

**State of Nebraska (State Purchasing Bureau)**  
**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

RETURN TO:  
State Purchasing Bureau  
301 Centennial Mall South, 1st Fl  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508  
OR  
P.O. Box 94847  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4847  
Phone: 402-471-2401  
Fax: 402-471-2089

SOLICITATION NUMBER	RELEASE DATE
<b>RFI DAS-VRC</b>	<b>November 15, 2013</b>
OPENING DATE AND TIME	PROCUREMENT CONTACT
<b>December 20, 2013 2:00 p.m. Central Time</b>	<b>Kristi Kling/Robert Thompson</b>

This form is part of the specification package and must be signed and returned, along with information documents, by the opening date and time specified.

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!**

**SCOPE OF SERVICE**

The State of Nebraska, Administrative Services (AS), Materiel Division, Purchasing Bureau, is issuing this Request for Information, RFI Number DAS-VRC for the purpose of gathering information related to performing and utilizing vendor reference checks.

Written questions are due no later than December 2, 2013, and should be submitted via e-mail to [matpurch.dasmat@nebraska.gov](mailto:matpurch.dasmat@nebraska.gov). Written questions may also be sent by facsimile to (402) 471-2089.

Bidder should submit one (1) original and one (1) copy of the entire RFI response. RFI responses must be submitted by the RFI due date and time.

RFI RESPONSE MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED VALID. RFI RESPONSE WILL BE REJECTED IF NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS.

1. Sealed RFI responses must be received in State Purchasing by the date and time of RFI opening indicated above. No late information will be accepted. No electronic, e-mail, fax, voice, or telephone information will be accepted.
2. RFI response must meet all specifications of the RFI.
3. This form "REQUEST FOR INFORMATION" MUST be manually signed, in ink, and returned by the information opening date and time along with bidder's response and any other requirements as specified in the RFI.
4. It is understood by the parties that in the State of Nebraska's opinion, any limitation on the contractor's liability is unconstitutional under the Nebraska State Constitution, Article XIII, Section 3, and that any limitation of liability shall not be binding on the State of Nebraska despite inclusion of such language in documents supplied with the contractor's bid or in the final contract.

**BIDDER MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING**

By signing this Request For Information form, the bidder guarantees compliance with the provisions stated in this Request for Information.

FIRM: \_\_\_\_\_

COMPLETE ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TYPED NAME & TITLE OF SIGNER: \_\_\_\_\_

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**I. SCOPE OF THE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

The State of Nebraska, Administrative Services (AS), Materiel Division, Purchasing Bureau (hereafter known as State Purchasing Bureau), is issuing this Request for Information, RFI DAS-VRC for the purpose of gathering information related to performing and utilizing vendor reference checks..

**ALL INFORMATION PERTINENT TO THIS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTERNET AT:** <http://www.das.state.ne.us/materiel/purchasing/rfp.htm>

**A. SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

The State expects to adhere to the tentative procurement schedule shown below. It should be noted, however, that some dates are approximate and subject to change.

	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>DATE/TIME</b>
1	Release Request for Information	November 15, 2013
2	Last day to submit written questions	December 2, 2013
3	State responds to written questions through Request for Information "Addendum" and/or "Amendment" to be posted to the internet at: <a href="http://www.das.state.ne.us/materiel/purchasing/rfp.htm">http://www.das.state.ne.us/materiel/purchasing/rfp.htm</a>	December 6, 2013
4	RFI opening Location: Nebraska State Office Building State Purchasing Bureau 301 Centennial Mall South, Mall Level Lincoln, NE 68508	December 20, 2013 2:00 PM Central Time
5	Conduct oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations (if required)	To Be Determined

## II. RFI RESPONSE PROCEDURES

### A. OFFICE AND CONTACT PERSON

Responsibilities related to this Request for Information reside with the State Purchasing Bureau. The point of contact for the procurement is as follows:

Name: Kristi Kling/Robert Thompson  
Agency: State Purchasing Bureau  
Address: 301 Centennial Mall South, Mall Level  
Lincoln, NE 68508

