

State of Nebraska
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

RETURN TO:

Nebraska Department of Education
500 S. 84th Street
2nd Floor
Lincoln, NE 68510-2295
Phone: 531-510-7276

SOLICITATION NUMBER	RELEASE DATE
NDERFI2303	March 8, 2023
OPENING DATE AND TIME	PROCUREMENT CONTACT
May 15, 2023, 2:00 p.m. Central Time	Paul Haas

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

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

SCOPE OF SERVICE

The State of Nebraska, Department of Education (NDE), is issuing this Request for Information (NDERFI2303) for the purpose of gathering responses from qualified vendors to purchase product & service implementation of procurement enhancement for goods and services (Contracts).

Written questions should be submitted via e-mail to nde.procmo@nebraska.gov. Email is to be titled: "NDERFI2303".

Vendor should electronically submit one (1) original of the entire proposal (in PDF format) to nde.procmo@nebraska.gov. RFI responses should be submitted by the proposal due date and time.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SCOPE OF THE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION	3
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS.....	3
RFI RESPONSE PROCEDURES.....	4
OFFICE AND CONTACT PERSON	4
GENERAL INFORMATION	4
COMMUNICATION WITH STATE STAFF	4
WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.....	4
ORAL INTERVIEWS/PRESENTATIONS AND/OR DEMONSTRATIONS.....	5
SUBMISSION OF RESPONSE.....	5
PROPRIETARY INFORMATION	5
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OPENING	6
LATE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OF RESPONSES	6
MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS	6
PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE OF WORK	7
PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND.....	7
SCOPE OF WORK.....	7
SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS.....	7
VENDOR EXPECTATIONS	8
FORM A VENDOR CONTACT SHEET	13

SCOPE OF THE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The State of Nebraska, Department of Education (NDE), is issuing this Request for Information RFI NDERFI2303 for the purpose of gathering responses from qualified vendors to purchase a product & service implementation of procurement enhancement for goods and services (Contracts). It will include the creation (routing (within NDE and contractors), approval, and signature), management, and tracking of contracts and contract payments.

ALL INFORMATION PERTINENT TO THIS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTERNET AT: <https://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/bidopps.html>

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.

	ACTIVITY	DATE/TIME
1	Release Request for Information	03/08/2023
2	Last day to submit written questions	03/22/2023
3	State responds to written questions through Request for Information "Addendum" and/or "Amendment" to be posted to the internet at: https://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/bidopps.html	04/12/2023
4	RFI opening Location: Responses will be opened by NDE RFI evaluation committee members virtually via Zoom or Teams. Public Opening Call Link: https://educationne.zoom.us/j/6562668370	05/15/2023 2:00 PM Central Time
5	Conduct oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations (if required)	To Be Determined

RFI RESPONSE PROCEDURES

OFFICE AND CONTACT PERSON

Responsibilities related to this Request for Information reside with the Nebraska department of Education (NDE). The point of contact for the RFI is as follows:

Name: Paul Haas
Agency: Nebraska Department of Education
Address: 500 S. 84th Street
2nd Floor
Lincoln, NE 68510-2611
Telephone: 531-510-7276
E-Mail: nde.procmods@nebraska.gov

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 NDE 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 NDE in developing the Request for Proposal. This RFI does not obligate the State NDE to reply to the RFI responses, to issue an RFP, or to include any RFI provisions or responses provided by vendors in any RFP.

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 NDE should be 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. The 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 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 Evaluation 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.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Any explanation desired by a vendor regarding the meaning or interpretation of any Request for Information provision should be submitted in writing to the Nebraska department of Education and clearly marked "NDERFI2303; (information requesting) Questions". It is preferred that questions be sent via e-mail to nde.procmods@nebraska.gov

It is recommended that Vendors submit questions sequentially numbered, include the RFI reference and page number using the following format.

<u>Question Number</u>	<u>RFI Section Reference</u>	<u>RFI Page Number</u>	<u>Question</u>

Written answers will be provided through an addendum to be posted on the Internet at <https://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/bidopps.html> on or before the date shown in the Schedule of Events.

ORAL INTERVIEWS/PRESENTATIONS AND/OR DEMONSTRATIONS

The NDE RFI Evaluation Committee may conclude that oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations are required. All vendors may not have an opportunity to interview/present and/or give demonstrations. The presentation process will allow the vendors to demonstrate their RFI offering, explaining and/or clarifying any unusual or significant elements related to their response.

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.

SUBMISSION OF RESPONSE

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

To facilitate the response evaluation process, one (1) original of the entire RFI response should be submitted to nde.procmo@nebraska.gov. RFI responses should 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 should reference the request for information number and be sent to the specified address. The Request for Information number must be included in all correspondence.

The Technical and Cost Proposals should be presented in separate sections. Pages may be consecutively numbered for the entire response or may be numbered consecutively within sections. Figures and tables must be numbered consecutively and referenced in the text by that number. They should be placed as close as possible to the referencing text.

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.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OPENING

The sealed responses will be virtually 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. Vendors may also contact the state to schedule an appointment for viewing RFI responses.

