



State of Arkansas
Bureau of
Legislative Research

Marty Garrity, Director
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for Legal Services
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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP Number: BLR-170002	
Commodity: Tax Reform Consulting Services	Proposal Opening Date: August 10, 2017
Date: July 13, 2017	Proposal Opening Time: 4:30 P.M. CDT

PROPOSALS SHALL BE SUBMITTED IN HARD COPY AND ELECTRONIC FORMAT AND WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL THE TIME AND DATE SPECIFIED ABOVE. THE PROPOSAL ENVELOPE MUST BE SEALED AND SHOULD BE PROPERLY MARKED WITH THE PROPOSAL NUMBER, DATE AND HOUR OF PROPOSAL OPENING, AND VENDOR'S RETURN ADDRESS. THE ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS SHOULD BE CLEARLY MARKED AS A PROPOSAL IN RESPONSE TO RFP NO. BLR-170002. IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO RETURN "NO BIDS" TO THE BUREAU OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH.

Vendors are responsible for delivery of their proposal documents to the Bureau of Legislative Research prior to the scheduled time for opening of the particular proposal. When appropriate, Vendors should consult with delivery providers to determine whether the proposal documents will be delivered to the Bureau of Legislative Research office street address prior to the scheduled time for proposal opening. Delivery providers, USPS, UPS, FedEx, and DHL, deliver mail to our street address, State Capitol Building, Room 315, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201, on a schedule determined by each individual provider. These providers will deliver to our offices based solely on our street address.

MAILING ADDRESS:	500 Woodlane Street State Capitol Building, Room 315 Little Rock, Arkansas 72201	PROPOSAL OPENING LOCATION: Bureau of Legislative Research Director's Office State Capitol Building, Room 315
E-MAIL:	thayerj@blr.arkansas.gov	
TELEPHONE:	(501) 682-1937	

Company Name:

Name (type or print):

Title:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Fax Number:

E-Mail Address:

Signature:

USE INK ONLY; UNSIGNED PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED

Identification:

Federal Employer ID Number

Social Security Number

**FAILURE TO PROVIDE TAXPAYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER MAY
RESULT IN PROPOSAL REJECTION**

Business Designation (check one):	Individual []	Sole Proprietorship []	Public Service Corp []
	Partnership []	Corporation []	Government/ Nonprofit []

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:	Tax Reform Consulting Services
TYPE OF CONTRACT:	Term

MINORITY BUSINESS POLICY

Participation by minority businesses is encouraged in procurements by state agencies, and although it is not required, the Bureau of Legislative Research ("BLR") supports that policy. "Minority" is defined at Arkansas Code Annotated § 15-4-303 as "a lawful permanent resident of this state who is: (A) African American; (B) Hispanic American; (C) American Indian; (D) Asian American; (E) Pacific Islander American; or (F) A service-disabled veteran as designated by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs". "Minority business enterprise" is defined at Arkansas Code Annotated § 15-4-303 as "a business that is at least fifty-one percent (51%) owned by one (1) or more minority persons". The Arkansas Economic Development Commission conducts a certification process for minority businesses. Vendors unable to include minority-owned businesses as subcontractors may explain the circumstances preventing minority inclusion.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY

The Vendor shall submit a copy of the Vendor's Equal Opportunity Policy. EO Policies shall be submitted in hard copy and electronic format to the Director of the Bureau of Legislative Research accompanying the solicitation response. The Bureau of Legislative Research will maintain a file of all Vendor EO policies submitted in response to solicitations issued by the Bureau of Legislative Research. The submission is a one-time requirement, but Vendors are responsible for providing updates or changes to their respective policies.

EMPLOYMENT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

The Vendor must certify prior to award of the contract that it does not employ or contract with any illegal immigrants in its contract with the Bureau of Legislative Research. Vendors shall certify online at <https://www.ark.org/dfa/immigrant/index.php/disclosure/submit/new> . Any subcontractors used by the Vendor at the time of the Vendor's certification shall also certify that they do not employ or contract with any illegal immigrant. Certification by the subcontractors shall be submitted within thirty (30) days after contract execution.

DISCLOSURE FORMS

Completion of the EO-98-04 Governor's Executive Order contract disclosure forms located at <http://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/offices/procurement/Documents/contgrantform.pdf> is required as a condition of obtaining a contract with the Bureau of Legislative Research and must be submitted with the Vendor's response.

SECTION I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Request For Proposal ("RFP") issued by the Bureau of Legislative Research ("BLR") is to invite responses ("Proposals") from Vendors desiring to provide tax reform consulting services for the Tax Relief and Reform Legislative Task Force (the "Task Force"). The Task Force intends to execute one contract as a result of this procurement ("the Contract"), if any contract is issued at all, encompassing all of the products and services contemplated in this RFP, and Proposals shall be evaluated accordingly. All Vendors must fully acquaint themselves with the Task Force's needs and requirements and obtain all necessary information to develop an appropriate solution and to submit responsive and effective Proposals.

