach of this agreement may subject Contractor to the following:

1. termination of this contract for services and ineligibility for any state or public contract in Mississippi for up to three (3) years with notice of such cancellation/termination being made public;
2. the loss of any license, permit, certification or other document granted to Contractor by an agency, department or governmental entity for the right to do business in Mississippi for up to one (1) year; or,
3. both. In the event of such cancellation/termination, Contractor would also be liable for any additional costs incurred by the State due to Contract cancellation or loss of license or permit to do business in the State.

#### EXCEPTIONS TO CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Contractor and the State shall not be obligated to treat as confidential and proprietary any information disclosed by the other party (“disclosing party”) which:

1. is rightfully known to the recipient prior to negotiations leading to this agreement, other than information obtained in confidence under prior engagements;
2. is generally known or easily ascertainable by nonparties of ordinary skill in the business of the customer;
3. is released by the disclosing party to any other person, firm, or entity (including governmental agencies or bureaus) without restriction;
4. is independently developed by the recipient without any reliance on confidential information;
5. is or later becomes part of the public domain or may be lawfully obtained by the State or Contractor from any nonparty; or,
6. is disclosed with the disclosing party’s prior written consent.

#### FORCE MAJEURE

Each party shall be excused from performance for any period and to the extent that it is prevented from performing any obligation or service, in whole or in part, as a result of cause beyond the reasonable control and without the fault or negligence of such party and/or its subcontractors. Such acts shall include without limitation acts of God, strikes, lockouts, riots, acts of war, epidemics, governmental regulations superimposed after the fact, fire, earthquakes, floods or other natural disasters (“force majeure events”). When such a cause arises, Contractor shall notify the MDE immediately in writing of the cause of its inability to perform, how it affects its performance, and the anticipated duration of the inability to perform. Delays in delivery or in meeting completion dates due to force majeure events shall automatically extend such dates for a period equal to the duration of the delay caused by such events, unless the MDE determines it to be in its best interest to terminate this agreement

#### INDEMNIFICATION

To the fullest extent allowed by law, Contractor shall indemnify, defend, save and hold harmless, protect, and exonerate the agency, its commissioners, board members, officers, employees, agents, and representatives, and the State of Mississippi from and against all claims, demands, liabilities, suits, actions, damages, losses, and costs of every kind and nature

whatsoever including, without limitation, court costs, investigative fees and expenses, and attorney’s fees, arising out of or caused by Contractor and/or its partners, principals, agents, employees and/or subcontractors in the performance of or failure to perform this agreement. In the State’s sole discretion upon approval of the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General, Contractor may be allowed to control the defense of any such claim, suit, etc. In the event Contractor defends said claim, suit, etc., Contractor shall use legal counsel acceptable to the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General. Contractor shall be solely responsible for all costs and/or expenses associated with such defense, and the State shall be entitled to participate in said defense. Contractor shall not settle any claim, suit, etc. without the concurrence of the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General, which shall not be unreasonably withheld.

#### INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

Contractor shall perform all services as an independent contractor and shall at no time act as an agent for the State. No act performed, or representation made, whether oral or written, by Contractor with respect to third parties shall be binding on the MDE.

#### INDEPENDENT PRICE DETERMINATION

Contractor certifies that the price submitted was independently arrived at without collusion.

#### INFORMATION DESIGNATED BY CONTRACTOR AS CONFIDENTIAL

Any disclosure of those materials, documents, data, and other information which Contractor has designated in writing as proprietary and confidential shall be subject to the provisions of Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-61-9 and 79-23-1. As provided in the contract, the personal or professional services to be provided, the price to be paid, and the term of the contract shall not be deemed to be a trade secret, or confidential commercial or financial information.

Any liability resulting from the wrongful disclosure of confidential information on the part of Contractor or its subcontractor shall rest with Contractor. Disclosure of any confidential information by Contractor or its subcontractor without the express written approval of the MDE shall result in the immediate termination of this agreement.

#### LEGAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Contractor shall utilize its knowledge and understanding of applicable legal standards and comply with recognized professional standards and generally accepted measurement principles applicable to assessments and uses of the type described in this contract, including but not limited to standards relating to validity and reliability. Contractor shall consult with the MDE concerning its implementation of the requirements of this section. In the event of a challenge in which the validity or reliability of the use of an assessment developed under this contract is an issue (other than a challenge based on infringement of copyright or other proprietary rights of a third party), Contractor shall cooperate with the MDE and/or the State of Mississippi in the defense of the assessment and shall provide reasonable technical and legal support with regard to Contractor's activities under this contract without additional charges to the MDE or the State.

