



# Nebraska Department of Education Request for Proposals

3/15/16

## Section 1: General Information

### Purpose of the Request for Proposal

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) for the purpose of selecting a qualified contractor to provide classification and compensation consultative services. A contract resulting from this RFP may be issued to a contractor to perform all, any one of, or any combination of the deliverables itemized below.

### Goal

The goal of the project is to refine and maintain a classification and compensation system that would place NDE in a position to compete effectively in the current labor market by attracting, retaining, and rewarding qualified employees in order to carry out the role and mission of the agency and accomplish the goals of the State Board of Education.

### Applicant Qualifications

Applicants shall meet the following qualifications: (1) have a proven regional or national presence and extensive experience in providing consultative services in the area of classification and compensation; and (2) demonstrate an understanding of market surveys and compensation analysis as well as job classification methodology. It is our intent to hire a full service consulting firm to provide all of the deliverables listed below, without subcontracting and without splitting or sharing any of the duties with other vendors.

## Section 2: Key Project Deliverables

The key project deliverables will focus on reviewing and making recommendations regarding NDE's classification, compensation, and performance management activities. Project activities may span a time period of 1 to 2 years. However, specific timelines are required for some activities due to collective bargaining, which will commence in September of 2016.

### 1) *Position Descriptions*

- a) Content/structure. Review existing position descriptions and make recommendations regarding content/structure.
- b) Models. Develop position description models or templates for highly similar positions (e.g., Office Associates, Education Specialists).

- c) Desk audits. Conduct desk audits as deemed necessary to determine position description accuracy.
- d) Update. Assist NDE HR in ensuring that each employee has an up-to-date position description in their personnel file by providing training, reviewing position description drafts and making recommendations for changes in content.

## **2) Classification**

- a) Job evaluation. Review and make recommendations regarding NDE's current job evaluation methodology for reviewing the classification of current positions, properly placing new positions, and making determinations on reclassification requests. This would include a review of the Position Description Questionnaire and Job Evaluation Rubric and recommendations for any changes or new approaches.
- b) Classification system. Review the classification structure currently used by NDE and make recommendations regarding the job classification structure (i.e., job families, the number of classification levels, career ladders, pay grades). The classification structure must be completed by September/October of 2016 due to collective bargaining.
- c) Job placement. Review placement of current positions in the existing job classification system.
  - Recommend strategies to address inflation of classification levels over time.
  - Review and recommend classification placement for specialty jobs (e.g., graphic artist; videographer; project managers), which are low in number of incumbents but have little or no match to existing classification specifications.
  - Review job series placement for selected jobs (e.g., Education vs. Program Specialist).
  - Identify best practices for placement of employees who don't meet the minimum qualifications of a classification, but are doing similar work. Revise as necessary, if the existing classification system is retained, or place positions in the new system.
- d) Classification specifications. Review the current classification specifications and make recommendations for revision based on the classification structure, changes to jobs, and enhanced differentiation between levels. Examine the existing minimum qualifications and make recommendations regarding rigor, equity across pay grades and positions, and differentiation between classification levels.

## **3) Compensation** (Items 3a – 3c must be completed by September 1, 2016 due to collective bargaining.)

- a) Market analysis. Assist NDE in determining benchmark positions and conduct a market analysis of approximately 50-75% of existing NDE positions; submit a written report summarizing the survey data, summarizing responses by classification/position and making recommendations for annual salary increases and changes to NDE's pay structure.
- b) Review pay structures. Review State of Nebraska and NDE pay structures and make recommendations for revisions in NDE's pay structure for 2017-19 to ensure competitiveness.
- c) Salary increases. On the basis of the market analysis, recommend annual salary increase percentages effective July 1, 2017 and July 1, 2018.

- d) Review compensation levels. Review compensation levels for selected NDE bargaining unit positions in comparison to similar State of Nebraska positions; summarize key differences and make recommendations to ensure relative comparability.
- e) In-grade salary increases. Review current methodology, eligibility and evaluation criteria for in-grade salary increases.
- f) Compensation strategies. Analyze current compensation levels and make recommendations for compensation strategies to meet identified compensation goals, including strategies for positions that have historically lagged the market. Make recommendations for variable hiring rates based on identified criteria (e.g., market conditions; work experience; education beyond minimum).
- g) Other compensation issues. Provide recommendations on other compensation issues as requested such as:
  - Salary equity issues, and
  - Salary compression.