1.1 ISSUING AGENCY

This RFP is issued by the BLR for the Task Force. The BLR is the sole point of contact in the state for the selection process. Vendor questions regarding RFP-related matters should be made in writing (via e-mail) through the Director of the BLR's Legal Counsel, Jillian Thayer, thayerj@blr.arkansas.gov. Questions regarding technical information or clarification should be addressed in the same manner.

1.2 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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| • Release RFP | July 13, 2017 |
| • Deadline for submission of questions | August 3, 2017 |
| • Closing for receipt of proposals and opening of proposals | August 10, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. CDT |
| • Evaluation of proposals by BLR | Between Aug. 10, 2017 and Aug. 24, 2017 |
| • Proposals released to Task Force | August 24, 2017 |
| • Selection of Vendors to make Oral Presentations | August 31, 2017 meeting of the Task Force |
| • Oral Presentations/Intent to Award | September 7, 2017, meeting of the Task Force |
| • Approval of draft contract by Task Force Chairs | Within 1 week after intent to award |
| • Approval of draft contract by the Policy Making Subcommittee of the Legislative Council | September 14, 2017 |
| • Approval of contract by Legislative Council | September 15, 2017 |
| • Contract Execution/Contract Start Date | Upon approval of the Legislative Council |
| • Preliminary Report Due | December 1, 2017 |
| • Final Report Due | September 1, 2018 |

Proposals are due no later than the date and time listed on Page 1 of the RFP.

1.3 **CAUTION TO VENDORS**

- During the time between the proposal opening and contract award, any contact concerning this RFP will be initiated by the issuing office or requesting entity and not the Vendor. Specifically, the Bureau of Legislative Research will initiate all contact.
- **Vendors are requested to respond to each numbered paragraph of the RFP.**
- Vendors must submit one (1) signed original hard copy of the proposal on or before the date specified on page one of this RFP. In addition, the Vendor should submit, on or before the date specified on page one of this RFP, two (2) electronic versions of the proposal (one (1) redacted electronic version and one (1) unredacted electronic version), preferably in MS Word/Excel format, on CD, flash drive, or via e-mail. **Do NOT include any pricing from the Official Proposal Price Sheet on the copies, including on the CD, flash drive, or in the e-mail. Pricing from the Official Proposal Price Sheet, attached as Attachment A, must be separately sealed and submitted from the proposal response and clearly marked as pricing information. The electronic version of the Official Proposal Price Sheet must also be sealed and submitted separately from the electronic version of the proposal and, if submitted via e-mail, the e-mail must clearly state that the attachment contains pricing information.** Failure to submit the required number of copies with the proposal may be cause for rejection.
- For a proposal to be considered, an official authorized to bind the Vendor to a resultant contract must have signed the proposal **and** the Official Proposal Price Sheet.
- All official documents shall be included as part of the resultant Contract.
- The Task Force reserves the right to award a contract or reject a proposal for any or all line items of a proposal received as a result of this RFP, if it is in the best interest of the Task Force to do so. Proposals will be rejected for one or more reasons not limited to the following:
 - a. Failure of the Vendor to submit his or her proposal(s) on or before the deadline established by the issuing office;
 - b. Failure of the Vendor to respond to a requirement for oral/written clarification, presentation, or demonstration;
 - c. Failure to supply Vendor references;
 - d. Failure to sign an Official RFP Document;
 - e. **Failure to complete the Official Proposal Price Sheet(s) and include them sealed separately from the rest of the proposal;**
 - f. Any wording by the Vendor in their response to this RFP, or in subsequent correspondence, which conflicts with or takes exception to a requirement in the RFP; or
 - g. Failure of any proposed services to meet or exceed the specifications.

1.4 **RFP FORMAT**

Any statement in this document that contains the word “**must**” or “**shall**” means that compliance with the intent of the statement is mandatory, and failure by the Vendor to satisfy that intent will cause the proposal to be rejected. It is recommended that Vendors respond to each item or paragraph of the RFP in sequence. Items not needing a specific vendor statement may be responded to by concurrence or acknowledgement; a failure to provide a response will be interpreted as an affirmative response or agreement to the BLR conditions. Reference to handbooks or other technical materials as part of a response must not constitute the entire response, and Vendor must identify the specific page and paragraph being referenced.

1.5 **ALTERATION OF ORIGINAL RFP DOCUMENTS**

The original written or electronic language of the RFP shall not be changed or altered except by approved written addendum issued by the Bureau of Legislative Research. This does not eliminate a Vendor from taking exception(s) to these documents, but it does clarify that the Vendor cannot change the original document's written or electronic language. If the Vendor wishes to make exception(s) to any of the original language, it must be submitted by the Vendor in separate written or electronic language in a manner that clearly explains the exception(s). If Vendor's submittal is discovered to contain alterations/changes to the original written or electronic documents, the Vendor's response may be declared non-responsive, and the response shall not be considered.

1.6 REQUIREMENT OF AMENDMENT

THIS RFP MAY BE MODIFIED ONLY BY AMENDMENTS WRITTEN AND AUTHORIZED BY THE BUREAU OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH. Vendors are cautioned to ensure that they have received or obtained and responded to any and all amendments to the RFP prior to submission.