#### MODIFICATION OR RENEGOTIATION

This agreement may be modified, altered or changed only by written agreement signed by the parties hereto. The parties agree to renegotiate the agreement if federal and/or state revisions of any applicable laws or regulations make changes in this agreement necessary.

#### NO LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

Nothing in this agreement shall be interpreted as excluding or limiting any tort liability of Contractor for harm caused by the intentional or reckless conduct of Contractor or for damages incurred through the negligent performance of duties by Contractor or the delivery of products that are defective due to negligent construction.

#### ORAL STATEMENTS

No oral statement of any person shall modify or otherwise affect the terms, conditions, or specification stated in this contract.

#### PAYMODE

Payments by state agencies using the State’s accounting system shall be made and remittance information provided electronically as directed by the State. These payments shall be deposited into the bank account of Contractor’s choice. The State may, at its sole discretion, require Contractor to electronically submit invoices and supporting documentation at any time during the term of this Agreement. Contractor understands and agrees that the State is exempt from the payment of taxes. All payments shall be in United States currency.

#### PRICE ADJUSTMENT

1. **Price Adjustment Methods.** Any adjustments in contract price, pursuant to a clause in this contract, shall be made in one or more of the following ways:
   1. by agreement on a fixed price adjustment before commencement of the Additional performance;
   2. by unit prices specified in the contract;
   3. by the costs attributable to the event or situation covered by the clause, plus appropriate profit or fee, all as specified in the contract; or,
   4. by the price escalation clause.
2. **Submission of Cost or Pricing Data.** Contractor shall provide cost or pricing data for any price adjustments subject to the provisions of Section 3-401 (Cost or Pricing Data) of the *Mississippi Public Procurement Review Board Office of Personal Service Contract Review Rules and Regulations*.

#### PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS

The contract shall be governed by the applicable provisions of the *Mississippi Public Procurement Review Board Office of Personal Service Contract Review Rules and Regulations*, a copy of which is available at 501 North West Street, Suite 701E, Jackson, Mississippi 39201 for inspection, or downloadable at [http://www.DFA.ms.gov](http://www.dfa.ms.gov/).

#### REPRESENTATION REGARDING CONTINGENT FEES

Contractor represents that it has not retained a person to solicit or secure a State contract upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee, except as disclosed in Contractor’s bid or qualification packet.

#### REPRESENTATION REGARDING GRATUITIES

The bidder, offeror, or Contractor represents that it has not violated, is not violating, and promises that it will not violate the prohibition against gratuities set forth in Section 6-204 (Gratuities) of the Mississippi Public Procurement Review Board Office of Personal Service Contract Review Rules and Regulations.

#### RIGHT TO AUDIT

Contractor shall maintain such financial records and other records as may be prescribed by the MDE or by applicable federal and state laws, rules, and regulations. Contractor shall retain these records for a period of three years after final payment, or until they are audited by the MDE, whichever event occurs first. These records shall be made available during the term of the contract and the subsequent three-year period for examination, transcription, and audit by the Mississippi State Auditor’s Office, its designees, or other authorized bodies.

#### RIGHT TO INSPECT FACILITY

The MDE may, at reasonable times, inspect the place of business of a Contractor or any subcontractor which is related to the performance of any contract awarded by the MDE.

#### SEVERABILITY

If any part of this agreement is declared invalid or unenforceable, such invalidity or unenforceability shall not affect any other provision of the agreement that can be given effect without the invalid or unenforceable provision, and to this end the provisions hereof are severable. In such even, the parties shall amend the agreement as necessary to reflect the original intent of the parties and to bring any invalid or unenforceable provision in compliance with applicable law.

