



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

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ADDENDUM #2

June 29, 2020

RFP #7606797

TITLE: MPA 579 ONLINE DISTANCE LEARNING PLATFORM - RIDE

Submission Deadline: July 9, 2020 10:00 AM (Eastern Time)

ATTACHED ARE THE VENDOR QUESTIONS WITH STATE RESPONSES.

Interested Parties should monitor this website on a regular basis, for any additional information that may be posted.

Robert DeAngelis

Senior Buyer

**The following are the questions received from vendors with State responses regarding RFP 7606797
Online Distance Learning Platform**

Vendor A

Does IT hardware fall under the scope of this project? If not, is there a separate solicitation for hardware or will there be one?

Hardware is not within the scope of this project, and Rhode Island does not currently anticipate issuing a separate solicitation for this, at this time.

Vendor B

If a vendor provides online instruction for students with moderate to severe disabilities, would this be considered for award?

Vendors who provide online instruction solutions for students with moderate to severe disabilities would be considered for this award; this student group is one of our most needy populations.

Vendor C

Please clarify which parts of the technical proposal (page 8) fall within the 6-page limit (imposed on page 14). The RFP mentions that appendices and resumes are excluded, but are offeror qualifications, work plans, approaches / methodologies, and four sections of questions all confined to the page limit?

Sections 3 and 4 as well as the guiding questions are expected to fall within the 6-page limit. The page limit excludes offeror qualifications, any and all appendices, and resumes.

Due to the complications of COVID-19, and with states moving back towards stronger social regulations (travel bans, social distancing, limited gatherings, etc.) many offices are closed and employees are working remotely. Will Rhode Island accept original electronic signatures? Or are ink signatures mandatory.

Rhode Island will accept original electronic signatures.

Vendor D

Is this RFP funded at the state level?

This RFP is funded at the state level through federal dollars related to the coordinated COVID-19 response.

What is the budget for this project?

The budget for this project is between \$2-5M.

How will Rhode Island schools be instructed to use/reference this list when making online learning purchasing decisions?

Question is unclear; this RFP doesn't reference the production of a list related to online learning purchasing decisions for schools or districts.

Vendor E

Are you looking for a comprehensive platform with all content areas already pre-determined/pre-loaded or are you looking for content for the various curricular areas on such a platform?

Rhode Island is actually looking for both—the state seeks to solve for multiple problems, within multiple scenarios.

Vendor F

Section 1, page 3, states “Additional responses will be reviewed every quarter for the duration of this Open Enrollment period” – Please clarify if this means vendors can (re)apply during the initial one year period?

Yes, vendors can submit proposals during the open enrollment initial one-year period.

Section 1, #11 on page 5 states that the certificate of authority is only required for successful vendors. Does this mean that a certificate of authority is not required with the submission?

Yes

Section 2, page 8, states, “...platform should link to preexisting student data systems...” – what are these preexisting systems?

These preexisting systems could include, but not be limited to, student information systems (Skyward, Aspen, Powerschool), assessment systems or platforms (STAR, iReady, AIMSweb), data or learning management systems, or systems for student support (ELlevation).

Technical Proposal, starting on page 8 – please clarify the desired format; should the response be organized starting with Section 1, Staff Qualifications, etc. (page 8) or with Section One, Organizational Details, etc. (page9).

The response should be organized starting with Section 1, Staff Qualifications; however, Sections 1 and 2 are not included in the page limit. Please ensure that answers or responses to the guiding questions starting on page 9 are included in the final, complete response.

Technical Proposal, #4 on page 9 (Approach/Methodology) – how many students are expected to use the solution during the summer?

No students will utilize the solution during the summer. Students will begin utilizing this solution(s) at the end of summer on August 31, 2020.

Technical Proposal, #4 on page 9 (Approach/Methodology) – for professional development planning, how many teachers and LEA sites will require training?

The state of Rhode Island has 64 LEAs and 9,417 teachers; at this time, the exact number requiring training is unknown, so please present a plan, with options, that prioritizing nimbleness and flexibility, considering the dynamic and changing circumstances of the current time.

Technical Proposal Format, Section One on page 9 – the wording of #5 (“drop down options”) and #6 (“upload” logo) seems to suggest an online submission component. Please clarify if proposals need to be uploaded and/or submitted online.

