



**Solicitation Information  
November 23, 2015**

**RFP# 7549984**

**TITLE: Administration of Rhode Island Department of Health's Nursing Assistant Examinations**

**Submission Deadline: December 18, 2015 at 10:00 AM ET**

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases at [david.francis@purchasing.ri.gov](mailto:david.francis@purchasing.ri.gov) no later than **December 2, 2015 at 10:00 AM (ET)**. 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](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov).

**Note to Applicants:**

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**

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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

The Rhode Island Department of Administration/Division of Purchases, on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Health (Department), is soliciting proposals from qualified firms to administer all aspects of the Department's Nursing Assistant written and skills examination program for qualified Nursing Assistant applicants seeking licensure by the Rhode Island Department of Health.

Pursuant to the requirements of Chapter 23-17.9 of the Rhode Island General Laws, as amended, and 42 *Code of Federal Regulations*, Part 431 *et al*, the Department is required to define the minimum standards for the training, competency evaluation, testing, and registration of nursing assistants in order to ensure safe and adequate care to individuals receiving nursing assistant services in Rhode Island.

The Department is soliciting all aspects of this examination program as described elsewhere herein, in accordance with the terms of this Request for Proposals and the State's General Conditions of Purchase, which may be obtained at the Rhode Island Division of Purchases Home Page by Internet at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov).

The initial contract period will begin immediately for a twelve month term and will be renewable for up to five (5) additional twelve (12) month period based on vendor performance and availability of funds.

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 Request for Proposal (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 that 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 120 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.
- 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 visit the website [www.mbe.ri.gov](http://www.mbe.ri.gov)
- 15) Under HIPAA, a "business associate" is a person or entity, other than a member of the workforce of a HIPAA covered entity, who performs functions or activities on behalf of, or provides certain services to, a HIPAA covered entity that involves access by the business associate to HIPAA protected health information. A "business associate" also is a subcontractor that creates, receives, maintains, or transmits HIPAA protected health information on behalf of another business associate. The HIPAA rules generally require that HIPAA covered entities and business associates enter into contracts with their business associates to ensure that the business associates will appropriately safeguard HIPAA protected health information. Therefore, if a Contractor qualifies as a business associate, it will be required to sign a HIPAA business associate agreement

## **SECTION 2: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

### **Authority to Bill for Services**

Pursuant to Chapter 23 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Department of Health is authorized to provide testing services to qualified Nursing Assistant applicants.

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

The Rhode Island Department of Health is seeking proposals from qualified vendors to administer all aspects of its examination program for qualified Nursing Assistant applicants. The testing process includes two components: 1. a written examination and 2. A skills (clinical) examination that tests a nursing assistant applicant's knowledge and competency to carry out the duties of a nursing assistant as defined in the *Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Rhode Island Certificates of Registration for Nursing Assistants, Medication Aides, and the Approval of Nursing Assistant and Medication Aide Training Programs (R23-17.9-NA)* promulgated by the Department and the applicable sections of the federal *Code of Federal Regulations*.

In Rhode Island, nursing assistant applicants must complete a 100 hour (80 didactic hours and 20 clinical hours) training program and successfully complete both the written and skills components of the examination prior to becoming licensed and placed on the Department's registry.

The Department is outsourcing these services to a vendor to include collection of examination fees to be billed directly to the applicant/examinee. The Department will not be providing funds or providing reimbursement for any costs associated with the scope of work outlined in this proposal.

### **General Scope of Work**

The vendor shall analyze the training and duties required of Rhode Island licensed nursing assistants as detailed in the *Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Rhode Island Certificates of Registration for Nursing Assistants, Medication Aides, and the Approval of Nursing Assistant and Medication Aide Training Programs (R23-17.9-NA)* promulgated by the Department and the applicable sections of the federal *Code of Federal Regulations* in order to develop an examination process that tests a nursing assistant applicant's knowledge and competency to carry out the duties of a nursing assistant.

This is a no-cost \$0.00 RFP. All examination fees will be paid by the examination applicants themselves directly to the vendor.

