



**Solicitation Information
February 26, 2016**

RFP#7550347

TITLE: SEARCH FOR AFFORDABLE CARE ACT TAX REPORTING SOLUTION

Submission Deadline: Monday, March 21, 2016 @ 11:30 AM (Eastern Time)

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases at doa.purquestions3@purchasing.ri.gov no later than Monday, March 7, 2016 @ 5:00 PM (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

Gary P. Mosca
Senior Buyer

Applicants must register on-line at the State Purchasing Website at 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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1 - Introduction	3
Section 2 - Background	4
Section 3 - Scope of Work	5
Section 4 - Technical Proposal	6
I. Dates of Performance	
II. Proposal Requirements	
III. Preparation of Proposal	
IV. Instructions and Notifications to Offerors	
Section 5 - Cost Proposal	9
Fees & Expenses	
Section 6 - Proposal Submission	10
Response contents	
Section 7 - Evaluation and Selection	11
Concluding Statements	

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Rhode Island Department of Administration/Division of Purchases, on behalf of the **Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education** is soliciting proposals from qualified firms to provide for its Affordable Care Act Tax Reporting Solution (the Solution) 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 .

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 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.
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. The State reserves the right to award to one or more offerers. The State also reserves the right to award this project based on pricing alone.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

In its search for an Affordable Care Act Tax Reporting Solution, the Council on Postsecondary Education is seeking the assistance of an individual consultant or a consultant group, hereafter called the consultant, in accordance with the terms of this solicitation and the State's General Conditions of Purchasing, which is available on the internet at www.purchasing.state.ri.us.

The public system of postsecondary education in Rhode Island is comprised of three institutions: the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the Community College of Rhode Island. While the system itself employs approximately 4,000 full time employees, these employees have been deemed “State Employees” and the ACA reporting requirements will be addressed by the State of Rhode Island.

However, the institutions of postsecondary education also employ individuals on their internal payrolls in positions that are significantly less than full time. There are approximately 500-700 in this category. The job categories that would be included these three individual payrolls (one at each institution) would include adjunct faculty, athletic coaches, athletic event personnel, performing artists, academic advisors & coordinators, drivers’ education staff, CNA evaluators, etc.

The issue for the institutions is that the Council on Postsecondary Education has been deemed a “Controlled Group” according to IRS definitions. While hiring at the three institutions is not coordinated nor controlled by the Council, there are a certain number of these “casual” employees who are employed by multiple institutions. Therefore, the tax reporting must be done for the entire system rather than at the individual institutions. A coordinated solution is sought.

Each institution maintains its separate payroll system. The University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College use PeopleSoft while the Community College of Rhode Island uses Banner software for its internal payrolls.

SECTION 3: SCOPE OF WORK

The Council is seeking a consultant who can assist with the Solution by doing the following tasks, at the discretion of the Council, in an efficient and timely manner:

- Determine and define informational requirements from individual institutional payroll systems.
- Secure the source data needed.
- Deliver the 1095-C forms to the system employees prior to the statutorily mandated due date.
- Support for corrections and duplicate print requests
- Electronic filing of 1094-C and 1095-C to the IRS by the statutorily mandated due date
- Act as an IRS approved transmitter to the IRS Affordable Care Act Information Returns (AIR) System
- ACA data must be secured in accordance with IRS, State and federal security and confidentiality standards.
- Access to the Reporting system must be strictly controlled.
- Hosted data and systems must reside in a secure datacenter (if applicable to the Solution).
- Implementation services must include implementation planning, analysis and mapping of source data files, training, and testing to be completed in a timely manner to assure compliance with reporting deadlines.

- Post filing support must include access to activity audit logs and data as well as ongoing access to ACA forms and data.

SECTION 4: TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

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

1. **Professional Services Requirements** - Provide a detailed discussion of your firm's approach to the successful implementation of this project. Include thorough discussions of methodologies regarding project management and control, delivery of education and training, cost control, and successful scheduling. This section shall be responsive to Section 3.0, "Project Management and Implementation Requirements". Also include a proposed work schedule to accomplish all of the required tasks within the desired timeline.
2. **Education and Training** -Indicate the level of education and training to be provided to State staff related to the operation of recommended equipment and the proposed solution. This training should be sufficient to allow State to effectively operate the equipment and/or solution, and perform equipment failure diagnostics. Include the following information:
 - a. A discussion of vendor's education and training philosophy.
 - b. A description of the level of education and materials offered, including tables of contents and training materials.
 - c. A description of training that will be provided on-site in Rhode Island (as needed).
3. **Corporate Background** -Provide details of the company, including company size and resources, details of corporate experience relevant to the proposed project, and a list of other current or recent State projects.

If a Vendor intends to use subcontractors, the Vendor must identify in the proposal the names of the subcontractors and the portions of the work the subcontractors will perform.

4. **Experience, qualifications and references** - Vendors must describe the experience of their firm in completing similar projects. Additionally, Vendors must provide information specific to the personnel assigned to accomplish the work called for in this RFP. Vendors must provide a narrative description of the organization of the project team and a personnel roster that identifies each person who will actually work on the contract and provide the title, resume, and description of the type of work the individual will perform about each person listed.
5. **Financial Requirements:** The Vendor shall provide financial information in such a manner that the State can reasonably formulate a determination about the stability and financial strength of the organization. This must include but not be limited to company size, organization, date of incorporation, ownership, number of employees, revenues for the last fiscal year, and, if available, audited financial statements for

the most recent 3 years. A current Dun and Bradstreet Report that includes a financial analysis of the firm would fulfill this requirement. A Vendor can use an Annual Report as verification of financial status provided it contains at a minimum a Compiled Income Statement and Balance Sheet verified by a Certified Public Accounting firm. The State reserves the right to contact the accounting firm if questions arise. As an alternative, for those Vendors unable to provide audited financial statements or Dun and Bradstreet report, the Vendor shall provide tax returns and financial statements including income statements and balance sheets for the most recent 3 years, and any available credit reports.