#### STOP WORK ORDER

1. **Order to Stop Work**: The Chief Procurement Officer, may, by written order to Contractor at any time, and without notice to any surety, require Contractor to stop all or any part of the work called for by this contract. This order shall be for a specified period not exceeding 90 days after the order is delivered to Contractor, unless the parties agree to any further period. Any such order shall be identified specifically as a stop work order issued pursuant to this clause. Upon receipt of such an order, Contractor shall forthwith comply with its terms and take all reasonable steps to minimize the occurrence of costs allocable to the work covered by the order during the period of work stoppage. Before the stop work order expires, or within any further period to which the parties shall have agreed, the Chief Procurement Officer shall either:
   1. cancel the stop work order; or,
   2. terminate the work covered by such order as provided in the Termination for Default clause or the Termination for Convenience clause of this contract.
2. **Cancellation or Expiration of the Order**: If a stop work order issued under this clause is canceled at any time during the period specified in the order, or if the period of the order or any extension thereof expires, Contractor shall have the right to resume work. An appropriate adjustment shall be made in the delivery schedule or Contractor price, or both, and the contract shall be modified in writing accordingly, if:
   1. The stop work order results in an increase in the time required for, or in Contractor’s properly allocable to, the performance of any part of this contract; and,
   2. Contractor asserts a claim for such an adjustment within 30 days after the end of the period of work stoppage; provided that, if the Chief Procurement Officer decides that the facts justify such action, any such claim asserted may be received and acted upon at any time prior to final payment under this contract.
3. **Termination of Stopped Work**: If a stop work order is not canceled and the work covered by such order is terminated for default or convenience, the reasonable costs resulting from the stop work order shall be allowed by adjustment or otherwise.
4. **Adjustments of Price:** Any adjustment in contract price made pursuant to this clause shall be determined in accordance with the Price Adjustment clause of this contract.

#### TERMINATION FOR CONVENIENCE

1. **Termination**. The Chief Procurement Officer may, when the interests of the State so require, terminate this contract in whole or in part, for the convenience of the State. Chief Procurement Officer shall give written notice of the termination to Contractor specifying the part of the contract terminated and when termination becomes effective.
2. **Contractor’s Obligations.** Contractor shall incur no further obligations in connection with the terminated work and on the date set in the notice of termination Contractor will stop work to the extent specified. Contractor shall also terminate outstanding orders and subcontracts as they relate to the terminated work. Contractor shall settle the liabilities and claims arising out of the termination of subcontractors and orders connected with the terminated work. The Chief Procurement Officer may direct Contractor to assign Contractor’s right, title, and interest under terminated orders or subcontracts to the State. Contractor must still complete the work not terminated by the notice of termination and may incur obligations as are necessary to do so.

#### TERMINATION FOR DEFAULT

1. **Default.** If Contractor refuses or fails to perform any of the provisions of this contract with such diligence as will ensure its completion within the time specified in this contract or any extension thereof, or otherwise fails to timely satisfy the contract provisions, or commits any other substantial breach of this contract, the Chief Procurement Officer may notify Contractor in writing of the delay or nonperformance and if not cured in ten days or any longer time specified in writing by the Chief Procurement Officer or designee, such officer may terminate Contractor’s right to proceed with the contract or such part of the contract as to which there has been delay or a failure to properly perform. In the event of termination in whole or in part, the Chief Procurement Officer may procure similar supplies or services in a manner and upon terms deemed appropriate by the Chief Procurement Officer. Contractor shall continue performance of the contract to the extent it is not terminated and shall be liable for excess costs incurred in procuring similar goods or services.
2. **Contractor’s Duties.** Notwithstanding termination of the contract and subject to any

directions from the Chief Procurement Officer, Contractor shall take timely, reasonable, and necessary action to protect and preserve property in the possession of Contractor in which the MDE has an interest.

1. **Compensation.** Payment for completed services delivered and accepted by the State shall be at the contract price. The State may withhold from amounts due Contractor such sums as the Chief Procurement Officer deems to be necessary to protect the State against loss because of outstanding liens or claims of former lien holders and to reimburse the MDE for the excess costs incurred in procuring similar goods and services.
2. **Excuse for Nonperformance or Delayed Performance.** Except with respect to defaults of subcontractors, Contractor shall not be in default by reason of any failure in performance of this contract in accordance with its terms (including any failure by Contractor to make progress in the prosecution of the work hereunder which endangers such performance) if Contractor has notified the Chief Procurement Officer within 15 days after the cause of the delay and the failure arises out of causes such as: acts of God; acts of the public enemy; acts of the State and any other governmental entity in its sovereign or contractual capacity; fires; floods; epidemics; quarantine restrictions; strikes or other labor disputes; freight embargoes; or unusually severe weather. If the failure to perform is caused by the failure of a subcontractor to perform or to make progress, and if such failure arises out of causes similar to those set forth above, Contractor shall not be deemed to be in default, unless the services to be furnished by the subcontractor were reasonably obtainable from other sources in sufficient time to permit Contractor to meet the contract requirements. Upon request of Contractor, the Chief Procurement Officer shall ascertain the facts and extent of such failure, and, if such officer determines that any failure to perform was occasioned by any one or more of the excusable causes, and that, but for the excusable cause, Contractor’s progress and performance would have met the terms of the contract, the delivery schedule shall be revised accordingly, subject to the rights of the State under the clause entitled (in fixed-price contracts, “Termination for Convenience,” in cost-reimbursement contracts, “Termination”). “Termination for Convenience.” (As used in this Paragraph of this clause, the term “subcontractor” means subcontractor at any tier).
3. **Erroneous Termination for Default.** If, after notice of termination of Contractor’s right to proceed under the provisions of this clause, it is determined for any reason that the contract was not in default under the provisions of this clause, or that the delay was excusable under the provisions of Paragraph (4) (Excuse for Nonperformance or Delayed Performance) of this clause, the rights and obligations of the parties shall, if the contract contains a clause providing for termination for convenience of the MDE, be the same as if the notice of termination had been issued pursuant to such clause.
4. **Additional Rights and Remedies.** The rights and remedies provided in this clause are in addition to any other rights and remedies provided by law or under this contract.

