



Solicitation Information

24 February 2012

RFI # 7449518

TITLE: Help Desk – Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Submission Deadline: 23 March 2012 @ 2:00 PM (Eastern Time)

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases at questions@purchasing.ri.gov no later than **9 March 2012 @ 12:00 Noon (Eastern)**. Questions should be submitted in a *Microsoft Word attachment*. Please reference the RFI # on all correspondence. Questions received, if any, will be posted on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

SURETY REQUIRED: No

BOND REQUIRED: No

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Assistant Director of Special Projects**

**Vendors must register on-line at the State Purchasing Website at
www.purchasing.ri.gov**

THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION FORM

Request for Information (RFI) System Help Desk

The Rhode Island Department of Administration/Division of Purchases, on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Education is soliciting responses from qualified entities to explore the implementation of a new Help Desk System.

This is a Request for Information (RFI). No award will be made as a result of this solicitation. This RFI outlines the type of information being solicited from potential respondents and includes guidelines for content and format of responses.

INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS TO OFFERORS:

- Potential respondents are advised to review all sections of this Request carefully, and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.
- Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this request are solicited. However, responses which depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this Request will be rejected as being non-responsive.
- All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this Request, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content, shall be borne by the offeror. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.
- Responses are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than sixty (60) days following the opening date, and may not be withdrawn, except with the express written permission of the State Purchasing Agent.
- Responses misdirected to other State locations or which are otherwise not present in the Division of Purchases at the time of opening for any cause will be determined to be late and may not be considered. The “Official” time clock is in the reception area of the Division of Purchases.
- Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Division of Purchases web site on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFI.

I. Introduction

Rhode Island is one of only 11 states to receive a highly competitive federal Race to the Top (RTTT) grant, which brought \$75 million to our state to improve public schools and to support educators and students.

Rhode Island is investing Race to the Top funds to develop:

- world-class standards and assessments;
- user-friendly data systems to improve instruction;
- mentoring and training for all teachers and school leaders;
- educator evaluation systems to improve teacher effectiveness; and
- systems of support for the lowest-achieving schools.

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is currently building a robust data enterprise system to serve as the backbone of the RTTT initiatives. Due to this grant, RIDE now has the funding necessary to build the tools needed to ensure that real change in instructional practices within the classroom is supported, sustained, and accessible to all those who make a positive difference in the lives of our children every day.

The six systems that comprise the data enterprise system are as follows:

Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS) - The EPSS will provide an easy-to-use interface to collect and manage data on all three components of RIDE's Evaluation System – Student Learning, Professional Practice, and Professional Responsibility. The EPSS will allow users to manage activities related to the evaluation process such as scheduling observations and conferences, two-way communication between evaluators and educators, as well as tools for self-assessment and observations. *Anticipated system live date: August 2012*

Instructional Management System (IMS) - The IMS will provide a systematic, coherent and ongoing combination of curriculum (including standards), as well as instruction and assessment to support student achievement. The system is being created to: align curriculum, instruction and assessments to support student achievement; manage and access curricular, instructional, professional development and student support materials; access relevant and timely visual reporting of assessment and other data (“dashboards”) for immediate student, class, school and district needs; and query data to determine areas of student strengths and needs while being able to track student progress so that learning gaps do not form or widen. *Anticipated system live date: September 2012*

Interim Assessment - Interim Assessments will be developed for instructional planning and monitoring purposes. Components will include: diagnostic tests that augment the state assessments so that teachers can gather richer and more specific information to inform their instruction for students who don't appear to be “on track” for end of year proficiency; test Blueprints that can pre-populate a test form for assessing certain standards while maintaining good psychometric properties; teacher-created tests built through an online test

construction tool used for quick snapshots of whether students obtained recently taught material. *Anticipated system live date: Fall 2012*

Formative Assessment - Formative assessment is an instructional process/practice, rather than a series of discrete tests. It focuses identifying learning gaps during instruction that can be addressed before the summative assessment. RIDE will develop online training modules as a primer for all RI educators to learn about the formative assessment process, including a variety of strategies for conducting formative assessments and best practices for how to alter instruction based on formative assessment data. *Anticipated system live date: September 2012*

Growth Model Visualization System - The Growth Model Visualization Tool is a robust reporting platform for student growth percentiles, a new metric being used in the Educator Evaluation system and other quality assurance activities. This tool has both a public and private view that displays district and school media growth percentiles as well as subgroups within districts and schools. It will enable a broad array of education stakeholders to better understand the student growth percentile model and provide a new way to take a rich look at student performance in Rhode Island. *Anticipated system live date: May 2012*

Rhode Island Certification System – RICERT is a web-based application which provides educators an interface to apply for certification, renew a certification and view all user certification data. RICERT will also provide critical functions internal to RIDE, such as managing state teacher certification data, application processing, cross-domain data analysis and state/federal reporting. Application will be the system of record for state Teacher IDs, and must be integrated into RIDE’s Enterprise System to ensure validity and accuracy of all teacher-related data. *Anticipated system live date: October 2012*

Sustainability is paramount to success as we move toward the implementation stage of building these systems and an efficacious help desk operation is needed. RIDE is seeking information about help desk options for our organization and is open to all models, including those that are completely outsourced, those that use department resources and the vendor’s technology, or any other hybrid solution the respondent believes will meet the department’s needs.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this RFI is to solicit feedback from qualified vendors regarding the estimated cost and timeline to provide a Help Desk Service for the RIDE data enterprise systems. The service can use electronic or human resources or a hybrid model, which is preferred. The process for implementation will follow the following protocol:

- Identify the needs for a RIDE Help Desk for both internal and external requests and explain how all incidents will be documented;
- Work with RIDE staff to define everyday call types and tiers and indicate what resources will be needed to provide high quality service;
- Detail how the support structure will be implemented including all phases of support tasks, activities, and training;

- Create business rules that prioritize daily workload;
- Include a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the service on a regular basis; and
- Provide a single point of contact person that is available on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis so that any issues can be resolved immediately.

