



**Solicitation Information
January 24, 2013**

RFP# 7459277

TITLE: Consultant Services - Approval and Verification Processes for the RI Early Childhood Professional Development System (ARRA)

Submission Deadline: Friday, March 1, 2013 @ 10:00 AM (EST)

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases at David.Francis@purchasing.ri.gov no later than **Thursday, February 7, 2013 @ 12:00 AM Midnight (EST)**. Questions should be submitted in a *Microsoft Word attachment*. Please reference the RFP# 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

David J. Francis
Interdepartmental Project Manager

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

Note to Applicants:

Offers received without the entire completed four-page RIVP Generated Bidder Certification Form attached may result in disqualification.

THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION FORM

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Rhode Island Department of Administration/Office of Purchases, on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, is requesting letters of interest from qualified consultants to provide a report and supplemental evaluation of the approval and verification processes used in statewide professional development systems associated with early care and education, as described herein and in accordance with the terms of this solicitation and the State's General Conditions of Purchase (available at www.purchasing.ri.gov). The findings and recommendations will be used to inform the development of policies and processes that will serve as the basis for Rhode Island's early learning professional development system.

This is a Request for Proposals, not an Invitation for Bid. Responses will be evaluated on the basis of the relative merits of the proposal, in addition to price; there will be no public opening and reading of responses received by the Division of Purchases pursuant to this Request, other than to name those offerors who have submitted proposals.

INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS TO OFFERORS:

1. Potential vendors are advised to review all sections of this RFP carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.
2. 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 RFP will be rejected as being non-responsive.
3. All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content shall be borne by the vendor. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.
4. 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.
5. All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.
6. Proposals misdirected to other state locations, or which are otherwise not present in the Division at the time of opening for any cause will be determined to be late and will not be considered. The official time clock is located in the reception area of the Division of Purchases, Department of Administration, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI. Faxed proposals will not be accepted.
7. It is intended that an award pursuant to this RFP will be made to a prime vendor, or prime vendors in the various categories, who will assume responsibility for all aspects of the work. Joint venture and cooperative proposals will not be considered.

Subcontracts are permitted, provided that their use is clearly indicated and justified in the respondent's proposal, and the subcontractor(s) proposed to be used are identified in the proposal, including the selection process used to identify said subcontractor(s).

8. All proposals should include the vendor's FEIN or Social Security number as evidenced by a W9, downloadable from the Division's website at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
9. The purchase of services under an award made pursuant to this RFP will be contingent on the availability of funds.
10. Vendors are advised that all materials submitted to the State for consideration in response to this RFP will be considered to be Public Records as defined in Title 38, Chapter 2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, without exception, and will be released for inspection immediately upon request once an award has been made.
11. Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Division of Purchases website on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFP.
12. Equal Employment Opportunity (G.L. 1956 § 28-5.1-1, et seq.) – § 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 to all areas where State dollars are spent, in employment, public services, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation. For further information, contact the Rhode Island Equal Opportunity Office at (401) 222-3090.
13. In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation, a corporation without a Rhode Island business address, 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 is a requirement only of the successful vendor(s).
14. The vendor should be aware of the State's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) requirements, which address the State's goal of ten percent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements. For further information, contact the MBE Administrator at (401) 574-8253 or visit the website www.mbe.ri.gov or contact charles.newton@doa.ri.gov.
15. 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

16. 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 Subawards 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.

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794), Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1970 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services implementing regulations (45 C.F.R. Parts 104 and 106), the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or sex in acceptance for or provision of services, employment, or treatment, in its educational and other programs and activities. Under the provisions of applicable law, DHS does not discriminate on the basis of age, religion, or sexual orientation.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Through the Race To The Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant, DHS and its partners aim to improve the quality of early learning programs and close existing achievement gaps for all Rhode Island children and especially for children with high needs. The RTT-ELC grant focuses on improving early learning and development outcomes for young children by supporting efforts to increase the number and percentage of children, especially children with high needs, enrolled in high-quality early learning programs.

Research shows that high-quality early childhood education produces substantial long-term educational, social, and economic benefits with the largest benefits for children occurring when staff are professionally prepared and adequately compensated. Furthermore, the knowledge and skills required of an effective early education professional has increased as science has revealed more about the capabilities of young children, how they learn best, and the importance of early learning for later school success. Therefore it is essential that a core component of Rhode Island's RTT-ELC efforts is a highly qualified workforce with access to a high quality professional development system.

In order to support early childhood educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities, we must have quality assurance mechanisms in place for the professional development being offered. A standardized evaluation and approval process will ensure

that the content of professional development opportunities reflects current research & best practices, aligns with Rhode Island's Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks, and is delivered in a way that reflects how adults learn best. An equivalent quality assurance process for trainers will foster credibility, uniformity, and consistency among professional development providers.