No, paper submissions need to be sent to the Division of Purchasing.

Technical Proposal Format, Section Three, #9 on page 10 – How many teachers will need training?

The state of Rhode Island has 9,417 teachers; please present an approach, with options, that takes this reality into account while prioritizing nimbleness and flexibility, considering the dynamic and changing circumstances of the current time.

Technical Proposal Format, Section Three, #12 on page 10 – Total Budget Request – for pricing purposes, how many students are expected to use the solution?

The state of Rhode Island currently enrolls about 143,000 students; please present an approach, with options, that takes this current reality into account, given the changing circumstances of the current

time. This approach to pricing could look many different ways—costs per pupil, costs per school or district, or even a tiered pricing structure for <10,000 students, between 10,001 and 20,000, between 20,001 and 40,000, between 40,001 and 80,000, and over 80,000 (or other variations on this structure).

Cost Proposal on page 11 requires “one fixed administrative cost to provide a robust professional learning experience...” – is this the cost per training session? Would RIDE consider virtual professional learning sessions?

This request is not a cost per training session—it is a flat, fixed cost for all training and support required for implementation and roll-out, regardless of how many teachers or students participate. And yes, RIDE would consider virtual professional learning sessions.

Cost Proposal on page 11 requires “one per pupil amount for students on the learning platform (regardless of class size)” – Would RIDE consider tiered pricing based on number of students?

RIDE is very open to tiered pricing based on the number of students participating; however, respondents should ensure that they provide the information requested in addition to any alternative pricing structure.

Section 7 Proposal Contents, #1 and #2, on page 14 states for the Bidder Certification Cover Form and W-9, “Do not include any copies in the Technical or Cost proposals.” – Please confirm this means these forms are only required with the Original Technical Proposal, and that the proposal paper and electronic copies do not need these forms.

Yes, that is correct.

Section 7 Proposal Contents, #4 Technical Proposal, on page 14 – the technical proposal is limited to six pages – please clarify if the six-page limit is intended to cover all Technical Proposal requirements on pages 8-11? May we include additional information in the appendices – and is there a page limit for appendices?

Respondents may include additional information in appendices; there is no page limit for appendices.

RFP page 15: “The cost proposal shall be typed using the formatting provided on the provided template.” – Please clarify where the cost proposal template can be found.

Please reach out to the Division of Purchasing within the Department of Administration—the cost proposal template language is boilerplate and provided by them.

With current office closures due to COVID-19, would RIDE accept digital signatures?

Rhode Island will accept original electronic signatures.

Would RIDE re-consider acceptance of USB thumb drives in lieu of CD-Rs?

No, the State will only accept CD-R's due to security.

Vendor G

What role will district educators play within the platform? Will teachers use the platform to create virtual learning opportunities?

It is unlikely that teachers will use the platform to create virtual learning opportunities. Ideally, such opportunities should already be created and exist in order for teachers to administer to students, allowing teachers to focus their attention on ancillary support of students.

What kind of content are you looking to include?

The platform should contain content high quality instructional materials in the core content areas—mathematics, language arts, science, social studies—that can meet the needs of all students (Tier 1), including those needing enrichment or extension, multilingual learners, differently abled students, and those needing additional support or remediation (Tier 2, and Tier 3). Additionally, there should be some form of aligned assessment.

What content is currently being utilized?

Question is unclear; this RFP posting seeks an online learning platform for future use. No content is currently being utilized.

What standards will be used?

The platform's offerings should align with and support, first and foremost, the Common Core State Standards, and additionally, the WIDA Standards for Language Acquisition.

Vendor H

Are you looking for a comprehensive platform with all content areas already pre-determined /pre-loaded or are you looking for content for the various curricular areas on such a platform?

Rhode Island is actually looking for both—the state seeks to solve for multiple problems, within multiple scenarios.

Vendor I

The evaluation criteria on page 12 matches what is on pages 8 – 9, Section A. Technical Proposal, #1 – 4, however, this does not include what is shown in the Technical Proposal Format on pages 9 -11. Are vendors to respond to #1 – 4 (staff qualifications, capacity, work plan, approach) AND provide point-by-point responses to all the prompts in the Technical Proposal Format? If so, it is not feasible to respond to all of these in the 6-page limit for the Technical Proposal that is stated in #4 on page 14. Please advise if this limit is an error or if I am misunderstanding the expectation.