#### TERMINATION UPON BANKRUPTCY

This contract may be terminated in whole or in part by the MDE upon written notice to Contractor, if Contractor should become the subject of bankruptcy or receivership proceedings, whether voluntary or involuntary, or upon the execution by Contractor of an assignment for the

benefit of its creditors. In the event of such termination, Contractor shall be entitled to recover just and equitable compensation for satisfactory work performed under this contract, but in no case shall said compensation exceed the total contract price.

#### TRADE SECRETS, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

It is expressly understood that Mississippi law requires that the provisions of this contract which contain the commodities purchased or the personal or professional services provided, the price to be paid, and the term of the contract shall not be deemed to be a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information and shall be available for examination, copying, or reproduction.

#### TRANSPARENCY

This contract, including any accompanying exhibits, Appendixes, and appendices, is subject to the “Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983,” and its exceptions. *See* Mississippi Code Ann. §§ 25-61-1 *et seq.* and Mississippi Code Annotated § 79-23-1. In addition, this contract is subject to the provisions of the Mississippi Accountability and Transparency Act of 2008. Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 27-104-151 *et seq.* Unless exempted from disclosure due to a court-issued protective order, a copy of this executed contract is required to be posted to the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration’s independent agency contract website for public access at [http://www.transparency.mississippi.gov.](http://www.transparency.mississippi.gov/) Information identified by Contractor as trade secrets, or other proprietary information, including confidential vendor information or any other information which is required confidential by state or federal law or outside the applicable freedom of information statutes, will be redacted.

#### UNSATISFACTORY WORK

If, at any time during the contract term, the service performed, or work done by Contractor is considered by the Agency to create a condition that threatens the health, safety, or welfare of the citizens and/or employees of the State of Mississippi, Contractor shall, on being notified by the Agency, immediately correct such deficient service or work. In the event Contractor fails, after notice, to correct the deficient service or work immediately, the Agency shall have the right to order the correction of the deficiency by separate contract or with its own resources at the expense of Contractor.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tentative Timeline**  **Temporary Staffing Agency for Call Center** | |
| October 18, 2021 | Release date to newspaper and MDE webpage |
| November 2, 2021 | Proposal submission deadline by 2:00 PM Central Time (CT) |
| November 2, 2021 | Evaluation of proposals |
| November 2-3, 2021 | Proposed Notice of Intent to Award |
| December 1, 2021 | Contract to Public Procurement Review Board (PPRB) |
| December 16, 2021 | Contract to The Mississippi Board of Education |
| December 20, 2021 | Projected Contract Start Date |

**Appendix A – Proposal Cover Sheet**

Company/Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Proposals must be submitted as directed in the ***Proposal Submission Requirements*** on or before the submission deadline specified in the solicitation.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Company Representative and Title |  |
| Mailing Address |  |
| City, State, Zip |  |
| Telephone: |  |
| E-Mail Address: |  |

***Please identify the Office/Branch which will provide services for the MDE if different from above***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Contact Person and Title |  |
| Telephone Number |  |
| Email Address |  |
| Physical Address |  |
| City, State, Zip |  |
| Mailing Address |  |
| City, State, Zip |  |