1.7 RFP QUESTIONS

Any questions regarding the contents and requirements of the RFP and the format of responses to the RFP should be directed to Jillian Thayer via email only at thayerj@blr.arkansas.gov. Questions must be submitted by the deadline set forth in Section 1.2, Schedule of Events. Questions submitted by Vendors and answers to questions, as provided by the Bureau of Legislative Research, will be made public.

1.8 SEALED PRICES/COST

The Official Proposal Price Sheet submitted in response to this RFP must be submitted separately sealed from the proposal response or submitted in a separate e-mail. **Vendors must include all pricing information on the Official Proposal Price Sheet and any attachments thereto and must clearly mark said page(s) and e-mail as pricing information. The electronic version of the Official Proposal Price Sheet must also be sealed separately from the electronic version of the proposal and submitted on CD, flash drive, or in a separate e-mail.** Official Proposal Price Sheets may be reproduced as needed. Vendors may expand items to identify all proposed services and costs. A separate listing, which must include pricing, may be submitted with summary pricing.

All charges included on the Official Proposal Price Sheet, must be valid for one hundred eighty (180) days following proposal opening, and shall be included in the cost evaluation. The pricing must include all associated costs for the service being bid.

The BLR will not be obligated to pay any costs not identified on the Official Proposal Price Sheet. Any cost not identified by the Vendor but subsequently incurred in order to achieve successful operation will be borne by the Vendor.

The total maximum amount of the bid listed on the Official Proposal Price Sheet will be the maximum amount that may be paid out under any resulting Contract. The amount paid by the BLR to the Successful Vendor will be based on billing for actual hours worked and documented in the hourly rates set forth in the Official Proposal Price Sheet, as well as reimbursements for actual expenses, documented by receipts, up to the maximum contract amount.

1.9 PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

Proposals and documents pertaining to the RFP become the property of the BLR, and after release to the Task Force shall be open to public inspection pursuant to the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act, § 25-19-101, *et seq.* It is the responsibility of the Vendor to identify all proprietary information by providing a redacted copy of the proposal, as discussed below, and to seal such information in a separate envelope or e-mail marked as confidential and proprietary.

The Vendor must submit one (1) complete electronic copy of the proposal from which any proprietary information has been removed, i.e., a redacted copy. The redacted copy should reflect the same pagination as the original, show the empty space from which information was redacted, and be submitted on a CD, a flash drive, or in a separate e-mail. Except for the redacted information, the electronic copy must be identical to the original hard copy. The Vendor is responsible for ensuring the redacted copy on CD, flash drive, or submitted via e-mail is protected against restoration of redacted data.

1.10 DELIVERY OF RESPONSE DOCUMENTS

It is the responsibility of vendors to submit proposals at the place and on or before the date and time set in the RFP solicitation documents. Proposal documents received at the Bureau of Legislative Research Offices after the date and time designated for proposal opening are considered late proposals and shall not be considered. Proposal documents that are to be returned may be opened to verify which RFP the submission is for. Proposals may be submitted via e-mail to Jillian Thayer, Legal Counsel to the Director, at thayerj@blr.arkansas.gov.

1.11 BID EVALUATION

The Task Force will evaluate all proposals to ensure all requirements are met. The Contract will be awarded on the basis of the proposal that most thoroughly satisfies the relevant criteria as determined by the Task Force.

1.12 ORAL AND/OR WRITTEN PRESENTATIONS/DEMONSTRATIONS

The Task Force will select a small group of Vendors from among the proposals submitted to attend the September 7, 2017 meeting of the Task Force to answer questions and to make oral and/or written presentations to the Task Force. All presentations are subject to be recorded.

All expenses of the Vendor associated with attending the September 7, 2017 Task Force meeting will be borne by the Vendor.

The Successful Vendor selected by the Task Force shall attend the September 14, 2017 meeting of the Policy Making Subcommittee of the Legislative Council and the September 15, 2017 meeting of the Legislative Council, and actual expenses of the Vendor in attending these meetings will be reimbursed under the contract.

1.13 INTENT TO AWARD

After complete evaluation of the proposal, the intent to award will be announced at the September 7, 2017, meeting of the Task Force. The purpose of the announcement is to establish a specific time in which vendors and agencies are aware of the intent to award. The Task Force reserves the right to waive this policy, The Intent to Award, when it is in the best interest of the state.

1.14 APPEALS

A Vendor who is aggrieved in connection with the award of a contract may protest to the Executive Subcommittee of the Legislative Council. The protest shall be submitted in writing within five (5) calendar days after the intent to award is announced. After reasonable notice to the protestor involved and reasonable opportunity for the protestor to respond to the protest issues cited by the Executive Subcommittee, the Arkansas Legislative Council, or the Joint Budget Committee if the Arkansas General Assembly is in session, shall promptly issue a decision in writing that states the reasons for the action taken. The Arkansas Legislative Council's or the Joint Budget Committee's decision is final and conclusive. In the event of a timely protest, the Bureau of Legislative Research shall not proceed further with the solicitation or with the award of the contract unless the co-chairs of the Arkansas Legislative Council or the Joint Budget Committee make a written determination that the award of the contract without delay is necessary to protect substantial interests of the state.