Additional Requirements:

A. Service

- Service must be available five (5) days per week, Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, excluding State holidays.
- Vendors must explain how they will respond to all calls including difficult problems within twenty four (24) business hours of notification.
- Vendors must explain how they will supply all upgrades and new releases of software (if used) for the full term of the contract.
- Vendors must address how they will accommodate peak periods during initial rollout and unexpected increases in inquiries.

B. Training

RIDE requires the following training:

The successful Vendor must provide training for designated Office of Network and Information Services (ONIS) employees for functions to include:

- Producing reports including but not limited to:
 - Which systems are causing most problems?
 - When are the calls coming into the Help Desk? (peak load times?)
 - How much time is needed to support each system?
 - Which symptoms occur most frequently for a given system?
 - Which users are having the most problems with a given system?
 - Which problems take the longest to solve?
 - How much time is being used to support each system?
- Any training for staff that is deemed relevant to the implementation of the Help Desk

All technical and user training may be conducted at the RIDE location. RIDE would prefer the Vendor to propose instructor lead training. All costs associated with this training would be included in the vendor's cost proposal.

C. Documentation

- The successful Vendor, upon award, will supply a copy of the documentation of all Help Desk activities, software (if used), and hardware. This will include all physical features, operational documentation, and complete documentation of all preventive and / or corrective maintenance to be performed by RIDE.

D. Project Management

- The successful Vendor must appoint a Project Leader. RIDE will appoint a Project Manager to be the primary point of contact for the Help Desk.
- The Vendor must provide an implementation plan describing major milestones and activities from contract signing to final acceptance. The plan must include a timetable that meets the project schedule and must provide for hardware and software testing.
- The Vendor is required to show a detailed implementation plan that includes a timeline chart and details the resources required from your organization and the RIDE to complete the implementation of the recommended solution. The vendor must show its project management methodology and how that methodology will be applied to this project.

E. Tasks and Services

The following outline (and suggested page counts) is intended to minimize the effort of the respondent and structure the response for ease of analysis. Be sure to incorporate the above expectations for the consolidated system in your response.

Section 1: Organization/Partnership Profile and Capacity and Past Experience (2 pages)

Provide a brief description of the organization. Please describe any past experience with other governmental agencies and include those as references.

Section 2: Description of Proposal (2-3 pages)

Describe your proposed approach.

Section 3: Feasibility Assessment (2-3 pages)

Assess the feasibility of your proposed approach. Note the primary obstacles, including any potential legal impediments. Recommend any solutions to resolving those obstacles.

Section 4: Cost Estimates (no page limits)

Respondents may also wish to propose quantitative and/or qualitative measurements to be used as deliverables in a proposed RFP contract.

Finally, respondents should indicate whether performance incentives and penalties should be considered in the RFP.

Section 5: Additional Material (10 page maximum)

Definitions

Department:	Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Division:	Office of Network and Information Services
Respondent:	Any public or private entity that wishes to reply to this RFI may do so in the form of a single response from both the lead and any affiliates.

III. Approximate Cost of Engagement

The State intends to issue a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) by April 15, 2012. Given the anticipated condensed time line for the turnaround of a response to this RFP, respondents must provide the State with an estimated cost of completing the work outlined in Section II as part of the RFI process.

IV. Vendor Requirements

All vendors interested in responding to this RFI should confirm interest no later than the date and time indicated on page one of this solicitation.

All questions regarding this RFI must be in written form, pursuant to the terms & conditions expressed on page one of this solicitation.

Respondents desiring to reply to this RFI must do so, in writing, providing one (1) original and four (4) complete copies by the date & time indicated on page one of this solicitation. Submit responses to this RFI, marked "RFI # (see cover page) : Help Desk (RIDE)" to:

RI Department of Administration
Division of Purchases, 2nd Floor
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5855

Note: Responses received after the date and time listed on the cover page of this solicitation will not be considered. Responses misdirected to other State locations or which otherwise not presented in the Division of Purchases by the scheduled due date and time will be determined to be late and will not be considered. Responses faxed or emailed, to the Division of Purchases will not be considered. The "official" time clock for this solicitation is located in the Reception Area of the Division of Purchases.

In addition to the hard copies of the proposal, respondents are requested to provide their proposal in electronic format (CD , flash drive). Microsoft Word/Excel or PDF format is preferable. Only one electronic copy is requested. This CD or flashdrive should be included in the proposal marked "original".

Disclaimer

This Request for Information is solely for information and planning purposes and does not constitute a Request for Proposal. All information received in response to the RFI and marked as "Proprietary" will be handled accordingly. Responses to the RFI cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract. No award will be made as a result of this solicitation, and because no award will be made, proposals WILL NOT be in the public domain. Responses to the RFI will not be returned. Respondents are solely responsible for all expenses associated with replying to this RFI.

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