



Solicitation Information

August 7, 2012

**LOI #7457950**

**TITLE: PROVIDE GED TEST SCORING SERVICE – RI DEPT. OF EDUCATION**

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE: September 4, 2012 at 10:00 AM (EDT)**

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Rhode Island Division of Purchases at [Hquestions@purchasing.ri.gov](mailto:questions@purchasing.ri.gov) **no later than August 21, 2012 @ 12:00 noon (EDT)**. Please reference the RFP # on all correspondence. Questions should be submitted in a *Microsoft Word* attachment. Questions received, if any, will be posted on the Purchasing website as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

**SURETY REQUIRED: No**  
**BOND REQUIRED: No**

**Gail Walsh**  
**State of Rhode Island Division of Purchases**

Vendors must register online at the State Purchasing website at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov).

**NOTE TO VENDORS:**

Offers received without the entire completed three page RIVIP Generated Bidder Certification Form attached may result in disqualification.

**THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION FORM**

***REQUEST for LETTERS of INTEREST  
GED Test Scoring Service***

The Rhode Island Department of Administration, Office of Purchases, on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is requesting Letters of Interest from qualified vendors to provide a GED Test Scoring Service, in accordance with the terms of this solicitation.

INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS TO OFFERORS:

Potential offerors 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 procurement are solicited. However, proposals 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.

Proposals 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considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than sixty (60) days following the opening date, and may not be withdrawn, except with the express written permission of the State Purchasing Agent.

All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.

Proposals 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.

In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.1 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation shall have the right to transact business in the state until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040). *This will be a requirement only of the successful bidder (s).*

Offerors are advised that all materials submitted to the State of Rhode Island for consideration in response to this Request for Proposals will be considered to be public records, as defined in Title 38 Chapter 2 of the Rhode Island General Laws.

Also, Submitters should be aware of the State's MBE requirements, which addresses the State's goal of ten per cent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements. For further information, contact the State MBE Administrator at (401) 574-8253 or [dorinda.keene@doa.ri.gov](mailto:dorinda.keene@doa.ri.gov). Visit the website <http://www.mbe.ri.gov>

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 LOI.

#### Equal Employment Opportunity (RIGL 28-5.1)

§ 28-5.1-1 Declaration of policy. – (a) Equal opportunity and affirmative action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island state government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards and authorities, and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employment. This policy applies in all areas where the state dollar is spent, in employment, public service, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation. For further information, contact the Rhode Island Equal Employment Opportunity Office, at 222-3090 or via email [raymond.lambert@hr.ri.gov](mailto:raymond.lambert@hr.ri.gov).

Subcontracts are permitted, provided that their use is clearly indicated in the offeror's proposal, and the subcontractor(s) proposed to be used are identified in the proposal.

RIGL 37-13-3.1 State public works contract apprenticeship requirements. \* (a) Notwithstanding any laws to the contrary, all general contractors and subcontractors who perform work on any public works contract awarded by the state after passage of this act and valued at one million dollars (\$1,000,000) or more shall employ apprentices required for the performance of the awarded contract. The number of apprentices shall comply with the apprentice to journeyman ratio for each trade approved by the apprenticeship council of the department of labor and training.

#### ARRA SUPPLEMENTAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

For contracts and sub-awards funded in whole or in part by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Pub.L.No. 111-5 and any amendments thereto, such contracts and sub-awards shall be subject to the Supplemental Terms and Conditions for Contracts and Sub-awards Funded in Whole or in Part by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Pub.L.No. 111-5 and any amendments thereto located on the Division of Purchases website at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov).

***REQUEST for LETTERS of INTEREST***  
**GED TEST SCORING SERVICE**

**BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW**

The Office of Adult Education, Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) and its program affiliates provide educational services to adults who:

- Have attained 16 years of age;
- Are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in high school under State law;
- Lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable them to function effectively in society;
- Do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; and
- Are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

According to data from the 2010 U.S. Census, American Community Survey there are over 85,000 working age adults that lack a high school diploma and over 35,000 working age adults who are limited English proficient.

One means to help this population is the General Educational Development (GED) credential, which is a recognized equivalent of a secondary school diploma. It consists of five tests: mathematics, writing, language arts, social studies, and science. The American Council on Education, a private, non-profit association of colleges and universities, established the GED testing program nearly sixty years ago. Its purpose was to provide adults who left school a fair and cost-effective means of documenting that they have achieved high school level academic skills and knowledge.