A contract will result from this solicitation if a qualified applicant is selected. The contract is anticipated to begin approximately by March, 2013 and end approximately June, 2013.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:

Contractor will be responsible for all expenses related to overhead, research, data collection, travel and other costs necessary to complete the scope of work;

Contractor will be responsible for supervision, performance and adherence to contractual language of all of its subcontractors or seek other partners for continued work.

The Department of Human Services will maintain oversight of progress toward deliverables, and the vendor must provide access to any and all materials relevant to the evaluation and monitoring of the activities and requirements described herein.

SECTION 3: SCOPE OF WORK

General Scope of Work

The vendor will collaborate with DHS to gather and analyze data and information surrounding other states' professional development systems including, but not limited to, the evaluation processes outlined below, in order to achieve the desired outcomes outlined in the Race to the Top program, find Rhode Island's application and related reports at www.earlylearningri.org/early-learning-challenge and to create and submit drafts of final reports from this project, as more specifically described below. Respondents should anticipate 30-60 days of multi-level review led by the Department with agreed upon revisions expected at each level to refine text and create web-ready document(s).

In addition to a scan of Rhode Island's current professional development system for the labor force in early care and education, for the purpose of identifying potential gaps between current system status and desired future system, the vendor will conduct a thorough analysis of the following processes utilized in other state professional development systems:

- a. Approval processes of Professional Development content within state professional development systems, including alignment to professional standards and most effective delivery method;
- b. Approval processes of Professional Development providers/trainers, including minimum qualifications and various levels of recognition tied to the states' workforce knowledge and competencies;
- c. Verification of early learning professionals' participation in approved professional development opportunities;

- d. Classification and verification of early learning professionals' various levels of Recognition, as tied to states' workforce knowledge and competencies; and
- e. Application and verification procedures and terminology utilized within a through d above.

The vendor will present final recommendations specific for RI, while citing best practices identified from other state systems, in a full, completed, written report identifying findings, trends, themes, lessons learned, and recommendations to the Department of Human Services, including:

- a. An executive summary of the full, completed report described above
- b. A succinct, user-friendly presentation document in the form of a PowerPoint presentation or fact sheets that summarizes the key findings of the full and completed written report

All final reports produced through this contract will be products of the Department. As such, they shall become public information and the Department may advertise their availability and seek other partners for continued work in the future.

Responders may propose additional tasks or activities if they will substantially improve the results of the project. These items should be separately noted from the required items in both the technical and the cost proposals.

SECTION 4: TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

Narrative and format: The separate technical proposal should address specifically each of the required elements:

1. Staff Qualifications – Provide staff resumes/Curriculum Vitae and describe qualifications and experience of key staff who will be involved in this project, if any.
2. Capability, Capacity, and Qualifications of the Offeror to Effectively Administer the Project- Please provide a detailed description of the Vendor’s experience, a link to any work products developed for other state entities that may be relevant to this project, and a list of relevant client references, including client names, addresses, phone numbers, dates of service and type(s) of service(s) provided.
3. Quality of the Work Plan and Timeline – Please describe the steps the offeror will take and the timeline for accomplishing the deliverables within three to four months. Describe the plan with some specificity, as for example, noting with whom – or which agencies or community organizations or partners – the offeror will consult to collect the baseline status of the current system in RI and how the offeror will determine national best practices that may work for Rhode Island.
4. Overall Quality of the Written Proposal – Please reflect the offeror’s understanding of the issues and challenges facing Rhode Island’s interest in building a system that supports quality early care and education and how that connects to broader social and economic goals.

SECTION 5: COST PROPOSAL

The contractor must prepare a separate cost proposal reflecting the percentage of salary, hourly rate, or other fee structure proposed for this scope of services using the DHS budget forms (Attachment 1), including a full descriptive Budget Narrative. Total cost of the contract is not to exceed twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000), and the State is interested in receiving the best possible value for the services sought.

SECTION 6: EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Proposals will be reviewed by a Technical Review Committee comprised of staff from state agencies. To advance to the Cost Evaluation phase, the Technical Proposal must receive a minimum of 60 (85.7%) out of a maximum of 70 technical points. Any technical proposals scoring less than 60 points will not have the cost component opened and evaluated. The proposal will be dropped from further consideration.

Proposals scoring 60 technical points or higher will be evaluated for cost and assigned up to a maximum of 30 points in cost category, bringing the potential maximum score to 100 points.

The Department of Human Services reserves the exclusive right to select the individual(s) or firm (vendor) that it deems to be in its best interest to accomplish the project as specified herein; and conversely, reserves the right not to fund any proposal(s).