#### 4) Performance Management

- a) Analyze existing practices. Review NDE’s performance management approach and make recommendations regarding performance appraisal structure, content and delivery system to ensure alignment with NDE’s goals and compensation philosophy.
- b) Recommendations. Make recommendations regarding other performance management practices such as goal setting and supervisor/direct report meeting frequency and talking points.

#### 5) Communications Plan

Develop a communications plan that incorporates C-suite, supervisor and employee strands, topic areas, and timelines.

#### 6) Summative Report

Present the results of the classification and compensation review in a written report, which summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of current strategies and recommendations for modifications. The report may be written in sections to correspond to blocks of work (e.g., completion of market survey). The summative report must incorporate all of the project deliverables and, at a minimum, contains the following information:

##### Position Descriptions

- a) Recommendations for position description content and structure;
- b) Listing of position description models or templates created;
- c) Summary of desk audits completed;
- d) Summary of services provided in bringing position descriptions up-to-date;

##### Classification - Recommendations regarding NDE’s:

- a) Current job evaluation methodology;
- b) Position description questionnaire;
- c) Job evaluation rubric;

- d) Classification system;
- e) Job placement in existing system and recommendations for changes;
- f) Classification specifications; and
- g) Classification of selected positions in comparison to similar State of Nebraska positions.

#### Compensation

- a) Market survey data for selected positions, with the ability to age data;
- b) Recommendations for revisions to NDE's pay structure for 2017-19;
- c) Recommendations for annual salary increase percentages effective July 1, 2017 and July 1, 2018;
- d) Findings regarding compensation levels for selected NDE bargaining unit positions in comparison to similar State of Nebraska positions;
- e) Recommendations for in-grade salary increase methodology;
- f) Recommendations for compensation strategies including variable hiring rates and corollary criteria for their use; and
- g) Recommendations on salary equity issues, salary compression and other compensation issues as requested.

#### Performance Management

- a) Recommendations regarding performance appraisal structure, content and delivery system; and
- b) Recommendations regarding other performance management practices such as goal setting and supervisor/direct report meeting frequency and talking points.

#### Communications

Summary of communications strategy that was employed.

### **Section 3: Application Requirements**

Proposals must be organized as outlined below and use the corresponding section titles and numbering in the body of the proposal. If information in the applicant's response is deemed to be insufficient for evaluation, NDE reserves the right to request additional information or to reject the submission outright. Fulfillment of the requirements will be determined by NDE and such judgment shall be final.

#### **A. Table of Contents and Proposal Sections**

Proposals must contain a table of contents that lists each of the sections contained in the proposal. It should match the section names listed below and provide corresponding page numbers. Where separate documents are necessary to include in the proposal, title each one inclusive of the appropriate section and list the corresponding document titles under "Attachments" in the table of contents.

#### **B. Cover Letter**

All applications must include a cover letter submitted under the organization's name on the organization's letterhead, containing the following:

- 1) An executive summary of the application. Claims of proprietary information must be included in the cover letter.
- 2) Applicant contact information.
- 3) Identification of any conflict of interest due to employment, contracting for services or paid honorariums to any employee or immediate family members of an employee of NDE during the previous 24 months.
- 4) Original signature and title of a person or an official of the firm who is authorized to commit the organization to a potential contract with NDE.

**C. Qualifications**

Describe the organization’s primary service offerings and qualifications to provide the requested services, and include the following:

- 1) Capacity. Description of experience, competencies, and overall organizational capabilities to provide the requested services.
- 2) Experience with similar projects. Identification of projects similar in scope and size, which were conducted within the last five years for: (1) government entities, and (2) entities within Nebraska. Include a brief summary of the key project deliverables for each project.
- 3) Project staff. Description of the project staff structure; the background, qualifications, and relevant experience of all staff involved in the project, including length of time at organization; list the responsibilities that each staff member will have during the execution of this project. Identify any third party or subcontractor proposed for any services and provide the corresponding contact name, address, qualifications, phone number and email address of the contact.