OR

Address: P.O. Box 94847  
Lincoln, NE 68509  
Telephone: 402-471-2401  
Facsimile: 402-471-2089  
E-Mail: [matpurch.dasmat@nebraska.gov](mailto:matpurch.dasmat@nebraska.gov)

### B. GENERAL INFORMATION

A subsequent Request for Proposal (RFP) may not be issued as a result of this RFI. There will not be a contract as a result of this RFI and the State is not liable for any cost incurred by vendors in replying to this RFI. If an RFP is issued, the information provided will assist the State of Nebraska in developing the Request for Proposal. This RFI does not obligate the State to reply to the RFI responses, to issue an RFP, or to include any RFI provisions or responses provided by vendors in any RFP.

### C. COMMUNICATION WITH STATE STAFF

From the date the Request for Information is issued and until RFI opening (as shown in the Schedule of Events), contact regarding this RFI between potential vendors and individuals employed by the State is restricted to written communication with the staff designated above as the point of contact for this Request for Information.

The following exceptions to these restrictions are permitted:

1. written communication with the person(s) designated as the point(s) of contact for this Request for Information;
2. contacts made pursuant to any pre-existing contracts or obligations; and
3. state-requested presentations, key personnel interviews, clarification sessions or discussions.

Violations of these conditions may be considered sufficient cause to reject a vendor's response to the RFI. No individual member of the State, employee of the State, or member of the Interview Committee is empowered to make binding statements regarding this RFI. The State of Nebraska will issue any clarifications or opinions regarding this RFI in writing.

### D. WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Any explanation desired by a bidder regarding the meaning or interpretation of any Request for Information provision must be submitted in writing to the State Purchasing Bureau and clearly marked "RFI Number DAS-VRC; Vendor Reference Checks Questions". It is preferred that questions be sent via e-mail to [matpurch.dasmat@nebraska.gov](mailto:matpurch.dasmat@nebraska.gov). Questions may also be sent by facsimile to 402-471-2089, but must include a cover sheet clearly indicating that the transmission is to the attention of Kristi Kling/Robert Thompson showing the total number of

pages transmitted, and clearly marked "RFI Number DAS-VRC; Vendor Reference Checks Questions".

Written answers will be provided through an addendum to be posted on the Internet at <http://www.das.state.ne.us/materiel/purchasing/rfp.htm> on or before the date shown in the Schedule of Events.

**E. ORAL INTERVIEWS/PRESENTATIONS AND/OR DEMONSTRATIONS**

The State reserves the right to conduct oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations if required at the sole invitation of the State.

Any cost incidental to the oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations shall be borne entirely by the vendor and will not be compensated by the State

**F. SUBMISSION OF RESPONSE**

The following describes the requirements related to the RFI submission, handling and review by the State.

To facilitate the response review process, one (1) original, clearly identified as such, and one (1) copy of the entire RFI response should be submitted. The copy marked "original" shall take precedence over any other copies, should there be a discrepancy. RFI responses must be submitted by the RFI due date and time.

A separate sheet must be provided that clearly states which sections have been submitted as proprietary or have copyrighted materials. RFI responses must reference the request for information number and be sent to the specified address. Container(s) utilized for original documents should be clearly marked "ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS". Please note that the address label should appear as specified on the face of each container. Rejected late responses will be returned to the bidder unopened, if requested, at bidder's expense. If a recipient phone number is required for delivery purposes, 402-471-2401 should be used. The request for information number must be included in all correspondence.