The Office of Adult Education is responsible for administering, scoring, and confidentially distributing GED tests' results to examinees. In 2010, 2,484 adults completed all five tests, and 1,888 GED credentials were awarded. The contract that will be awarded as a result of this LOI will score, maintain test data, and report on GED test results in Rhode Island.

**SCOPE OF THE WORK**

It is intended that the contract will begin approximately October 1, 2012 and terminate June 30, 2014. If needed, a six-month ramp-up and transition period will begin October 1, 2012 and terminate with a successful transition of services from the current vendor on December 31, 2012. The vendor shall meet with Office of Adult Education, RIDE representatives and the current vendor, if needed, during this period to ensure the inclusion of appropriate data elements, reporting capabilities, and MIS compatibility and that a smooth, uninterrupted transition of services is achieved, and a fully executed data migration from the current vendor to the selected bidders is accomplished.

Once this six-month period has expired, the bidder will be expected to follow all rules, protocols, and requirements of the GED Testing Service (GEDTS) in scoring GED tests and reporting on test results in accordance with the technical specifications found in Appendix B. The bidder must also provide all training and updates to the testing procedure; develop materials; and store data in accordance with Appendix B.

The testing and scoring services will be provided on an on-going and as-needed basis, with approximately 3,500 English and 650 Spanish tests scored per year.

On January 1, 2014, the GED tests will be computer based and scored by GEDTS. The test results will be exported to the bidder who will be responsible for uploading the scores to the RIDE student data management information system. Details of this procedure will be worked out during the contract period 2013-2014.

A detailed description of the technical requirements and tasks, schedules, and deliverables associated with the requested bid for GED Tests Scoring Services can be found in Appendix B: Technical Appendix.

### **TERMS OF THE CONTRACT**

The Contract will begin approximately **October 1, 2012** and end **June 30, 2014**. The scope of the work may be modified by RIDE prior to beginning work on a given task. RIDE retains the option of granting a time extension of up to **two years** with additional funding if available, if the level of work is expanded by mutual written consent, and notwithstanding any policies or regulations to the contrary.

### **COST PROPOSAL/TERMS OF PAYMENT**

The Bidder must prepare a cost proposal reflecting the hourly rate or other fee structure proposed for this scope of services using the Cost Proposal Forms contained in Appendix A. The total cost of the contract is not to exceed **\$30,000**. Cost proposals must fall within the range below for each period as follows:

FY13	Up to \$15,000
FY14	Up to \$15,000

### **PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

Questions concerning this solicitation may be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at [questions@purchasing.ri.gov](mailto:questions@purchasing.ri.gov) no later than the date & time listed on the cover sheet of this solicitation. **Send your questions in Microsoft Word format.** Please reference the LOI # on all correspondence. Questions received, if any, will be posted and answered on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information. For computer technical assistance, call the helpdesk at 401-222-3766.

Proposals (an original plus 4 copies) should include the following:

1. A completed and signed three-page RIVIP Bidder Certification Cover Form, available at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov).
2. A **separate sealed** Cost Proposal as described above (original plus 4 copies).
3. A *separate* Technical Proposal (see below) describing the qualifications and background of the applicant and experience with similar programs, as well as the work plan or approach proposed for this requirement.
4. A completed and signed W-9 (taxpayer identification number and certification). Form is downloadable at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov).
5. One (1) copy of the technical proposal and one (1) copy of the cost proposal (clearly marked) in electronic format (CD-ROM) in a PDF.

**Proposals (an original plus four copies) shall be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked "LOI# 7457950 GED Test Scoring Service" to:**

Department of Administration  
Office of Purchases  
One Capitol Hill  
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

Contractor assumes all responsibilities for proposals submitted by mail or commercial delivery service. Proposals misdirected to other state locations or which are otherwise not present in the Office of Purchases at the time of opening, for any cause, will be determined to be late and will not be considered. Faxed or e-mailed responses will not be considered.

**TECHNICAL PROPOSAL REQUIRED ELEMENTS**

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Contractor understanding of the Issues                       | (10 points) |
| 2. Work Plan*   | (25 points) |
| 3. Capacity of the Agency Effectively to Administer the Project | (25 points) |
| 4. Quality of Key Personnel (including Curriculum vitae)        | (20 points) |
| 5. Cost Proposal  | (20 points) |

**\* Additional Bid Requirements**

Only vendors that are an approved GEDTS official scoring entity may bid on this contract. The work plan shall also include a disaster recovery plan in case of server downtime, etc.