The numbered questions outlined in Technical Proposal Format on pages 9-11 should be addressed and/or embedded within a vendor's response for Section 1 through Section 4. To that end, the response should be organized starting with Section 1, Staff Qualifications. However, please note that Sections 1 and 2 are not included in the page limit, and neither are offeror qualifications, any and all appendices, as well as any resumes submitted. To that end, please ensure that answers or responses to the guiding questions starting on page 9 are included in some form or fashion within the final, complete response. The total limit of 6 pages for the Technical Proposal is accurate and not an error.

Page 14, Section 7 Proposal Contents lists a Cover Form, W-9 and Appendix A. Are these to be included as a separate proposal? Individual documents? In the original version of the Technical Proposal? How should they be labeled?

They may be as a separate packet labeled as Cover Form, W-9 and Appendix A.

Are vendors permitted to take exceptions to any of the requirements listed in the RFP (e.g. insurance requirements) If so, where should we do so?

Vendors are permitted to take exceptions to the requirements listed in the RFP. However, please note that RIDE understands the insurance requirements to be non-negotiable given the nature of this solution and its relationship to protected or confidential student data.

Given the pandemic and continued work-from-home orders for almost all of our staff, including authorized signers, are electronic signatures acceptable in lieu of wet signatures?
Rhode Island will accept original electronic signatures.

Vendor J

We understand that RFP No. 7606797 will be used to establish a Master Price Agreement of qualified service providers for an Online Distance Learning Platform. Please confirm that this list will not preclude Districts from continuing to use other products such as textbooks / offline instruction.

The work to identify an online distance learning platform to support schools, districts, students, and families during and after the COVID-19 crisis and return to schooling neither forecloses nor precludes LEAs from continuing to use other products, as deemed appropriate and high quality.

Vendor K

The text in Table of Contents links to a file located at <file:///ent-fs-vm002.enterprise.ri.gov/DOA-PURCHASES/Home/Robert.DeAngelis/RFP%2520-%2520OnlineDistanceLearningPlatform%25206.4.2020.docx>. We are unable to access this. Does it contain more details than what is mentioned in the RFP document or does it refer to this same RFP document which was earlier in .docx format?

There are no links in the Table of Contents.

Proposal - Approach/Methodology We understand the state would like to run a pilot with a limited group of LEAs. Can you confirm if the pilot is expected to be rolled out in summer 2021

The state intends and plans for this option to be available and rolled out by August 31, 2020.

Section 3 Can you please elaborate on the content areas to be supported on the platform. Does it refer to content types/formats the platform support or the actual preloaded content on the platform.

This refers to actual preloaded content on the platform.

Please clarify what type of content would reside on the platform. Will it house OER content or content from third party content providers. Does the scope also include integrating LEA content and local assessments on the platform

The platform should contain content high quality instructional materials in the core content areas—mathematics, language arts, science, social studies—that can meet the needs of all students (Tier 1), including those needing enrichment or extension, multilingual learners, differently abled students, and those needing additional support or remediation (Tier 2, and Tier 3). The scope does not include integrating LEA content or local assessments on the platform; ideally, the content would not be 3rd party or OER.

Section 3 Does the state have any partnership with 3rd party content providers whose content you want to integrate on the platform. If yes, can you please provide the details?

At this current time, no, the state does not.

Section 3 For multilingual support, what are the probable languages the platform should support?

First, by a wide margin, is Spanish. Subsequent to those are Khmer Mung, Creole (Haitian and Cape Verdean), and Portuguese.

Section 3 What is the level of training for educators and staff requirements? What are the KPIs that need to be fulfilled at the end of the training(s) for the staff to be enabled and empowered? This will help to remodel our default training model to fit to RIDE requirements. Also, is the state looking for the vendor to issue certifications to the trainees after successfully completing the platform training?

Certifications from the vendor may be offered at the vendor's discretion. At this time, the level of training required for educators and staff is unknown and undecided. Please submit a proposal, with options, that captures the dynamism of the moment, the changing landscape, and prioritizes flexibility.