**G. PROPRIETARY INFORMATION**

Data contained in the response and all documentation provided therein, become the property of the State of Nebraska and the data become public information upon opening the response. If the vendor wishes to have any information withheld from the public, such information must fall within the definition of proprietary information contained within Nebraska's public record statutes. All proprietary information the vendor wishes the state to withhold must be submitted in a sealed package, which is separate from the remainder of the response. The separate package must be clearly marked PROPRIETARY on the outside of the package. Vendor may not mark their entire Request for Information as proprietary. Failure of the vendor to follow the instructions for submitting proprietary and copyrighted information may result in the information being viewed by other vendors and the public. Proprietary information is defined as trade secrets, academic and scientific research work which is in progress and unpublished, and other information which if released would give advantage to business competitors and serve no public purpose (see Neb. Rev. Stat. §84-712.05(3)). In accordance with Attorney General Opinions 92068 and 97033, vendors submitting information as proprietary may be required to prove specific, named competitor(s) who would be advantaged by release of the information and the specific advantage the competitor(s) would receive. Although every effort will be made to withhold information that is properly submitted as proprietary and meets the State's definition of proprietary information, the State is under no obligation to maintain the confidentiality of proprietary information and accepts no liability for the release of such information.

**H. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OPENING**

The sealed responses will be publicly opened and the responding entities announced on the date, time and location shown in the Schedule of Events. Responses will be available for viewing by those present after the opening.

**I. LATE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION RESPONSES**

RFI responses received after the time and date of the RFI opening will be considered late responses. Rejected late responses will be returned to the bidder unopened, if requested, at bidder's expense. The State is not responsible for responses that are late or lost due to mail service inadequacies, traffic or any other reason(s).

### **III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE OF WORK**

The bidder should provide the following information in response to this Request for Information.

#### **A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this Request for Information is to gather information from vendors and/or other procurement contacts that can help the State of Nebraska (the State) Department of Administrative Services (DAS), State Purchasing Bureau (SPB), perform and utilize reference checks for potential vendors as part of the procurement process.

#### **B. CURRENT BUSINESS PRACTICES**

SPB's current boilerplate language is as follows:

"The State reserves the right to check any reference(s), regardless of the source of the reference information, including but not limited to, those that are identified by the company in the proposal, those indicated through the explicitly specified contacts, those that are identified during the review of the proposal, or those that result from communication with other entities involved with similar projects.

Information to be requested and evaluated from references may include, but is not limited to, some or all of the following: project description and background, job performed, functional and technical abilities, communication skills and timeliness, cost and schedule estimates and accuracy, problems (poor quality deliverables, contract disputes, work stoppages, et cetera), overall performance, and whether or not the reference would rehire the firm or individual. Only top scoring bidders may receive reference checks and negative references may eliminate bidders from consideration from award."

This language is included in all Requests for Proposal (RFP) and is used at the discretion of the State and/or the agency evaluating the RFP. The current form utilized by SPB is attached as Exhibit 1 for informational purposes.

#### **C. SCOPE OF WORK**

As a response to this RFI, the State expects to learn:

1. Common practices for seeking vendor references, including but not limited to, formats, lists, forms, procedures, etc., as well as customization options regarding the information gathered
2. The availability of third-party vendor reference investigation and reporting, including but not limited to, the level of detail, investigative and reporting options, scoring matrices, etc.
3. Options which may include, but are not limited to, automated processes, software, software requirements, online interfaces, customer service options, etc.
4. A range of price options/packages

As a part of the RFI response, respondents must include details of credentials and/or experience that can validate qualifications to respond to this RFI.

# Form A

## Vendor Contact Sheet

### Request for Information Number DAS-VRC

Form A should be completed and submitted with each response to this solicitation document. This is intended to provide the State with information on the vendor's name and address, and the specific persons who are responsible for preparation of the vendor's response.

Preparation of Response Contact Information	
Vendor Name:	
Vendor Address:	
Contact Person & Title:	
E-mail Address:	
Telephone Number (Office):	
Telephone Number (Cellular):	
Fax Number:	

Each vendor shall also designate a specific contact person who will be responsible for responding to the State if any clarifications of the vendor's response should become necessary. This will also be the person who the State contacts to set up a presentation/demonstration, if required.

Communication with the State Contact Information	
Vendor Name:	
Vendor Address:	
Contact Person & Title:	
E-mail Address:	
Telephone Number (Office):	
Telephone Number (Cellular):	
Fax Number:	