### **Specific Activities/Tasks**

Tasks to be performed by the selected vendor are described below:

- billing and processing applicant's examination fees for the test;
- securing the testing sites for both the written and skills components of the examination;
- administering a written examination that is valid, reliable, and psychometrically sound;

- administering a skills examination that tests the applicant’s ability to provide nursing assistant services at the required minimum level in order to protect the health and safety of patients;
- managing all aspects of the re-testing process;
- notifying the Department and the applicant of examination results in a timely, confidential manner;
- arranging all logistics at the testing sites, including the staffing of appropriate personnel and maintaining a secure testing environment;

The Department requires that vendors be fully compliant with the federal *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA). Reasonable accommodations must be provided for examinees with documentation of impairments that substantially limits a major life activity. For persons with disabilities, the vendor must assure that the testing process accurately determines the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the examinee.

### **Project Management Deliverables**

The following deliverables are required in addition to those outlined in the scope of work above:

#### **Examinations: Written and Skills**

The vendor shall be responsible for written examination question development and the banking of test questions. The vendor shall develop a written examination in English that consists of 70 multiple choice questions. The vendor shall provide a two-hour time limit to complete the written examination. The vendor shall be responsible for offering the written examination no less than monthly.

The vendor shall develop a skills examination that tests no less than the following: communication and interpersonal skills; infection control; safety emergency procedures; promotion of patients' independence; respecting patients' rights; basic nursing skills; mental health/social service needs; care of cognitively impaired patients; and basic restorative services. Five skill areas must be tested. Skills examinations shall not be performed on a mannequin. The skills examination shall not be timed. The vendor shall be responsible for offering the skills examination no less than monthly.

The vendor shall develop an oral examination that may be taken by an applicant who has documented difficulty in reading English. Such oral examination shall consist of 60 multiple choice questions and 10 multiple choice reading comprehension questions. Examinees who take the oral examination may also be provided a headset to listen to a pre-recorded examination of questions being read. Each question should be read to the examinee twice. The examinee may replay any question. Examinees who take the oral examination shall be provided with the same printed test booklet and shall record answers on the same answer sheet as those examinees that take the written examination. Examinees who take the oral examination shall also be required to complete an additional test section on reading comprehension. These 10 multiple choice questions are designed to demonstrate minimal competency in English literacy. Thirty minutes shall be allowed for the completion of the reading comprehension component of the oral examination. Examinees must pass the reading comprehension section in order to pass the oral examination. Each time the oral examination is offered, the reading comprehension section must be completed, even if it was previously successfully completed. The grade for the reading comprehension section shall be reported as “pass” or “fail.”

The vendor shall perform all statistical tests and procedures to assure that test results can be defended (i.e., are valid, reliable, and conducted in accordance with a proven methodology). The vendor shall establish a passing score for each component of the examination.

The vendor shall prepare a contingency plan for the rescheduling of examinations or changes in testing dates due to emergencies or severe weather conditions.

## **Examination Results Reporting**

The vendor shall report test results no more than ten (10) days after the examination to the Department in both a written (paper) and computerized format as follows to be compatible with the Department's licensure software (License 2000).

Examination results shall also be reported in no more than ten (10) days by the vendor to the applicant and to the nursing facility and/or training program. The report of examination results should include areas where the examinee is deficient.

All prudent measures shall be taken to maintain the confidentiality of test results. Examination results shall not be given out over the telephone under any circumstances.

## **Testing Sites**

The vendor shall secure testing sites for both the written and skills examinations. The vendor shall arrange for not less than three (3) regional testing sites. It shall be the vendor's responsibility to match a test applicant with a preferred testing site.

## **Application Processing**

The vendor shall be responsible for collecting all testing applications from the Department, verifying that the information listed is accurate and complete.

The vendor shall offer a web-based application processing system so applicants may process their test applications online.

Within three (3) days of receipt of the test application vendors shall schedule the examination and shall send a letter to applicants indicating the time, date and location of the scheduled examination and include any details such as what to bring to the examination, how to dress, etc.