1. Are you currently registered as a Supplier in MAGIC? \_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO
2. What is your supplier number? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you currently registered with PayMode? \_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO
4. Are you a minority owned company? \_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_NO

**By signing below, the Company Representative certifies that he/she has authority to bind the company, and further acknowledges and certifies the statements below on behalf of the company:**

* That the Offeror will perform the services required at the prices stated in their proposal.
* That the pricing submitted will remain firm for the contract term.
* That, to the best of its knowledge and belief, the cost or pricing data submitted is accurate, complete, and current as of the submission date.
* That the company is licensed or authorized to provide the proposed services in the State of Mississippi.
* The Offeror indicates and is in agreement with the Standard Terms and Conditions as set forth above. If the Offeror objects to any of the Standard Terms and Conditions, the objection may be considered as an adequate cause for rejection without further negotiations.
* The State of Mississippi utilizes the Mississippi Accountability System for Government Information and Collaboration (MAGIC) system to manage contracts. Additionally, electronic payments are issued through an electronic portal called [PayMode](http://www.paymode.com/mississippi). In order to do business with the State of Mississippi, all Suppliers must be registered with both systems. By submitting a proposal, the Offeror certifies it is registered with both systems and if not already registered, will do so within seven (7) business days of being notified by the MDE that it has been awarded a contract.

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B**

# CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

I/We make the following certifications and assurances as a required element of the qualification to which it is attached, of the understanding that the truthfulness of the facts affirmed here and the continued compliance with these requirements are conditions precedent to the award or continuation of the related contract(s) by circling the applicable word or words in each paragraph below:

**REPRESENTATION REGARDING GRATUITIES**

The Offeror, or Contractor represents that it has not violated, is not violating, and promises that it shall not violate the prohibition against gratuities set forth in Section 6-204 (Gratuities) of the Mississippi Public Procurement Review Board Office of Personal Service Contract Review Rules and Regulations.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AMENDMENTS**

I acknowledge all amendments, if any, to this solicitation.

Responses to questions shall be treated as amendments to the solicitation and shall require acknowledgment.

**PROSPECTIVE CONTRACTOR’S REPRESENTATION REGARDING CONTINGENT FEES**

The prospective Contractor represents as a part of such Contractor’s qualification that such Contractor ***has ( ) or has not ( )*** retained any person or agency on a percentage, commission, or other contingent arrangement to secure this contract.

**FEDERAL DEBARMENT CERTIFICATION:**

I hereby certify that Contractor is not on the list for federal debarment on [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov/) – System for Award Management.

**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI DEBARMENT CERTIFICATION:**

I hereby certify that Contractor is not on the list for debarment on [www.sos.ms.gov](http://www.sos.ms.gov/) for doing business with the State of Mississippi or with any Mississippi State Agency.

**PARTNERSHIP DEBARMENT CERTIFICATION:**

I hereby certify that all entities who are in partnership through this contract or grant with the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) (subcontractors, subrecipients, et al.) are not on the federal debarment list on [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov/) – System for Award Management or the State of Mississippi debarment list. Proof of documentation of partnership verification with SAM shall be kept on file and the debarment status shall be checked prior to submission of every contract/subgrant and modification to MDE.

**Temporary Staffing Services for Call Center**

**Offeror’s Name Date**

**APPENDIX C**

## CERTIFICATION OF INDEPENDENT PRICE DETERMINATION

The bidder certifies that the prices submitted in response to the solicitation have been arrived at independently and without, for the purpose of restricting competition, any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other bidder or competitor relating to those prices, the intention to submit a bid, or the methods or factors used to calculate the prices bid.

## PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

The enclosed proposal or qualification ***does ( ) or does not ( )*** contain trade secrets or other proprietary data which the Offeror wishes to remain confidential in accordance with Section 25-61-9 and 79-23-1 of the Mississippi Code.

If the enclosed proposal does include pages that the Offeror wishes to designate as proprietary, please list page numbers below.

\_\_

\_\_

\_\_ \_\_

**Temporary Staffing Services for Call Center**

**Offeror’s Name Date**

*Note: Please sign and check applicable word or words provided in Appendixes B and C above.*

**APPENDIX D**

#### BUDGET SUMMARY FORM

Temporary Staffing Services for Call Center

(Offer to include a detailed budget narrative and insert a chart that addresses all costs for services with each applicable budget category)

Provide a clear and concise description of the computations used to arrive at the total amounts indicated.