## APPENDIX A

### BUDGET Multi-Year Projects

The Contractor estimates that its budget for work to be performed under this Agreement is as follows:

<u>Expense Category</u>	<u>Estimated Expenditures</u>	
	Year 1	Year 2
1. Salary and Fringe Benefits	0	0
2. Consultant	0	0
3. In-State Travel	0	0
4. Out-of-State Travel	0	0
5. Printing	0	0
6. Office Expense	0	0
7. Telephone	0	0
8. Educational Materials	0	0
9. Equipment	0	0
10. Data Processing	0	0
11. Rental	0	0
12. Other	0	0
13.	0	0
14.	0	0
15.	0	0
16.	0	0
Subtotal	0	0
Indirect Cost	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	0	0

It is understood and agreed that the amounts indicated above for the several line items are estimates of expenditures to be incurred by the Contractor on behalf of this Agreement and to be claimed by the Contractor for reimbursement under this Agreement. It is further understood and agreed that actual expenditures may vary from the estimates set forth above and that such variations shall not in themselves be cause for disallowance of reimbursement by RIDE; provided, however, that the Contractor shall notify and obtain the approval of the contract officer, in writing, if expenditures to be claimed for reimbursement in any line item above shall begin to vary significantly from the estimate given above; and provided further that unless permission of the contract officer shall have been obtained in advance, no expenditure shall be claimed by the Contractor for reimbursement by RIDE under this Agreement if such expenditure shall have been incurred in a line item category not listed above. Transfer of funds is permitted between Expense Categories (1) and (2) up to 10% or \$25,000, whichever is less; all other transfers require prior written approval by the Department of Education.

BUDGET DETAIL SHEET  
 FISCAL YEAR \_\_\_\_\_

**SALARY AND FRINGE BENEFIT DETAIL**

NAME	POSITION TITLE	HOURLY RATE \$	NUMBER OF HOURS	TOTAL SALARY \$	FRINGE BENEFITS \$	HOURLY RATE WITH FRINGE BENEFITS \$	SALARY & FRINGE TOTAL \$
TOTAL REQUEST							

**DETAIL OF CONSULTANT**

NAME	POSITION TITLE	HOURLY RATE \$	NUMBER OF HOURS	TOTAL COST \$
TOTAL REQUEST				\$

**EXPLANATION OF OTHER EXPENSES (i.e. travel, printing, office supplies, educational materials, and equipment)**

EXPENSE CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	COST

Prepare a sheet of each fiscal year of the contract.

## APPENDIX B

### Technical Appendix

#### **Bidder Responsibilities**

In accordance with the policies for establishing a test scoring services site, the bidder must demonstrate approval as an official GEDTS (General Educational Development Testing Service) Scoring Site. It is the responsibility of the bidder to maintain and/or modify the GED Testing Service scoring requirements as identified. No institution, individual or other entity that stands to benefit directly from or has direct financial interest in the success of GED candidates can be established as an official GED scoring site. No person who scores tests, essays, or who has access to GED test scoring keys, essay training materials, answer booklets or scored tests may have an affiliation with an adult education program or any other commercial or non-commercial GED instruction program.

A GED scoring site is responsible to provide the following in accordance with the policies and procedures in the GED Administrators Manual, GED Examiner's Manual, and where appropriate, the Chief Reader Training Manual:

- The Bidder must be an approved GEDTS official scoring center.
- The Bidder must make provisions and verify that each essay reader is currently certified by GEDTS.
- The Bidder must follow scoring protocols, rubrics and security as specified by GEDTS.
- The Bidder must adhere to GEDTS policies and procedures and industry standards for information security and confidentiality of records.
- The Bidder must demonstrate a process for "challenging an existing score" in accordance with GEDTS standard requirements and for "requesting changes to data."

#### **Scoring Site Responsibilities**

A GED scoring site is responsible to provide the following in accordance with the policies and procedures in the GED Administrator's Manual, GED Examiner's Manual, and where appropriate, the Chief Reader Training Manual.

A scoring site must meet all standards established in the GED Examiner's Manual and Chief Reader Training Manual. A site may be closed at any time for failure to comply with any standard including any breach of security or confidentiality.