1.15 PAST PERFORMANCE

A Vendor's past performance may be used in the evaluation of any offer made in response to this solicitation. The past performance should not be greater than three (3) years old and must be supported by written documentation submitted to the Bureau of Legislative Research with the Vendor's RFP response. Documentation shall be in the form of a report, memo, file, or any other appropriate authenticated notation of performance to the vendor files.

1.16 TYPE OF CONTRACT

This will be a term contract commencing on the date of execution of the Contract and terminating on December 31, 2018, with an option for one (1) renewal of up to six (6) months. The BLR will have the option to renegotiate at time of renewal.

1.17 PAYMENT AND INVOICE PROVISIONS

All invoices shall be delivered to the BLR and must show an itemized list of charges. The Invoice, Invoice Remit, and Summary must be delivered via email to Jillian Thayer, Legal Counsel to the Director, at thayerj@blr.arkansas.gov.

The BLR shall have no responsibility whatsoever for the payment of any federal, state, or local taxes that become payable by the Successful Vendor or its subcontractors, agents, officers, or employees. The Successful Vendor shall pay and discharge all such taxes when due.

Payment will be made in accordance with applicable State of Arkansas accounting procedures upon acceptance by the BLR. The BLR may not be invoiced in advance of delivery and acceptance of any services. Payment will be made only after the Successful Vendor has successfully satisfied the BLR as to the reliability and effectiveness of the services as a whole. Purchase Order Number and/or Contract Number should be referenced on each invoice.

The Successful Vendor shall be required to maintain all pertinent financial and accounting records and evidence pertaining to the Contract in accordance with generally accepted principles of accounting and other procedures specified by the BLR. Access will be granted to state or federal government entities or any of their duly authorized representatives upon request.

Financial and accounting records shall be made available, upon request, to the BLR's designee(s) at any time during the contract period and any extension thereof and for five (5) years from expiration date and final payment on the Contract or extension thereof.

1.18 PRIME CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITY

The Successful Vendor will be required to assume prime contractor responsibility for the Contract and will be the sole point of contact.

The Task Force reserves the right to interview the key personnel assigned by the Successful Vendor to this project and to recommend or require reassignment of personnel deemed unsatisfactory by the Task Force.

The Task Force reserves the right to approve subcontractors for this project and require primary contractors to replace subcontractors that are found to be unacceptable.

If any part of the work is to be subcontracted, the Vendor must disclose the same information for the subcontractor as for itself. Responses to this RFP must include a list of subcontractors, including firm name and address, contact person, complete description of work to be subcontracted, and descriptive information concerning subcontractor's business organization.

1.19 DELEGATION AND/OR ASSIGNMENT

The Vendor shall not assign the Contract in whole or in part or any payment arising therefrom without the prior written consent of the BLR, as approved by the Task Force. The Vendor shall not delegate any duties under the Contract to a subcontractor unless the BLR, as approved by the Task Force, has given written consent to the delegation.

1.20 CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT

The Successful Vendor shall at all times observe and comply with federal and state laws, local laws, ordinances, orders, and regulations existing at the time of or enacted subsequent to the execution of the Contract which in any manner affect the completion of the work. The Successful Vendor shall indemnify and save harmless the BLR, the Task Force, the Arkansas General Assembly, and the State of Arkansas and all of their officers, representatives, agents, and employees against any claim or liability arising from or based upon the violation of any such law, ordinance, regulation, order, or decree by an employee, representative, or subcontractor of the Successful Vendor.

1.21 STATEMENT OF LIABILITY

The BLR and the Task Force will demonstrate reasonable care but shall not be liable in the event of loss, destruction, or theft of contractor-owned technical literature to be delivered or to be used in the installation of deliverables. The Vendor is required to retain total liability for technical literature until the deliverables have been accepted by the authorized BLR official. At no time will the BLR or the Task Force be responsible for or accept liability for any Vendor-owned items.

The Successful Vendor shall indemnify and hold harmless the Task Force and its members, the BLR and its officers, directors, agents, retailers, and employees, and the State of Arkansas from and against any and all suits, damages, expenses, losses, liabilities, claims of any kind, costs or expenses of any nature or kind, including, with limitation, court costs, attorneys' fees, and other damages, arising out of, in connection with, or resulting from the development, possession, license, modification, disclosure, or use of any copyrighted or non-copyrighted materials, trademark, service mark, secure process, invention, process or idea (whether patented or not), trade secret, confidential information, article, or appliance furnished or used by a vendor in the performance of the Contract.

The resulting Contract shall be governed by the laws of the State of Arkansas, without regard for Arkansas' conflict of law principles. Any claims against the Bureau of Legislative Research, the Task Force, or the Arkansas General Assembly, whether arising in tort or in contract, shall be brought before the Arkansas State Claims Commission as provided by Arkansas law, and shall be governed accordingly. Nothing in this RFP or the resulting contract shall be construed as a waiver of sovereign immunity.

1.22 AWARD RESPONSIBILITY

The BLR will be responsible for award and administration of any resulting contract(s).