Nursing assistant applicants are allowed up to three (3) attempts at both the written and skills examinations before re-training must take place. The vendor shall manage all details related to the re-testing process such as processing of application and matching applicant with the preferred testing site.

## **Personnel at Testing Sites**

The vendor shall secure the appropriate number of persons to staff all testing sites. Selection of testing site personnel shall be in compliance with the *Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Rhode Island Certificates of Registration for Nursing Assistants, Medication Aides, and the Approval of Nursing Assistant and Medication Aide Training Programs (R23-17.9-NA)*, all applicable federal and state statutes and regulations. The vendor shall validate that credentials are current and in good standing for any licensed professional personnel at the testing sites.

## **Record Keeping**

Test results for all examinees shall be maintained in paper and electronic form by the vendor for a minimum of five (5) years after the test date, at which time they may be destroyed.

## **Testing Sites: Physical Location and Security**

The vendor shall secure an adequate number of regional testing sites to accommodate all applicants who present to test according to the testing schedule required above. The physical environment shall contain all necessary equipment and resources to administer the written and/or skills examination(s).

An adequate number of well-maintained restrooms shall be available to all examinees.

The vendor shall ensure that a no smoking policy is enforced in the testing areas.

Examinees shall not be permitted to leave the testing area in order to smoke.

### **Security**

The vendor shall require that the following security measures be in place at the testing sites:

- The examinee shall present two forms of identification prior to sitting for the written examination. One of these forms of identification must be a current photo, such as a driver's license or a passport. One form of identification must also include the examinee's signature.
- No examinee shall be permitted to leave the testing site with test materials.
- No examinee shall have access to textbooks, study materials, notes, or translators during the examination.
- There shall be no eating or drinking while the examination is being administered.

### **Vendor Responsibilities**

Vendor(s) shall be responsible for each of the following as necessary to conduct the scope of work:

- Any and all computer and related resources required for vendor(s);
- Office space, equipment and support personnel and other supplies;
- Any travel, whether in state or out of state; and
- The supervision and performance of any subcontractor(s).

### **Additional Information and Assurances**

- A description of the database, if any, that is maintained by the Contractor(s) and how such database may be utilized in the performance of this contract.
- A statement describing all current or prior relationships between the Contractor(s), and any of the assigned personnel and/ or subcontractor(s), and either Lifespan or CNE and its parents, subsidiaries and affiliates. If no such relationships exist, a declaration to that effect must be made.
- An indication of the role that the Contractor(s) would be qualified to perform if the matter requires litigation (e.g., expert witness in an action by the Department to enjoin the transaction, or opposition by the Department to a petition by the parties for court approval).
- Certification as to whether or not the Contractor(s) or the proposed subcontractor(s) or consultant(s) are the subject of any pending or concluded governmental investigation or disciplinary matter.
- Written assurances that the Contractor(s) will provide a final report to the Director of Health no later than the earlier of (1) 45 calendar days from the date on which a contract is fully executed by

all parties or (2) the sixty (60) days following the initiation of the review of the proposed transaction by the Department.

- Written agreement/assurance that the Contractor(s) will cooperate/coordinate with other agencies, contractors, or entities as directed by the Department.
- Written agreement/assurances that all work products shall revert to and is the sole property of the Department upon payment of contractually agreed to amounts.
- The vendor must provide a dedicated program manager to coordinate all examination activities with the Department's Division of Customer Services staff.
- Three customer references, with contact names and numbers, and an explanation of similar work performed, must be included with the proposal.
- A description of the corporate background, financial status, and experiences in implementing testing programs of similar size and complexity, must be included in the proposal.
- Samples of testing products similar in nature to the requirements of this project must accompany the proposal.
- Vendors will be evaluated on their ability to fulfill all of the requirements of this contract as part of the award process.
- Vendors must demonstrate considerable experience in the development and implementation of testing programs to measure competency of nursing assistants or other health professions.

#### **SECTION 4: TECHNICAL PROPOSAL**

##### **Narrative and Format**

The separate technical proposal should address specifically each of the following required elements:

##### **Executive Summary**

The Executive Summary is intended to highlight the contents of the Technical Proposal and to provide State evaluators with a broad understanding of the vendor's technical approach and ability.