LATE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OF RESPONSES

Responses received after the time and date of the RFI responses opening will be considered late Responses. The State is not responsible for responses that are late or lost due to technical difficulties.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

The responses will first be examined to determine if all mandatory requirements listed below have been addressed to warrant further evaluation. Responses not meeting mandatory requirements will be excluded from further evaluation. The mandatory requirement items are as follows:

1. Executive Summary
2. Corporate Overview
3. Technical Proposal
4. Cost Proposal

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE OF WORK

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) needs to enhance and centralize the procurement process for goods, services, requisitions, licensing, leasing, and other procurement initiatives. The procurement process within NDE previously was not centralized or digitalized, which led to slower processes and delayed decisions. The increasing day-to-day need for better procurement processes requires more efficient and technologically advanced tools to accelerate the procurement process.

SCOPE OF WORK

Scope of work outlines project tasks, activities, and deliverables to be completed and delivered by the vendor during the life of the project. As part of the response, the vendor must provide a proposed preliminary project plan with milestone and schedule. The vendor must reflect a recommended implementation approach and strategy for accomplishing the tasks, activities, and deliverables identified throughout the RFI.

Major work tasks and project deliverables to be completed and produced by the vendor include:

1. Project Planning and Management; Project timeline
2. Product/Service purchase and installation
3. Initial setups/administration
4. Build integrations & necessary interfaces
5. System Environment and Cloud Configuration
6. System Requirements Refinement
7. System Design, Development and Configuration
8. Test Plan and User Acceptance Testing
9. Operations and Support Documentation
10. Training
11. Implementation
12. Post implementation and Maintenance Support.
13. Ongoing patches/upgrades, license requirements, vendor helpdesk service level agreement (SLA) & Product/service cost associated for next 3 to 5 years.
14. Optional features, functionalities, and services

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Vendors must describe how their proposed solution aligns and physically implements the functionality as identified within the RFI. Where appropriate, vendors are encouraged to describe how their proposed solution provides added value to the requirements.

1. COMPUTING AND HOSTING PLATFORM

- a. The proposed solution must be capable of integrating with Workday (State HR System), Enterprise 1, and other procurement related applications. The proposed solution should be capable of providing single sign-on for purchasing of goods and services, requisition, and similar procurement needs.

2. SYSTEM/APPLICATION SECURITY

- a. Authentication
 - i. The proposed solution must support multiple authentication directories.
 - ii. The proposed solution must include a form of Multi Factor Authentication (MFA).
 - iii. The proposed solution must use OAuth standards.
 - iv. The proposed solution must have robust logging capabilities for auditing.
- b. Authorization
 - i. The proposed solution must support role-based and/or attribute-based access with flexibility of permissions.
 - ii. The proposed solution must support multiple organizations with their own permission management.

VENDOR EXPECTATIONS

1. SYSTEM SOFTWARE

- a. The vendor must include within their cost proposal all required system operations, database, security, and virtualization software, functional and interface software and all other third party and vendor software products required to properly design, develop, test, train, implement, interface, maintain, tune, and operate the proposed solution and fully satisfy the State's requirements.
- b. Software releases and versions must be the most current required to operate the vendor's proposed solution correctly and properly.
- c. Any other software used within the system, for which the State would need to obtain licenses, must be defined by the vendor. While the State requires each vendor to include their costs for all third-party software and associated licenses, Project Costs, the State, at its sole option, reserves the right to procure any or all of the software and associated licenses from another source.
- d. The software shall support creation, amendment, and publishing RFI/RFP/RFQ. Specific users should be able to upload, download, and delete files.
- e. The software shall present an authorized user with clear process for performing specific tasks in a form of workflow for the necessary actions.
- f. The software shall allow bidders to create bids electronically. The bidders shall be able to upload relevant files. (Possibly, using an electronic form)
- g. The software shall have multiple modules integrated with each other (for bidding, registration, contract, reporting, approval, employee travel). This will make it more feasible to add functionalities to specific modules in the future. All the necessary information shall be automatically transferred between modules.
- h. The software shall restrict user to perform tasks ONLY through the system service to which the user has access.
- i. The software shall provide single interface for registration of stakeholders (NDE offices, suppliers, approvers, committee members) who shall use the e-procurement software. There shall be authentication requirement for different groups.
- j. The software shall provide the users with Search functionality.

- k. Sunset/Decommission legacy systems in iterations.
- l. Capability of scheduling and planning leave/vacation/travel reimburse with full visibility.
- m. The software shall have the capacity to handle no. of transactions, storage capacity etc.
- n. The software shall minimize impact on existing, internal and external legacy systems.
- o. The software shall process payments made by credit card, checks, and journal transfers, at a minimum.
- p. The software shall eliminate the use of offline forms by the department/agencies by incorporating such dynamic/static content within the software modules.
- q. The software shall have a module for NDE employees to log in to request and receive approvals for travel. It shall support requesting and receiving approval for reimbursement and upload substantiating vouchers. This should be easy to integrate Kronos.
- r. The software shall include functionality which allows NDE users to create reminders and to-do / follow up lists for vendor management and other in-house functions.