**Appendix E - References**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Client Name |  |
| Contact Name and Title |  |
| Contact Address |  |
| Contact Telephone Number |  |
| Email Address |  |
| Type of work provided to the client |  |
| Effective contract dates for the time frame services were/are being provided to client |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Client Name |  |
| Contact Name and Title |  |
| Contact Address |  |
| Contact Telephone Number |  |
| Email Address |  |
| Type of work provided to the client |  |
| Effective contract dates for the time frame services were/are being provided to client |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Client Name |  |
| Contact Name and Title |  |
| Contact Address |  |
| Contact Telephone Number |  |
| Email Address |  |
| Type of work provided to the client |  |
| Effective contract dates for the time frame services were/are being provided to client |  |

**TEMPORARY STAFFING SERVICES FOR CALL CENTER**

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

1. Why has this bid been released at this time? **This is a Request for Proposals (RFP), not a Bid.**
2. Are bidders permitted to deviate in any way from any manner of quoting fees you may be expecting? For example, if there is a pricing page in the RFP, can bidders submit an alternate fee structure? If there is no pricing page in the RFP, do you have any preference for how bidders should quote fees or can bidders create their own pricing categories? **This is a Request for Proposals (RFP), not a Bid. Please see Appendix D - for the Budget Summary Form.**
3. Please describe your level of satisfaction with your current or recent vendor(s) for the same purchasing activity, if applicable. **This is a new contract, current or recent vendor for The Educator Licensure Call Center is not applicable.**
4. Has the current contract gone full term? **Not applicable.**
5. Have all options to extend the current contract been exercised? **Not applicable.**

1. Who is the incumbent, and how long has the incumbent been providing the requested

services?  **Not applicable.**

1. To what extent will the location of the bidder’s proposed location or headquarters have a bearing on any award? **Please refer to the RFP (Qualifications)** **The Vendor shall provide all services directly related to this contract from an office(s) located in the United States. Indicate your agreement with this requirement and identify any locations outside the State of Mississippi in which you propose to provide the services described in this solicitation**.
2. How are fees currently being billed by any incumbent(s), by category, and at what rates? **Not applicable.**
3. What estimated or actual dollars were paid last year, last month, or last quarter to any incumbent(s)? **Not applicable.**
4. Is previous experience with any specific customer information systems, phone systems, or software required?  **The RFP specifies the Customer Services Professional minimum qualifications, educational requirements, and experiences.**
5. What is the minimum required total call capacity? **Not applicable to vendor.**
6. What is the minimum simultaneous inbound call capacity? **Please refer to the RFP. Call Center Project Description.**
7. What is the maximum wait time? **The average wait time varies based on time of year.**
8. What is the maximum hold time? **Not applicable. MDE to manage the Call Center.**
9. What percentage of inbound calls must be answered by a live operator? **Not applicable. MDE to manage the Call Center.**
10. What percentage of calls must be resolved without a transfer, second call, or a return call? **Not applicable. MDE to manage the Call Center.**
11. What is the maximum percentage of calls that can be terminated by the caller without resolution? **Not applicable.**
12. Is there a minimum or maximum number of operators and supervisors? **Please refer to the RFP #9 - Contractor Deliverables.**
13. What is the required degree of dedication for the call center? **Not applicable. MDE to manage the Call Center.**
14. Are callers required or allowed to connect with a message verification system or pre-recorded message before connecting to a live operator, or must a live operator be the initial contact?  
    **Not applicable**.
15. What are the recording requirements for inbound and outbound phone calls and how long must recordings be maintained? **Not applicable.**
16. What are the recording and storage requirements for non-phone communications? **Not applicable.**
17. What information is to be included in call logs? **Not applicable.**
18. What is the current number of seats for operators and supervisors at your existing call center? **This contract is a** n**ew initiative.**
19. What is the current average wait time for phone calls? **The average wait time varies based on time of year.**
20. What is the current average handle time for phone calls and other types of communications? **Please refer to the RFP #5. Call Center Project Description.**
21. What is the current average after-call work time for operators? **Not applicable.**
22. Over the past year, what is the percentage of calls received in English versus non-English?  
    **Not applicable.**
23. Over the past year, what percentage of calls received were in Spanish? **Not applicable.**
24. What time of day, days of the week, or times of the year do calls typically peak? **Please refer to the RFP #5. Call Center Project Description.**
25. By the “Key Personnel Resumes” does MDE refer to the resumes of proposed staff (Call Center-Customer Service Representative/Agent ) to work on this project within your office or You refer to the resumes of our Account Management or Service delivery team (Staffing Delivery Manager- to oversee staffing needs and serves as the primary liaison to work directly with MDE representative, Recruitment Manger, Recruiter etc.)?