1.23 INDEPENDENT PRICE DETERMINATION

By submission of this proposal, the Vendor certifies, and in the case of a joint proposal, each party thereto certifies as to its own organization, that in connection with this proposal:

- The prices in the proposal have been arrived at independently, without collusion, and that no prior information concerning these prices has been received from or given to a competitive company; and
- If there is sufficient evidence of collusion to warrant consideration of this proposal by the Office of the Attorney General, all Vendors shall understand that this paragraph may be used as a basis for litigation.

1.24 PUBLICITY

News release(s), media interviews, or other publicity by a Vendor pertaining to this RFP or any portion of the project shall not be made without prior written approval of the BLR, as authorized by the Task Force chairs. Failure to comply with this requirement is deemed to be a valid reason for disqualification of the Vendor's proposal.

The Successful Vendor agrees not to use the BLR's, the Task Force's, or the Arkansas General Assembly's names, trademarks, service marks, logos, images, or any data arising or resulting from this RFP or the Contract as part of any commercial advertising or proposal without the express prior written consent of the BLR and the Task Force in each instance.

1.25 CONFIDENTIALITY

The Successful Vendor shall be bound to confidentiality of any confidential information that its employees may become aware of during the course of performance of contracted services. Consistent and/or uncorrected breaches of confidentiality may constitute grounds for cancellation of the Contract.

The Successful Vendor shall represent and warrant that its performance under the Contract will not infringe any patent, copyright, trademark, service mark, or other intellectual property rights of any other person or entity and that it will not constitute the unauthorized use or disclosure of any trade secret of any other person or entity.

1.26 PROPOSAL TENURE

All Proposals shall remain valid for one hundred eighty (180) calendar days from the Proposal due date referenced on Page 1 of the RFP.

1.27 WARRANTIES

- The Successful Vendor shall warrant that it currently is, and will at all times remain, lawfully organized and constituted under all federal, state, and local law, ordinances, and other authorities of its domicile and that it currently is, and will at all times remain, in full compliance with all legal requirements of its domicile and the State of Arkansas.
- The Successful Vendor shall warrant and agree that all services provided pursuant to this RFP and the Contract have been and shall be prepared or done in a workman-like manner consistent with the highest standards of the industry in which the services are normally performed. The Successful Vendor further represents and warrants that all computer programs implemented for performance under the Contract shall meet the performance standards required thereunder and shall correctly and accurately perform their intended functions.
- The Successful Vendor shall warrant that it is qualified to do business in the State of Arkansas and shall file appropriate tax returns as provided by the laws of this State.

1.28 CONTRACT TERMINATION

Subsequent to award and execution of the Contract, either party may terminate the Contract by providing ten (10) days prior written notice.

1.29 VENDOR QUALIFICATIONS

The Successful Vendor must, upon request of the Task Force, furnish satisfactory evidence of its ability to furnish products or services in accordance with the terms and conditions of this proposal. The Task Force reserves the right to make the final determination as to the Vendor's ability to provide the services requested herein.

The Vendor must demonstrate that it possesses the capabilities and qualifications described in Sections 3 and 5, including without limitation the following:

- Be capable of providing the services required by the Task Force;
- Be authorized to do business in this State; and
- Complete the Official Proposal Price Sheet in Attachment A.

1.30 NEGOTIATIONS

As provided in this RFP, discussions may be conducted by the BLR with a responsible Vendor who submits proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of obtaining clarification of proposal responses and negotiation for best and final offers.

1.31 LICENSES AND PERMITS

During the term of the Contract, the Vendor shall be responsible for obtaining, and maintaining in good standing, all licenses (including professional licenses, if any), permits, inspections, and related fees for each or any such licenses, permits, and/or inspections required by the state, county, city, or other government entity or unit to accomplish the work specified in this solicitation and the contract.

1.32 OWNERSHIP OF DATA & MATERIALS

All data, material, and documentation prepared for the Task Force pursuant to the Contract shall belong exclusively to the BLR, for the use of the Task Force and other committees of the Arkansas General Assembly, as authorized by the Task Force.

SECTION 2. OVERVIEW

2.0 TAX REFORM AND RELIEF ACT OF 2017 OVERVIEW

The Tax Reform and Relief Act of 2017 (the "Act"), enacted by the 91st General Assembly of the State of Arkansas, created the Tax Reform and Relief Legislative Task Force in order to "examine and identify areas of potential reform within the tax laws of the State of Arkansas and to recommend legislation."

2.1 OBJECTIVES

It is the objective of the Task Force, by entering into a Contract for consultant services, to provide to the members of the Arkansas General Assembly detailed and accurate information concerning the current state of tax laws and their impact in the State of Arkansas, as well as recommendations for legislative changes in order to:

- Modernize and simplify the Arkansas tax code;
- Make the Arkansas tax laws competitive with other states in order to attract businesses to the State;
- Create jobs within the State; and
- Ensure fairness to all individuals and entities impacted by the tax laws of the State of Arkansas.

The Vendor shall provide this information in a timely manner to the Task Force in order to assist the Task Force in compiling its preliminary report due December 1, 2017 and a final report due September 1, 2018. This information will allow the Task Force to adequately assess the needs in the state in order achieve the requirements of the Act.

This Request for Proposal is designed to obtain a Contract to provide tax reform consulting services to the Task Force. All responses to this RFP shall reflect the overall goals and objectives stated herein. The Vendor shall bill the BLR on an hourly basis for the services provided.