2. SYSTEM HARDWARE

- a. The vendor must include within their proposal all server, data storage, virtualization, cables, cards, connectors and other hosting, imaging, and server related equipment information necessary to fully satisfy the State's RFI requirements and properly operate the vendor's proposed solution. This includes equipment necessary for proof-of-concept, development, test, user acceptance/training, and final production processing environments. Equipment proposed by the vendor must be all mainstream computing equipment offered by leading computing equipment manufacturers.
- b. The State envisions using pre-production environments to facilitate test, user acceptance, and training project tasks. Each environment, either physical or virtual, must use mainstream industry-standard hardware, software, and relational database management products. While the State requires each vendor to include their costs for all base components and third-party equipment, Project Costs, the State, at its sole option, reserves the right to procure any or all of the required components and equipment from another source, based upon specifications provided by the successful vendor. Vendors must provide a comprehensive equipment list including equipment make, model and primary configuration.

3. SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

- a. Vendors must describe the system architecture degree of "openness" and adherence to industry standard hardware, software, security, and communications protocols.
- b. Vendors must describe the hosting environment options.
- c. The software shall allow buyers/administrators to define a time period within which certain activities must happen (Time Boxed activities for e.g., suppliers/vendors posting their questions

or submitting a bid). The e-procurement software shall close the specific process after the defined time period. This shall be implemented within the e-procurement portal and shall happen automatically.

- d. The software shall implement the business rules/validations as provided by the NDE. (For e.g., the software should notify ONLY relevant people for contracts above or below a threshold limit.)
- e. Different modules shall have FAQs/Training material for relevant stakeholders.
- f. The software shall calculate and display the overall score of the evaluated bids. (For internal use - restricted access)
- g. The software shall support generating, exporting/downloading reports and shall allow slicing and dicing the report parameters (for e.g., quarterly report of awarded contracts)
 - i. Create customized report pages (management dashboards)
 - ii. Create, store, and share standard queries.
 - iii. Create export results and analyze data in standard desktop tools.
 - iv. automated reports distribution features
- h. The software shall have capability to distinguish between contract/Purchase Order etc. and have a different workflow for different types of orders.
- i. Purchase card portal enhancement & QE2 replacement
- j. The software to have history tab to retain historical data on different types of contracts.

4. SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, CAPACITY, AND SCALABILITY

- a. The software shall have the capability to - Add new users and update existing users.
- b. The software shall populate the information in the database for further use once users have registered.
- c. The software shall support e-signature.
- d. The system shall allow single sign-on and role-based access control (RBAC) to the portal. (Users shall be able to sign with their NDE log in credentials and shall be able to view content and modules as per their roles).
- e. The software shall have interoperability with NDE applications/software (For e.g., Enterprise One)
- f. The software shall provide a mechanism for administrators to validate the provided details that the user filled in.
- g. The software shall have the capability to generate preset templates with some dynamic content for user input.
- h. The software shall allow users to set up vendor evaluation criteria. (This will be role based. To be accessed only by approvers and Evaluation Committee)

- i. Scalability (Vendor to provide scalability capabilities)
- j. The software shall have the capability to exchange information with State systems and other third-party software's being utilized by NDE.
- k. Contracts tracking using a more scalable, elegant, efficient, and interoperable way. The system should have the capability to track open contracts with vendors throughout the contract lifecycle. Should track contract start date, contract end date, status, work done %, contract amount, vendor name etc.

5. SYSTEM AVAILABILITY, RELIABILITY, AND MAINTAINABILITY

- a. The software shall have an email notification mechanism that shall send email notification to relevant users when a specific action is performed. The buyer shall be able to log in and select specific request (for e.g., "Purchase Goods" or "Create a Service Contract")
- b. The software shall have a Grant Management module.
- c. Build a set of systems and best practices for handling tasks and operations (e.g., creating a standard end-to-end process for Procure to Pay)
- d. Provide procurement approval workflow process to be used by all staff before any procurement can be carried out. This would be common to all procurement processes, with additional steps for each type of procurement transaction.
- e. Transitioning the NDE staff to new software/applications. Migrating processes gradually and providing training.
- f. General Ledger (GL), Accounts Payable (AP), Accounts Receivable (AR), cash management and tax management. Order entry, order management, financial management, and inventory management system

6. STATEWIDE SYSTEM SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

- a. The software shall support an audit trail log. (It should register all login and other activities with timestamp) and for how many years.
- b. Software must support appropriate security controls (for example, user roles with pre-defined access rights.)
- c. Sensitive data stored various components of the software shall be encrypted before they are stored.
- d. Build data validation to be compliant with Legal/Compliance requirements.
- e. The System shall have the capability to alert users at various critical stages. (For example, in situations where legal review is a must before approvals)

7. DISASTER RECOVERY AND SYSTEM INTEGRITY

- a. Post Implementation support, Ongoing maintenance, Disaster Recovery Plan.

- b. Provide training manual/videos for NDE staff on how to use the system.
- c. Easy to integrate with NDE existing applications.
- d. Record Retention Plan - What data to be retained for how long and what are the Legal/compliance

FORM A Vendor Contact Sheet

Request for Information Number NDERFI2303

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:	