



**Solicitation Information  
June 14, 2013**

**RFP# 7474373**

**TITLE: RFP – FOR AFFORDABLE CARE ACT CONSULTATIVE SERVICES – HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Submission Deadline: Thursday July 11, 2013 11:00 am (Local Prevailing Time)**

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases at [questions@purchasing.ri.gov](mailto:questions@purchasing.ri.gov) no later than 6/25/2013 at 12:00 pm Noon (LPT) 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**

**Thomas Bovis  
Interdepartmental Project Manager**

Applicants must register on-line at the State Purchasing Website at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://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**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1 –Introduction.....	4
Section 2- Background and Purpose.....	6
Specific Requirements.....	6
Section 3- Scope of Work.....	6
General Scope of Work.....	6
Specific Activities / Tasks.....	6
Section 4 -Technical Proposal.....	7
Narrative and Format.....	7
Section 5 -Cost Proposal.....	7
Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative.....	7
Section 6- Evaluation and Selection.....	8
Section 7 -Proposal Submission.....	9

## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

The Rhode Island Department of Administration/Division of Purchases, on behalf of the Office of Higher Education, requests letters of interest from qualified firms, individuals and organizations to provide Affordable Care Act consulting services, in accordance with the terms of this solicitation and the State's General Condition of Purchase (available on the Internet at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov)).

The RI Board of Education (RIBOE) wishes to obtain consultative services related to the upcoming Affordable Care Act requirements related to healthcare insurance provided to the employees of the Office of Higher Education, the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the Community College of Rhode Island.

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. For the purposes of this requirement, the official time and date shall be that of the time clock in the reception area of the Division.

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 in the vendor's proposal and the subcontractor(s) to be used is identified in the proposal.
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](http://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](http://www.mbe.ri.gov) or contact [charles.newton@doa.ri.gov](mailto:charles.newton@doa.ri.gov).

## **SECTION 2: BACKGROUND**

The Board of Education governs and is responsible for the management of, the three public institutions of higher education in the State of Rhode Island (the "State"), the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the Community College of Rhode Island (collectively, the "State Colleges").

### **Specific Requirements**

The vendor must possess extensive prior experience in federal and state statutory and regulatory requirements for employee benefits as well as substantial knowledge of IRS codes and compliance recording methodology.

## **SECTION 3: SCOPE OF WORK**

### **General Scope of Work**

The Board of Education is looking for consultative services related to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act provisions, while also in compliance with State of Rhode Island and Board Personnel policies, in regard to its three entities (the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College and the Community College of Rhode Island) and the Office of Higher Education with the following issues among those to be addressed and analyzed with recommendations.

### **Specific Activities / Tasks**

- A legal and tax opinion as to whether the three institutions are considered separate employers by the Department of the Treasury? Or are the three institutions and the Office considered a single entity under the Board of Education? or
- Are the Board of Education employees considered or not considered state employees for the purpose of ACA?
- What reasonable methodology should be used for the calculation Part-time/Adjunct faculty hours?
- What other job descriptions might be included in these categories? Examples such as coaches, student employees, seasonal and variable employees, graduate students
- Are retired employees already receiving health benefits, but working part-time/adjunct exempted from the ACA? Does it matter from whom the employee is receiving health care coverage?
- How should multi-institutional faculty be handled? (Although this issue may be resolved with the answer to who is the employer?)
- What standard measurement, stability, and administrative periods should be employed? Do any of the safe harbor provisions provide the system with either specific guidance or relief?
- What additional related benefit expenses will be passed along to state government if any?

- What is the cost of benefits versus alternative human resource solutions or ACA penalties?
- An assessment tool for analyzing penalty risks for each of the major ACA categories.
- What processes and systems should be put into place at each institution to monitor ACA requirements and provisions and required IRS reporting?
- What options for offering affordable coverage might exist and be available for the Board of Education?

However, if there are additional considerations that the offeror believes should be included, they should be included, with explanation, in the proposal.

#### **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/CV and describe qualifications and experience of key staff who will be involved in this project, including their experience in the field of human resources and benefits consultation based on state and federal requirements.
2. Capability, Capacity, and Qualifications of the Offeror - Please provide a detailed description of the Vendor’s experience as an employee benefits consultant and regulatory expert. A list of relevant client references must be provided, to include client names, addresses, phone numbers, dates of service and type(s) of service(s) provided.
- 3 Work plan - Please describe, in detail, the framework within which requested consultative services will be performed including a significant discussion of the scope of work as requested in this document along with any additional areas of need as seen by the vendor.
- 4 Approach/Methodology – Define the methodology to be used for the determination of recommendations and requirements for the system’s and the institutions’ compliance with these upcoming requirements and reporting standards.

#### **SECTION 5: COST PROPOSAL (IN A SEPARATELY SEALED ENVELOPE)**

Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative:

Provide a proposal for fees charged for the billing of services proposed. Please explain the basis and rationale of your fee structure. Alternative fee schedule proposals will be considered; however, you must provide an understandable fee structure and explain the benefits of the alternative approach.

**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 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 Board of Education 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:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
Staff Qualifications	15 Points
Capability, Capacity, and Qualifications of the Offeror	25 Points
Quality of the Work plan	15 Points
Suitability of Approach/Methodology	15 Points
<b>Total Possible Technical Points</b>	<b>70 Points</b>
Cost calculated as lowest responsive cost proposal divided by (this cost proposal) times 30 points *	30 Points
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>100 Points</b>

\*The Low bidder will receive one hundred percent (100%) of the available points 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 \$65,000 and Vendor B bids \$100,000 for monthly cost and service fee and the total points available are Thirty (30), vendor B’s cost points are calculated as follows:

$$\$65,000 / \$100,000 * 30 = 19.5$$

Points will be assigned based on the offeror's clear demonstration of his/her abilities to complete the work, apply appropriate methods to complete the work, create innovative solutions and quality of past performance in similar projects.

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. 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 [questions@purchasing.ri.gov](mailto:questions@purchasing.ri.gov) no later than the date and time indicated on page one of this solicitation. Please reference **RFP# 7474373** 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 original plus 4 copies**) should be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked "**RFP**"# 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. A 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](http://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](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov).
3. **A separate Technical Proposal** describing the qualifications and background of the applicant and experience with and for similar projects, and all information described earlier in this solicitation. The Technical Proposal is limited to six (6) pages (this excludes any appendices). As appropriate, resumes of key staff that will provide services covered by this request.
4. **A separate, signed and sealed Cost Proposal** reflecting the hourly rate, or other fee structure, proposed to complete all of the requirements of this project.
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".

#### **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.