SECTION 3. TAX REFORM CONSULTING SERVICES

3.0 SCOPE OF WORK/SPECIFICATIONS

It will be the responsibility of the Vendor to provide the Task Force and, ultimately, the members of the Arkansas General Assembly with accurate and detailed reports, including information set forth in Section 2, above.

In addition to preparation of a final report, the Successful Vendor will provide:

- Monthly status updates on the project, which will require monthly attendance at meetings of the Task Force to answer questions regarding the status updates;
- Answers to research requests or data inquiries by members of the Task Force, as authorized by the Task Force Co-chairs; and
- Assistance with draft legislation based on recommendations adopted by the Task Force.

The Successful Vendor will also need to be available to attend other meetings of the Task Force and other legislative committees, as requested and authorized by the Task Force Co-Chairs.

In the event that services in addition to those described in this Section 3.0 Scope of Work/Specifications are required during the term of the Contract, the Co-chairs of the Arkansas Legislative Council shall have the power to approve the additional services and an additional fee for those services in an amount not to exceed ten percent (10%) of the Vendor's total maximum amount of the bid as submitted in the Official Proposal Price Sheet and agreed upon in the Contract, upon recommendation of the Task Force.

The Vendor may find it necessary and prudent to pull data from existing studies recently undertaken by other consultants or state agencies. In the event that the Vendor utilizes any information from other reports or studies, the Vendor shall first verify the methodology employed in compiling the data in the reports and the accuracy of the data therein. Documentation of this verification process shall be provided in the reports of the Vendor to the Task Force.

3.1 TAX REFORM CONSULTING

The tax reform consulting services provided by the Successful Vendor pursuant to this Request for Proposal must address the stated specifications and requirements. These services will be provided to the Task Force.

As requested by the Task Force, the Vendor must attend various meetings of the Task Force and other legislative committees of the Arkansas General Assembly. Hourly compensation will be paid for meeting times in addition to reimbursement of actual travel expenses. The Vendor shall explain any anticipated limitations in its ability to attend meetings of the Task Force in its response to this RFP.

All projects shall be paid pursuant to the fee schedule, as stated in the Official Proposal Price Sheet and any attachments thereto. The Vendor shall submit itemized invoices to the BLR, which will pay the invoices on a monthly basis.

The Task Force does not grant the Vendor exclusive rights to all tax reform consulting services contemplated under this RFP. In the event the Task Force decides that the acquisition of these services by another Vendor is in the Task Force's best interest, the Task Force reserves the right to contract and purchase tax reform consulting services from a different source outside of the contract resulting from this RFP, and the Task Force's action to procure services outside of the Contract does not infringe upon, nor terminate, the contract resulting from this Request For Proposal.

3.2 PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES

If the Vendor anticipates the need to procure additional goods or services in order to provide the tax reform consulting services requested in this RFP, the Vendor must identify the goods and/or services that may be procured, the reason the procurement is necessary, the name of the vendor from whom the goods or services are to be procured, and the anticipated cost of the goods and/or services to be procured.

A Vendor does not need to restate each item listed in this Section 3.2 but will be bound by all applicable specifications. Information relating to these matters should be incorporated into the Proposal. A Vendor must provide in detail any limitations in meeting the requirements stated in Section 3.

SECTION 4. COST PROPOSAL

4.0 COMPENSATION

Compensation for tax reform consulting services shall be paid based upon the work performed as specified in this RFP. The budget is subject to approval by the Task Force. A Vendor seeking consideration shall submit a compensation proposal as required below for tax reform consulting services as provided throughout the RFP.

The fee schedule, as set forth on the Official Proposal Price Sheet, will cover the time spent in the completion of the requested task or project, as well as other administrative costs (including, but not limited to, secretarial, bookkeeping, budget preparation, monitoring and auditing services, etc.) The fee schedule will cover any and all travel expenses anticipated in relation to conducting the work required under this RFP and resulting Contract. The fee schedule will cover the time expended inclusive of all overhead or any other costs associated with the particular individuals who may be performing the services.

4.1 PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The BLR shall pay the Vendor based on the hours expended for approved projects on a monthly basis or as otherwise may be agreed to in writing by the parties. The BLR may request and the Vendor shall provide timesheets or other documentation as may be directed by the BLR prior to the payment for any services rendered. Failure to provide appropriate and satisfactory documentation will be sufficient grounds to withhold payment for the disputed amount, but other nondisputed amounts must be paid in a timely manner.

4.2 TRAVEL, LODGING, AND MEALS

The Successful Vendor may submit invoices and receive reimbursement for travel expenses allowed by law related to attending meetings of the Task Force and other legislative committees of the Arkansas General Assembly. Reimbursement of travel expenses will be included in the total maximum contract amount.

Estimates of expenses as allowed by law for travel related to field work required by the Contract and this RFP should be included by the Vendor in the fee schedule, as required by Section 4.0.