Disclose any and all judgments, pending or expected litigation, or other real potential financial reversals, which might materially affect the viability or stability of the Vendor's organization; or certify that no such condition is known to exist.

A confidentiality statement may be included if this portion is considered non-public information. The State may request reports on financial stability from independent financial rating services in order to further substantiate stability.

I. Dates of Performance

The services requested are expected to commence on or about March 1, 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter.

II. Proposal Requirements

To be eligible for consideration, proposals shall comply with the following requirements:

1. Provide a list of higher education and other relevant clients for whom ACA compliance engagements have been conducted in the past three years. Include the name, address and phone number of the primary contact person for each such client.
2. Provide an assurance of your firm's ability to complete the required tasks within the stated timeframe, or any reservations you may have.
3. Describe how your firm will accommodate state and federal laws and Council policy related to Affordable Care Act requirements.
4. Provide any feedback you have with respect to the proposed Affordable Care Act Tax Reporting Solution.

III. PREPARATION OF PROPOSAL

To be eligible for consideration, individuals and firms desiring to compete for this contract should supply the following information as part of the submitted proposal:

A fully developed plan describing how the consultant will assist the Council in its search for a tax reporting compliance solution related to the Affordable Care Act. The plan should include the following components:

- i. A time line for beginning the search with the intent of having it completed according to IRS requirements.
- ii. A realistic budget that is consistent with the proposed services.
- iii. A description of the previous experience and expertise, particularly with other governmental and/or higher educational entities and controlled groups, of those proposing to provide the services.

IV. 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 nonresponsive.
- 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 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 PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**
- It is intended that an award pursuant to this Request will be made to a prime contractor, who will assume all aspects of the work. Joint venture and cooperative

proposals will not be considered, but 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.

- 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.
- The purchase of services under an award made pursuant to this RFP will be contingent on the availability of funds.
- In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.1 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, not 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.
- Bidders 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, without exception, and will be released for inspection immediately upon request, once an award has been made.
- Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Division of Purchases website on a regular basis, as additional information related to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFP/LOI.
- The offeror should be aware of the State's MBE requirements, which addresses the State's goal of ten percent (10%) participation by MBBE's in all State procurements. For further information, contact the MBE Administrator, at (401) 222-6253.

SECTION 5: COST PROPOSAL

A separate, signed and sealed, Cost Proposal reflecting the fee structure proposed for this scope of service.

Fees and Expenses

A lump sum fee shall include the cost of all necessary clerical and administrative support. In addition, the ACA Tax Reporting Compliance consultant shall be entitled to be reimbursed for the following categories of out-of-pocket expenses, not to exceed a total sum to be determined by the Council:

- Travel-related expenses of the search consultant and prospects/candidates;
- Telephone charges;
- Reproduction and material costs; and

- Mail and delivery charges.

Proposals should also include the following cost components:

- Non-recurring costs: please provide a list of one time charges related to the Solution.
- Recurring costs: Please include any annual maintenance, licensing or other costs related to the Solution that are paid on an annual basis.
- Price Guarantee: The vendor is required to maintain its price for a fixed period of time. If the solution contemplates doing additional work with the vendor for additions to the Solution or the addition of users or accommodation of changes in the System of Postsecondary Education' position, state the hourly rates for future work for key types of positions.

Invoices for all reimbursable expenses will be submitted to the Council on a monthly basis. No expenses in excess of the Council-approved amount will be reimbursed without the prior written authorization of the Council chairman or his designee.

SECTION 6: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Questions concerning this solicitation may be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at doa.purquestions3@purchasing.ri.gov no later than the date and time indicated on page one of this solicitation. Please reference **RFP #7550347** 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.

Interested offerors may submit proposals to provide the services covered by this Request on or before THE DATE AND TIME LISTED ON THE COVERAGE PAGE OF THIS SOLICITATION. For the purposes of this solicitation, the official time clock is in the Division of Purchases Reception Area. Proposals received after this time will not be considered.

Responses (**an original plus (5) copies**) should be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked "**RFP#**" Search for President of Rhode Island College 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 three-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 (only one copy required inserted in “original”) downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
3. **A separate Technical Proposal** describing the qualifications and background of the applicant and experience with and or similar projects, and all information described earlier in the solicitation.
4. A separate, signed and sealed Cost Proposal as described above.

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. Two electronic copies are requested (One for the State and one for the University) and it should be placed in the proposal marked “original”.

SECTION 7: EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Proposals will be reviewed by a Technical Review Committee comprised of the staff from the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner and staff of the three institutions whose job titles related to the ACA reporting requirements.

To advance to the Cost Evaluation phase, the Technical Proposal must receive a minimum of **56 (80%)** out of a maximum of 70 technical points. Any technical proposals scoring less than 56 points will not have the cost component opened and evaluated. The proposal will be dropped from further consideration.

Proposals scoring 56 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 Council 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	15 Points
Capability, Capacity, and Qualifications of the Offeror	15 Points
Quality of the Work plan	20 Points
Suitability of Approach/Methodology	20 Points
Total Possible Technical Points	70 Points
Cost 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 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.

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>

End.