##### **Vendor's Organization and Staffing**

This section shall include identification of all staff and/or subcontractors proposed as members of the project team, and the duties, responsibilities, and concentration of effort which apply to each (as well as resumes, curricula vitae, or statements of prior experience and qualification). Include a detailed listing of relevant experience that the Contractor(s) has had in performing similar projects within the last five years, including the purpose of the project, the project dates, the names of the clients, whether live testimony was given and whether such testimony was subject to cross-examination. For those previous projects that are most relevant to this RFP, please provide the name and phone number of a contact person who can provide recommendation(s).

## **Work plan/Approach Proposed**

This section shall describe the vendor's understanding of the State's requirement, including the result(s) intended and desired, the approach and/or methodology to be employed, and a work plan for accomplishing the results proposed. The description of approach shall discuss and justify the proposed approach for each task, and the technical issues that will or may be confronted at each stage on the project.

The work plan description shall include a detailed proposed project schedule (by task and subtask), a list of tasks, activities, and/or milestones that will be employed to administer the project, the assignment of staff members and concentration of effort for each, and the attributable deliverables for each.

## **Previous Experience and Background**

This section shall include the following information:

A comprehensive listing of similar projects undertaken and/or similar clients served, including a brief description of the projects; &

A description of the business background of the offeror (and all subcontractors proposed), including a description of their financial position.

## **SECTION 5: COST PROPOSAL**

### **Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative**

This request is for a \$0.00 contract. There will be no exchange of money between the State of Rhode Island and the vendor. All examination fees will be paid by the examination applicants themselves directly to the vendor. Results of examinations and duplicate reports must be provided at no charge to candidates.

Rhode Island Department of Health assesses a fee for a Nursing Assistant license application according to the schedule set by R23-1-17-FEE. However, the Department does not have the authority to assess any fee related to the examination services.

It is the desire of the Department of Health to ensure affordable and reasonable pricing for examination applicants. Therefore, vendors shall be evaluated based on the cost per examination to the applicant.

The successful vendor must charge an examination fee that is approved by the State.

## **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 Health 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
Executive Summary	10 Points
Vendors Organization and Staffing	25 Points
Quality of the Work plan	25 Points
Previous Experience and Background	10 Points
<b>Total Possible Technical Points</b>	<b>70 Points</b>
Cost calculated as lowest responsive cost per examination fee divided by (this cost proposal) times 30 points *	30 Points
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>100 Points</b>

\*The bidder with the lowest cost per examination fee 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:

$$(\text{Lowest exam fee bid} / \text{vendors exam fee bid}) * \text{Available points}$$

For example: If the low bidder (Vendor A) bids \$50.00 and Vendor B bids \$100.00 per examination and the total points available are Thirty (30), vendor B's cost points are calculated as follows:

$$\$50.00 / \$100.00 * 30 = 15$$

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.

## **SECTION 7: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

Questions concerning this solicitation may be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at [david.francis@purchasing.ri.gov](mailto:david.francis@purchasing.ri.gov) no later than the date and time indicated on page one of this solicitation. Please reference **RFP # 7549984** 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 four (4) copies**) should be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked “**RFP# 7549984 Administration of Rhode Island Department of Health’s Nursing Assistant Examinations**” 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) One completed and signed three-page R.I.V.I.P generated bidder certification cover sheet (included in the original copy only) downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov).
- 2) One completed and signed W-9 (included in the original copy only) 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 (CD-ROM, disc, or flash drive)**. Microsoft Word / Excel OR PDF format is preferable. Only 1 electronic copy for each Technical and Cost are 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.

The State’s General Conditions of Purchase contain the specific contract terms, stipulations and affirmations to be utilized for the contract awarded to the RFP. The State’s General Conditions of Purchases/General Terms and Conditions can be found at the following URL:

<https://www.purchasing.ri.gov/RIVIP/publicdocuments/ATTA.pdf> .