**The Offeror staff.**

1. Is this the new contract or any existing contract is expiring? **This is a new contract.**
2. Is there any particular budget for overall project or Not to Exceed Hourly Bill Rate range available for the Customer Services Representatives? **Please refer to the RFP Available Budget: Because of the scope of this project, we believe it should be possible for different proposers to arrive at vastly differing estimates of resources required. It is anticipated that this shall allow the proposers to explain exactly what the State shall receive for this amount of funds and shall allow evaluators to determine the best proposals based upon the qualifications and the description of what the State shall receive in exchange for this amount.**
3. So, you are looking to have a firm hire local employees to staff a local call center that you will operate and run? **The Staffing Agency will provide hiring of staff for Customer Services Professionals in a Call Center for the Division of Educator Licensure**. **Also, please refer to (Call Center Project Description): The Customer Service Professionals for the Educator Licensure - Call Center, duties and responsibilities are expected to be performed** **onsite at the Mississippi Department of Education in Jackson, MS.** **MDE will manage the Call Center and supervise the staffing employee(s).**
4. Is this a new initiative? If not, please provide the names of the current vendor(s) providing

the services. **This is a new initiative;** **current vendor for The Educator Licensure - Call**

**Center is not applicable*.***

1. Can you please let us know the previous spending of this contract? **Not applicable*.***

1. Please confirm if we can get the proposals or pricing of the incumbent(s). **Not applicable.**
2. Are there any pain points or issues with the current vendor(s)? **Not applicable.**
3. Please confirm the anticipated number of awards. **Please refer to the RFP - Time Frame: A contract shall be awarded to the vendor whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the State, taking into consideration the price and the evaluation factors set forth in the solicitation.**
4. What is the anticipated date of award and contract execution? **RFP Tentative Timeline- anticipated Notice of Intent to Award: November 2 - 3, 2021. The anticipated fully contract execution date is on or before December 29, 2021.**
5. Is Subcontracting allowed for this opportunity, if so, are there any specific participation goals to be met? *(***STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS) #2. ASSIGNMENT/SUBCONTRACTING.**
6. What is the total number of resources who are currently working on this project? Please let us know their position name and hourly rate? **This is a new initiative.**

43. Considering the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, if the proposed candidates are not

available at the time of award, will the agency allow us to provide replacement personnel with

similar or more skill sets? **Please refer to Minimum qualifications,**

**educational requirements, and experience.**

1. Are hourly rate ranges acceptable for proposed personnel? **(Appendix D) Budget Summary Form: (Offeror to include a detailed budget narrative and insert a chart that addresses all costs for services with each applicable budget category). Provide a clear and concise description of the computations used to arrive at the total amounts indicated.**
2. Is it entirely onsite work or can it be done remotely to some extent / Does the services need

to be delivered onsite or is there a possibility for remote operations and performance? **RFP: The Customer Service Professionals for the Educator Licensure - Call**

**Center, duties and responsibilities are expected to be performed onsite at the**

**Mississippi Department of Education in Jackson, MS.**

46. How many people are currently working onsite and offsite? **Not applicable.**

47. Could you please provide the list of holidays observed by the client? **Not applicable.**

48. Are there any mandated Paid Time Off, Vacation, etc.? **Not applicable.**

49. Can the state please clarify how needs for FTE vendor supplied contractors will be

disseminated to awardees post award? **- The specific responsibilities of MDE**

**to** **include Manage the Call Center and supervise the staffing employee(s); Training and**

**educate staff on the licensure guidelines and Supply office space, equipment,**

**computers/phones etc. for the Call Center.**

50. Can the state please provide a detailed explanation for how points will be awarded for the

pricing section of this solicitation (i.e., lowest bill rate receives maximum points, and next lowest

vendor receives a prorated amount; lowest bill rate receives maximum points, and the next

lowest vendor receives a predetermined amount of points)? **Refer to Section 22 of the RFP.**

51. Can the state please provide incumbent information and current bill rates for contracts in place

for similar services? **New Initiative, incumbent is not applicable.**

52. Can the state please provide the total amount of FTE contract, vendor supplied Call Center Admins utilized during the 2019-20 SY? **Not applicable, new initiative.**