SECTION 5. ADDITIONAL VENDOR REQUIREMENTS

5.0 COMPREHENSIVE VENDOR INFORMATION

All proposals should be complete and carefully worded and should convey all of the information requested by the Task Force. If significant errors are found in the Vendor's proposal, or if the proposal fails to conform to the essential requirements of the RFP, the Task Force will be the sole judge as to whether that variance is significant enough to reject the proposal. Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the Vendor's capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the RFP. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of the content. Proposals that include either modifications to any of the contractual requirements of the RFP or a Vendor's standard terms and conditions may be deemed non-responsive and therefore not considered for award.

5.1 VENDOR PROFILE

In addition to information requested in other sections of the RFP, the Vendor shall submit the following:

- Business Name;
- Business Address;
- Alternate Business Address;
- Primary Contact Name, Title, Telephone, Fax, and E-mail Address;
- How many years this company has been in this type of business;
- Proof that the Vendor is qualified to do business in the State of Arkansas;
- A disclosure of the Vendor's name and address and, as applicable, the names and addresses of the following: If the Vendor is a corporation, the officers, directors, and each stockholder of more than a ten percent (10%) interest in the corporation. However, in the case of owners of equity securities of a publicly traded corporation, only the names and addresses of those known to the corporation to own beneficially five percent (5%) or more of the securities need be disclosed; if the Vendor is a trust, the trustee and all persons entitled to receive income or benefits from the trust; if the Vendor is an association, the members, officers, and directors; and if the Vendor is a partnership or joint venture, all of the general partners, limited partners, or joint venturers;
- A disclosure of all the states and jurisdictions in which the Vendor does business and the nature of the business for each state or jurisdiction;
- A disclosure of all the states and jurisdictions in which the Vendor has contracts to supply tax reform consulting services and the nature of the goods or services involved for each state or jurisdiction;
- A disclosure of the details of any finding or plea, conviction, or adjudication of guilt in a state or federal court of the Vendor for any felony or any other criminal offense other than a traffic violation committed by the persons identified as management, supervisory, or key personnel;
- A disclosure of the details of any bankruptcy, insolvency, reorganization, or corporate or individual purchase or takeover of another corporation, including without limitation bonded indebtedness, and any pending litigation of the Vendor;

- A disclosure of any conflicts of interest on the part of the Vendor or its personnel that will be working on this project, especially regarding financial interests that would be impacted depending on the recommendations ultimately made by the Task Force.
- Additional disclosures and information that the Task Force may determine to be appropriate for the procurement involved.

5.2 GENERAL INFORMATION

Vendor shall submit any additional information for consideration such as specialized services, staffs available, or other pertinent information the Vendor may wish to include.

5.3 DISCLOSURE OF LITIGATION

A Vendor must include in its Proposal a complete disclosure of any civil or criminal litigation or indictment involving such Vendor. A Vendor must also disclose any civil or criminal litigation or indictment involving any of its joint ventures, strategic partners, prime contractor team members, and subcontractors. This disclosure requirement is a continuing obligation, and any litigation commenced after a Vendor has submitted a Proposal under this RFP must be disclosed to the BLR in writing within five (5) days after the litigation is commenced.

5.4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Vendor must provide a summary overview and an implementation plan for the entire project being proposed. The intent of this requirement is to provide the Task Force with a concise but functional summary of the discussion of each phase of the Vendor's plan in the order of progression. While the Task Force expects a Vendor to provide full details in each of the sections in other areas of the RFP relating to its plan, the Executive Summary will provide a "map" for the Task Force to use while reviewing the Proposal.

Each area summarized must be listed in chronological order, beginning with the date of Contract execution, to provide a clear indication of the flow and duration of the project. A Vendor may use graphics, charts, pre-printed reports, or other enhancements as a part of this section to support the chronology or add to the presentation. Any such materials must be included in the original and each copy of the Proposal.

5.5 VENDOR'S QUALIFICATIONS

A Vendor shall provide resumes or short biographies and qualifications of all management, supervisory, and key personnel to be involved in performing the services contemplated under this RFP. The resumes shall present the personnel in sufficient detail to provide the Task Force with evidence that the personnel involved can perform the work specified in the RFP. A Vendor shall provide a brief history of its company, to include the name and location of the company and any parent/subsidiary affiliation with other entities. If a Vendor is utilizing the services of a subcontractor(s) for any of the service components listed, the Vendor shall include in its proposal response a brief history of the subcontractor's company to include the information requested herein.

A Vendor shall provide:

- A brief professional history, including the number of years of experience in tax reform consulting or related experience and any professional affiliations and trade affiliations.
- A listing of current accounts and the longevity of those accounts.
- An organizational chart highlighting the names/positions that will be involved in the contract, including the individual who will be primarily responsible for managing the account on a day-to-day basis.
- An outline of the Vendor's or employees' experience in tax reform assessment, research, and reporting.
- A full explanation of staffing, functions, and methodology to be used in areas of tax reform assessment and account management, identifying specifically the personnel that will be assigned to the account. All such personnel are subject to Task Force approval. Describe any staff functions that are considered unique to the account.
- A detailed description of the plan for assisting the Task Force in meeting its goals and objectives, including how the requirements will be met and what assurances of efficiency and success the proposed approach will provide.