Proposals will be reviewed and scored based upon the following criteria:

Criteria	Possible Points
Staff Qualifications, including Curriculum Vitae	20 Points
Capability and Capacity to Effectively Administer the Project	15 Points
Quality of the Work Plan and Timeline	20 Points
Overall Quality of the Written Proposal	15 Points
Total Possible Technical Points	70 Points
Cost is calculated as lowest responsive cost proposal divided by (this cost proposal) times 30 points *	30 Points
Total Possible Points	100 Points

*The Low bidder will receive one hundred percent (100%) of the available points (30) for cost. All other bidders will be awarded cost points based upon the following formula:

$$(\text{low bid} / \text{vendors bid}) * \text{available points}$$

For example: If the low bidder (Vendor A) bids \$20,000 and Vendor B bids \$25,000 and the total points available are thirty (30), vendor B's cost points are calculated as follows:

$$\$20,000 / \$25,000 * 30 = 24.0$$

Applicants may be required to submit additional written information or be asked to make an oral presentation before the technical review committee to clarify statements made in their proposal.

SECTION 7: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Questions concerning this solicitation may be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at David.Francis@purchasing.ri.gov no later than the date and time indicated on page one of this solicitation. Please reference "**RFP# 7459277 Consultant Services - Approval and Verification Processes for the RI Early Childhood Professional Development System (ARRA)**" on all correspondence. Questions should be submitted in a Microsoft Word attachment. Answers to 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. If technical assistance is required to download, call the Help Desk at (401) 574-9709.

Offerors are encouraged to submit written questions to the Division of Purchases. **No other contact with State parties will be permitted.** Interested offerors may submit proposals to provide the services covered by this Request on or before the date and time listed on the cover page of this solicitation. Responses received after this date and time, as registered by the official time clock in the reception area of the Division of Purchases will not be considered.

Responses (**an unbound original plus five (5) copies**) should be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked "**RFP# 7459277 Consultant Services - Approval and Verification Processes for the RI Early Childhood Professional Development System (ARRA)**" to:

**RI Dept. of Administration
Division of Purchases, 2nd floor
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5855**

NOTE: Proposals received after the above-referenced due date and time will not be considered. Proposals misdirected to other State locations or those not presented to the Division of Purchases by the scheduled due date and time will be determined to be late and will not be considered. Proposals faxed, or emailed, to the Division of Purchases will not be considered. The official time clock is in the reception area of the Division of Purchases.

RESPONSE CONTENTS

Responses shall include the following:

1. An original completed and signed four-page R.I.V.I.P generated bidder certification cover sheet downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
2. A completed and signed W-9 downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at www.purchasing.ri.gov
3. A **separate Technical Proposal**, outlined above, describing the qualifications and background of the applicant and experience with similar projects/programs, as well as the work plan proposed for this requirement.
4. A **separate, sealed Cost Proposal**, as described above, submitted on DHS budget forms (Attachment 1) with a full descriptive budget narrative included.
5. In addition to the multiple hard copies of proposals required, Respondents are requested to provide their proposal in electronic format (CDRom, diskette, or flash drive). Microsoft Word / Excel OR PDF format is preferable. Only 1 electronic copy is requested and it should be placed in the proposal marked "original".

CLEAR, SUCCINCT AND RESPONSIVE PROPOSALS ARE EXPECTED. TECHNICAL PROPOSALS, INCLUDING ALL ATTACHMENTS, SHALL NOT EXCEED 50 PAGES

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

Notwithstanding the above, the State reserves the right not to award this contract or to award on the basis of cost alone, to accept or reject any or all proposals, and to award in its best interest.

Proposals found to be technically or substantially non-responsive at any point in the evaluation process will be rejected and not considered further.

The State may, at its sole option, elect to require presentation(s) by offerors clearly in consideration for award.

ATTACHMENT 1 -DHS BUDGET FORM (1 of 3)

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

BUDGET

NAME OF AGENCY: _____

FEDERAL EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/TOWN: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____ FAX: _____

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: _____

TIME OF PERFORMANCE: FROM _____ TO _____

BUDGET SUMMARY

COST CATEGORY

AMOUNT

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. | PERSONNEL | _____ |
| 2. | CONSULTANT AND SUB CONTRACT SERVICES | _____ |
| 3. | TRAVEL | _____ |
| 4. | SPACE | _____ |
| 5. | SUPPLIES | _____ |
| 6. | EQUIPMENT | _____ |
| 7. | OTHER COSTS | _____ |

TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED:

\$0.00

ATTACHMENT 1- DHS BUDGET FORM (3 of 3)

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES BUDGET DETAIL			
CONSULTANTS & SUB CONTRACT SERVICES	TYPE, NAME, HOURLY RATE, NUMBER OF HOURS, ETC		COST
	Enter on page 1, line 2		
TRAVEL	PURPOSE, RATE, NUMBER OF MILES, ETC		COST
	Enter on page 1, line 3		
SPACE	DESCRIPTION		COST
	Enter on page 1, line 4		
SUPPLIES	DESCRIPTION		COST
	Enter on page 1, line 5		
EQUIPMENT	PURCHASE, LEASE, RENTAL		COST
	Enter on page 1, line 6		
OTHER COSTS	DESCRIPTION		COST
	Enter on page 1, line 7		