Section 3 Presuming there is content available in digital form for PK12, is there a need to rework/align the contents to a competency framework, instructional design, and/or creation of course content and assessment items.

Question is unclear; the purpose of this platform is to provide content, and that content or those courses should be aligned to CCSS, WIDA, and other applicable standards in accord with broader Rhode Island law and regulation.

Section 3 Can you please elaborate on the requirement of supporting **evidence-based track record of success** for the learning platform mentioned in the RFP.

Vendors should demonstrate that they have a track record of success with student groups and general populations similar to the student demographics of Rhode Island. Additionally, if vendors have access to white papers, implementation studies, research briefs, or evaluations that demonstrate an evidence-base for their platform or their approach, this is beneficial as well.

Section 4 The RFP states that the platform should support intervention at tier 1 and 2. Would like to understand if this refers to students intervention ie. platform's ability to provide feedback to students, direct instructions or it means how the vendor will provide L1/L2 support of the platform

The platform should support Tier 1 instruction that is accessible and available to all students. Additionally, the platform should provide supports or interventions for students who need additional scaffolding in order to access the content or demonstrate mastery. If the platform is able to provide feedback to students, direct instruction, or L1/L2 support, then all the better.

Section 4 For integration with Student Information Systems, what are the integration mechanics options available. Do these systems provide APIs for external systems to consume data or the data will be available in flat files (excel / csv) to be imported into the learning platform?

The integration mechanics will look different for different LEAs; however, of the options offered, most districts have an approach that will support either one or the other. Please plan an approach that is flexible.

Vendor L

What is the anticipated implementation start date?

The first day of school across the state of Rhode Island—August 31, 2020.

Item # 4, p.7 (Required Insurance): Would you please confirm the required minimum limits for the Information Technology / Cyber Privacy insurance?

The minimum requirements for this are as listed within the RFP.

Several specifications mention support for Tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions (p.10) – is the RIDE seeking supplemental / intervention programs in addition to digital courses / core instructional solutions?
Yes, Rhode Island seeks to solve for multiple problems, within multiple scenarios; one of those scenarios is for supplemental or intervention programs in addition to broader core instructional solutions.

Cost Proposal (p.11): Does the RIDE intend to make a statewide purchase of the online / distance learning platform(s)? Or will the purchase be on the individual District level?
This decision is still under development; please submit a proposal that takes the dynamism of the moment into consideration and offers flexibility toward either path.

With regard to the “fixed administrative cost” – is this for the State or per District?
Rhode Island would be interested in understanding and seeing any fixed administrative costs at both the state and the district level.

If a vendor offers more than one solution to meet the needs as outlined, is it acceptable to submit multiple cost proposals?
If the vendor believes this is the best approach, then they should avail themselves.

Section 7, item # A.4 (p.14): Is it acceptable to submit the electronic copy on a USB / flash drive instead of a CR-R?
No, the State will only accept CD-R's due to security.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, our office continues to operate with very limited staff, and most are working remotely, including our authorized signers. Would it be acceptable to have the required bid forms signed electronically (via secure DocuSign) in lieu of wet signature?
Rhode Island will accept original electronic signatures.

Would the State consider accepting proposals submitted electronically in lieu of printed proposals?
No, the Division of Purchases is open to accept mail.

Vendor M

Does the district intend to award a single vendor or multiple vendors through this process?
This decision will depend on the quality, volume, and viability of the responses received.

Is the awarded contract intended as a statewide purchase or to provide an approved vendors for individual school and districts to purchase from?
This decision is still in development.

How many sites does this implementation involve?
At this time, the total number is unclear; please submit a proposal that is responsive to the ever-changing current environment and identifies flexibilities for this contingency, as needed.

How many students does the State expect to utilize said solution?
At this time, the total number is unclear; please submit a proposal that is responsive to the ever-changing current environment and identifies flexibilities for this contingency, as needed.

Approximately how many educators are expected to be involved in the onboarding of awarded program?

At this time, the total number is unclear; please submit a proposal that is responsive to the ever-changing current environment and identifies flexibilities for this contingency, as needed.

To allow additional time to provide a response, would the State consider an electronic submission?

No, the Division of Purchases is open to accept mail.