**D. Plan of Operation**

Provide a specific plan of operation in table format, which includes the following:

- Delineation of project phases or subsets of work;
- Action plans that identify specific action steps to accomplish each requested deliverable;
- Timelines associated with major tasks;
- Staff responsible for major tasks (i.e., vendor staff, NDE HR staff); and
- Summative costs for each requested deliverable.

An example of the requested Plan of Operation format is shown below.

Deliverable	Action Steps	Timeline	Staff Responsible	Deliverable Costs
Phase I: Position Descriptions	Review existing positions descriptions			\$_____
	Develop position description models or templates			
	Conduct desk audits			

**E. Cost of Proposed Services**

Provide an itemized listing of proposed services, estimated work hours, and associated costs. The budget must be sufficiently detailed by project deliverable (e.g., classification) to allow for potential revisions in project scope. Include a statement regarding proposed billing practices.

**F. Market Analysis Report Sample**

Include an example of a representative market analysis report, which reflects the data that would be provided to NDE.

**G. References**

Provide three independent references from three different projects of similar scope, nature, and complexity to that of the proposed NDE project. References from educational or governmental entities are preferred. NDE reserves the right to contact the provided references as well as any other organizations that may provide a reference for the respondent. Each of the references must include the following information:

- 1) Organization name and type (e.g., private business; government);
- 2) General description of services provided, consulting time period and number of consulting work hours;
- 3) Respondent staff who provided services; and
- 4) Reference contact name, title, phone number and email address.

**Section 4: Submittal Instructions**

Application materials. Applicants must submit the following materials to the Point of Contact by the application deadline: (1) one original copy of the proposal; and (2) one digital (i.e., PDF) copy of the application submitted via email or on digital media (i.e., jump drive). All responses must be submitted in accordance with the specific terms of this request.

Application deadline/time. The deadline for receipt of applications is: **Wednesday, March 30, 2016, at 12:00 noon (CDT)**. Any application received after the date and time listed above will not be considered. The timeline for the process is provided below. NDE reserves the right to modify this schedule at any time.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date/Time</u>
Proposals requested	March 15, 2016
Application due date	March 30, 2016; 12 noon (CDT)
Proposals are evaluated	March 31, 2016
Decision made – Finalist notified	April 1, 2016
All bidders notified of decision	April 2, 2016

**Section 5: Selection**

Process overview. NDE seeks responses to this Request for Proposals from respondents that can provide the services requested in Section 2 (Key Project Deliverables). Proposals must include the information requested. By submitting a proposal, the respondent warrants that the respondent has the requisite licenses, certification, and training to perform the services requested. Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following selection criteria:

- *Qualifications* – Experience in performing similar work and in carrying out projects of similar scope and size; capabilities to provide requested services including sufficient numbers of qualified staff dedicated to the project; familiarity with the Nebraska labor market and governmental agencies;

- *Plan of Operation*– The plan of operation addresses each of the requested deliverables, actions steps are clearly described, associated timelines are provided, staff responsible is listed and the costs per deliverable are provided;
- *Cost of Proposed Services* – Costs are well itemized, justified, and reasonable given the services to be provided; and
- *References* – Positive references from three different projects of similar scope, nature, and complexity to that of the proposed NDE project.

Potential On-site Interviews/Presentations. NDE may conclude, after the completion of proposal evaluation, that interviews or presentations are required in order to determine the successful respondent. All such activities would be conducted in Lincoln, Nebraska.

All respondents may not have an opportunity to interview or present. NDE reserves the right to select only the top-scoring respondents at its sole discretion. The interview process would allow the respondents to summarize their proposal and explain and/or clarify any unusual or significant elements related to their proposals. Supplemental information provided as part of the interview process may be recorded and accepted. However, additional information gathered in this matter shall not constitute replacement of proposal contents. Any costs associated with the on-site interview would be the responsibility of the respondent.

If conducted, once the interviews have been completed, NDE reserves the right to award a contract without any further discussion with the respondents regarding the proposals received. Final selection of the vendor will be at the discretion of NDE and will be based on the proposal that is deemed most appropriate given the selection criteria.

## **Section 6: Point of Contact**

The point of contact for questions and all matters related to this request is:

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