- An indication of how soon after the contract award the personnel named would be available and indicate any possible scheduling conflicts that might exist during the period of the contract. Any other limitations on the availability to perform under this RFP or to attend meetings must be fully explained.
- An indication of the timeframe the Vendor would require to assist the Task Force in meeting its goals and objectives.
- A detailed, narrative statement listing the three (3) most recent, comparable contracts (including contact information) that the Vendor has performed and the general history and experience of its organization.
- At least two (2) samples of the Vendor's work on comparable projects.
- At least three (3) references from entities that have recent (within the last three (3) years) contract experience with the Vendor and are able to attest to the Vendor's work experience and qualifications relevant to this RFP.
- A list of every business for which Vendor has performed, at any time during the past three (3) years, services substantially similar to those sought with this solicitation. Err on the side of inclusion; by submitting an offer, Vendor represents that the list is complete.
- List of failed projects, suspensions, debarments, and significant litigation.
- An outline or other information relating to why the Vendor's experience qualifies in meeting the specifications stated in Section 3 of this RFP.

The Vendor should demonstrate the work the Vendor has done for clients during the past three (3) years and indicate which individual on its staff was responsible for the work. Referenced work should provide a clear indication of the types of tax reform consulting services that can be obtained for the Task Force.

A Vendor shall provide information on any conflict of interest with the objectives and goals of the Task Force that could result from other projects in which the Vendor is involved. Failure to disclose any such conflict may be cause for Contract termination or disqualification of the response.

A Vendor or its subcontractor(s) must list all clients that were lost between January 2014 and the present and the reason for the loss. The Task Force reserves the right to contact any accounts listed in this section. A Vendor must describe any contract disputes involving an amount of thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000) or more that the Vendor, or its subcontractor(s), has been involved in within the past two (2) years. Please indicate if the dispute(s) have been successfully resolved.

5.5.1 BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION

Vendors must allow the BLR to perform an investigation of the financial responsibility, security, and integrity of a Vendor submitting a bid, if required by the Task Force.

5.6 SUBCONTRACTOR IDENTIFICATION

If Vendor intends to subcontract with another business for any portion of the work and that portion exceeds ten percent (10%) of the Proposal price, Vendor's offer must identify that business and the portion of work that they are to perform. Identify potential subcontractors by providing the business's name, address, phone, taxpayer identification number, and point of contact. In determining Vendor's responsibility, the Task Force may evaluate Vendor's proposed subcontractors.

SECTION 6. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

6.0 GENERALLY

The Vendor should address each item listed in this RFP to be guaranteed a complete evaluation. After initial qualification of proposals, selection of the Successful Vendor will be determined in a meeting of the Task Force by evaluation of several factors.

The Task Force has developed evaluation criteria that will be used by the Task Force and that is incorporated in Section 6.1 of this RFP. Other agents of the Task Force may also examine documents.

The Task Force requires that the tax reform consulting services requested under this RFP be available for use by the Task Force the day after the Contract Execution Date. Submission of a proposal implies Vendor acceptance of the evaluation technique and Vendor recognition that subjective judgments must be made by the Task Force during the evaluation of the proposals.

The Task Force reserves, and a Vendor by submitting a Proposal grants to the Task Force, the right to obtain any information from any lawful source regarding the past business history, practices, and abilities of Vendor, its officers, directors, employees, owners, team members, partners, and/or subcontractors.

6.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following evaluation criteria are listed according to their relative importance; however, the difference between the importance assigned to any one criterion and the criteria immediately preceding and following is small:

- Directly related experience;
- Price, including individual amounts and total maximum amount;
- Plan for providing services;
- Availability to perform work and attend meetings;
- Proposed schedule for providing services;
- Proposed personnel and the credentials of those assigned;
- Compliance with the requirements of the RFP; and
- Past performance.

ATTACHMENT A

OFFICIAL PROPOSAL PRICE SHEET

Note: The Official Proposal Price Sheet must be submitted in a separate envelope or e-mail and not part of the technical evaluation. Any reference to pricing in the technical proposal shall be cause for disqualification from further considerations for award.

1. Any cost not identified on this schedule but subsequently incurred will be the responsibility of the Vendor.
2. Bids should provide at least a 180-day acceptance period.
3. By submission of a proposal, the proposer certifies the following:
 - A. Prices in this proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement for the purpose of restricting competition;
 - B. No attempt has been made nor will be by the proposer to induce any other person or firm to submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition;
 - C. The person signing this proposal is authorized to represent the company and is legally responsible for the decision as to the price and supporting documentation provided as a result of this RFP; and
 - D. Prices in this proposal have not been knowingly disclosed by the proposer and will not be prior to award to any other proposer.

The Official Price Proposal Sheet must be submitted in the following form, allowing for the inclusion of specific information regarding positions, goods, services, etc., and signed by an official authorized to bind the Vendor to a resultant contract.

DESCRIPTION	PRICE PER HOUR	NUMBER OF POSITIONS
Supervisor		
Other Professional Staff (List by Position)		
Support Staff		
DESCRIPTION	PRICE PER UNIT (if applicable)	TOTAL PRICE
Subcontractors (if any)		
Travel		
Any Additional Goods & Services (List Individually)		
TOTAL MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF BID:		