53. Can the state please describe the supplies and materials that contracted providers will have access to at the Call Center? (Wi-Fi, computer access, testing material, office supplies, etc.)? **Not applicable.**

54. Can the state confirm if this is a sole-source or multi-sourced bid award? **This is a Request for Proposal (RFP), a sole-source or multi-sourced bid award is not applicable.**

55. The State anticipate these positions to be full-time or provide as-needed support for existing State employee call-offs, absences, etc.? **MDE anticipate these to be temporary full-time** **positions.**

56. Compliance and monitoring: Outside of monitoring of contractor personnel, does the State require any additional performance monitoring activities? **Please refer to Section 4 of the RFP - Scope of Work and Responsibilities.**

57. Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada) **The Vendor shall provide all services directly related to this contract from an office(s) located in the United States. Indicate your agreement with this requirement and identify any locations outside the State of Mississippi in which you propose to provide the services described in this solicitation.**

58. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA (like, from India or Canada)? **The Vendor shall provide all services directly related to this contract from an office(s) located in the United States. Indicate your agreement with this requirement and identify any locations outside the State of Mississippi in which you propose to provide the services described in this solicitation. The Customer Service Professionals for the Educator Licensure - Call Center, duties and responsibilities are expected to be performed onsite at the Mississippi Department of Education in Jackson, MS.**

59. What is the projected staffing level of effort to provide bi-lingual services**?** **(Special Experience): Ability to provide bi-lingual services such as Spanish, preferred.**

60. Will MDE please clarify “fixed price contract”? Does fixed price or unit price refer to an hourly

fixed price per temporary staffing resource provided? Or a monthly fixed price for all staff

provided, etc.? **Please refer to the RFP - Type of contract.**

61. It is anticipated that this contract shall be a fixed price contract with payment made upon

completion of tasks identified within the proposal. Question: Will payment be made on a

monthly firm fixed price OR upon completion of tasks? **Please refer to the RFP -**

**Type of contract.**

62**.** What formula will be applied in the Cost Proposal evaluation? **Please refer to the RFP**

**Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals.**

63. Does this evaluation item refer to previous training staff have attended as stated on resumes?

**Yes**.

64. The RFP states the contract is 3 years with details about your avg monthly calls and length of

time which we can support.  The same document says, ‘temporary staffing services.’ Can you

please explain what is meant by this specifically? **The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) through the Office of Teaching and Leading is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified vendors for Temporary Staffing Services for a Call Center. The Staffing Agency will provide hiring of staff for Customer Services Professionals in a Call Center for the Division of Educator Licensure.**

65**.** Would contractors be working remotely or in the office? **RFP: The Customer Service Professionals for the Educator Licensure - Call Center, duties and responsibilities**

**are expected to be performed onsite at the Mississippi Department of Education in Jackson, MS.**

66. What is the required response time from when MDE makes a request for a temporary contractor to when is a vendor expected provide candidates? **RFP Section 9. Contractor Deliverables.**

67.  Does the client’s evaluation process provide an advantage of any kind for local businesses? **Refer to**

**The RFP Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals**.

68.  Will justification of a proposer’s cost be used to determine the number of evaluation points given for cost? **Refer to** **the RFP Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals**.

69.  Are the 45 points for cost purely distributed from lowest price? R**efer to RFP- D. Price/Cost Factors.**

70.  What is MDE’s current vaccination policy? **Please visit the Covid-19 guidelines for the state.**

71. Will contractors be required to complete a drug test? **Refer to the RFP: Scope of Work and**

**Responsibilities: Ensure drug screening of staffing employee(s), if requested. Contractor will incur cost of fee(s).**

72. Can you explain how the Mississippi Department of Education determines the amount of Customer Service Agents needed? **Please refer to the RFP. Call Center Project Description.**

**Mississippi Accountability And Governmental Information Collaboration (MAGIC) Submission of the Proposal Instructions**

[DFA :: Mississippi Suppliers (Vendors) (ms.gov)](https://www.dfa.ms.gov/dfa-offices/mmrs/mississippi-suppliers-vendors/)

*Proposals shall be submitted in the Mississippi Accountability Governmental Information Collaboration System (MAGIC). Please visit and register at DFA: Mississippi Suppliers (Vendors) (ms.gov). If assistance is required, contact MASH help desk at 601-359-1343 at least 72 hours in advance of the due date for submission. Proposals received after the time designated in the solicitation shall be considered late and shall not be considered for award.*