Scoring answer sheets, along with other general information sheets (i.e., demographic forms) are forwarded to the bidder's scoring site by multiple testing centers located in Rhode Island, where they are scanned in, scored, recorded, and maintained in a database. Some portions of the test cannot be computer scored, such as the Writing skills sub-test which contains an essay. The essay sub-test requires the reading and scoring of each individual essay in English and/or Spanish and scores must be manually entered. These scores and information are then made available to RIDE and parties designated by RIDE, via computer access for dissemination. (Additionally, the scoring site is responsible for the printing and

dissemination of documents pertaining to scores, which include but are not limited to official transcripts, score reports, diplomas, and other pertinent information.)

- Establish electronic access to the IDB and provide accurate weekly electronic uploads to the GEDTS International Database.
- The Bidder must score all five tests within the GED Exam, including the English, Spanish, Large Print and Braille versions. These tests shall be administered at all approved Rhode Island GED Testing Centers, which are certified by contract between GEDTS and RIDE.
- The Bidder must provide reading and holistic scoring of the essay portion of all answer sheets sent to them from all official Rhode Island GED Testing Centers in English, Spanish.
- The Bidder must prove certification by GEDTS in calibration and recalibration of scoring.
- The scoring site should also be able to produce reports at the request of the RIDE.
- The scoring site should also be able to produce local program reports at the request of the RIDE.
- All services are provided in a secure, timely, and efficient manner.
- The Bidder must make available to RIDE clearly written and electronic monthly, quarterly and annual reports showing volumes of test administrations and related information including but not limited to: Ethnicity, gender adult education program, age, primary language for each testing center and the entire state.
- The Bidder must provide the option to optical scanning of GEDTS U.S. Demographic forms, if desired.
- The Bidder must conform reports to the following standards for report accuracy: 100% on Scores and Demographic cross-referencing of data.
- The Bidder must make available to RIDE performance/error reports monthly, quarterly, and annually noting the type of errors that have been made.
- The Bidder will provide RIDE with a monthly report of all students and categories of scores achieved. The report must include the candidates' mailing addresses, the test sites, and the candidates' total scores and if available, the GED test preparation sites.

### Timeliness

- Turn-around time for scanned data and essay scores shall fall within 7 business days.

### Training

- The Bidder shall travel to the RIDE GED Office in Providence, Rhode Island, to demonstrate how to use any new software or technology, offering On-Site Training and Demonstrations of that technology, prior to the start of the new contract operations and especially when piloting new

scoring formats of equipment. Participants of this training process will be at the RIDE GED, as well as testing center staff, and will number approximately 15 - 20 people. The bidder will train personnel at all RIDE GED Testing Centers in the following areas:

- Security of GED materials such as tests and answer sheets
  - Proper methods of mailing answer sheets to Bidder
  - Proper methods of record-keeping and reporting scores
  - Proper use of technology to coordinate scoring and reporting
- The Bidder shall design quality-training literature for lay persons (Administrators, Examiners, and GED operators in field). The training literature will clarify all aspects of documents preparation, reporting, and related technology. These User Manuals will be furnished to RIDE at least 30 days before target date for full scoring process application.
  - The Bidder shall provide updates to any process improvement or change with notification of such changes and updates given to RIDE prior to implementation.
  - The Bidder shall travel to the RIDE office in Providence, Rhode Island, if necessary, to provide RIDE staff with recurrent and initial training on software and technology should conditions arise, in the future, where new key staff are assigned to the Rhode Island GED Testing Program.

### **Test Archiving**

- The Bidder must store back-up of all data, which will be available to RIDE during the state's normal business hours for the duration of this contract.
- The Bidder shall save and store all answer sheets/bubble sheets, securely, for six months.
- The Bidder shall, at RIDE's request, make available images of scanned answer sheets for review.
- The Bidder shall document their data and hard copy storage systems, so they will be able to provide reports to RIDE, upon request, pertaining to storage procedures, security, or other related concerns.
- The Bidder shall have suitable secure storage facilities in place for ensuring backup and/or redundancy of record storage systems in an off-site location.

### **Additional Services**

- The Bidder shall propose any additional services related to GED Test Scoring deemed important based on prior experience.
- The Bidder shall create mailing instructions for GED Testing Centers.
- The Bidder shall create a GED answer sheet transmittal cover sheet.
- The Bidder shall accommodate requests for agreed upon additional reports during the contract negotiation process.