



State of Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP Number: BLR-190003	
Commodity: Education Adequacy Consulting Services	Proposal Opening Date: September 20, 2019
Date: August 23, 2019	Proposal Opening Time: 4:00 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-190003. 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, 500 Woodlane Street, 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: _____

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:	Education Adequacy 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 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 this solicitation. 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 shall 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 on the Proposal Signature Page and 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.

RESTRICTION OF BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

Pursuant to Arkansas Code § 25-1-503, a public entity shall not enter into a contract with a company unless the contract includes a written certification that the person or company is not currently engaged in, and agrees for the duration of the contract not to engage in, a boycott of Israel. This prohibition does not apply to a company which offers to provide the goods or services for at least twenty percent (20%) less than the lowest certifying business.

By checking the designated box on the Proposal Signature Page, the Vendor agrees and certifies that they do not, and will not for the duration of the contract boycott Israel.

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 shall 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 education adequacy consulting services for the House Education Committee and the Senate Education Committee (the "Committees").

The Committees and the BLR intend to execute one (1) 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 needs and requirements of the Committees and the BLR 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 Committees. 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 | August 23, 2019 |
| • Deadline for submission of questions | September 13, 2019 |
| • Closing for receipt of proposals and opening of proposals | September 20, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. CDT |
| • Evaluation of proposals by BLR | September 20-26, 2019 |
| • Proposals released to Committees | September 27, 2019 |
| • Selection of Vendors to make Oral Presentations | To Be Announced by Committees |
| • Oral Presentations/Intent to Award | To Be Announced by Committees |
| • Approval of draft contract by the Policy-Making Subcommittee of the Legislative Council | October 16, 2019 |
| • Approval of final contract by the Legislative Council | October 18, 2019 |
| • Contract Execution and Start Date | Upon approval of the Legislative Council |

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

1.3 **CAUTION TO VENDORS**

- Vendors shall not contact members of the Committees or the BLR regarding this RFP or the Vendor Selection process from the time the RFP is posted until the Intent to Award is issued, other than through submission of questions in the manner provided for under Section 1.7 of this RFP. The BLR will initiate all other necessary contact with Vendors. ***Any violation of this requirement can be considered a basis for disqualification of the Vendor by the Committees.***
- **Vendors shall respond to each numbered paragraph of the RFP, including by written acknowledgment of the requirements and terms contained in paragraphs that require no other response.** (e.g. "Section 1.3. Vendor acknowledges and agrees with the requirements set forth in this section.") Failure to provide a response will be interpreted as an affirmative response or agreement to the 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.
- On or before the date and time specified on page one of this RFP, Vendors shall submit:
 - a. One (1) signed original hard copy of the original proposal and the Official Proposal Price Sheet ("OPPS");
 - b. Thirty-five (35) additional copies of the redacted proposal and the OPPS (If no redacted version is submitted, then 35 copies of the original proposal.); and
 - c. If the Vendor's proposal contains information that is proprietary and confidential, two (2) electronic versions of the proposal (one (1) redacted electronic version and one (1) unredacted electronic version) on CD, flash drive, or via e-mail. However, if there is no information to redact, one (1) electronic version of the proposal is sufficient.
- If emailing electronic versions, send to Jillian Thayer at thayerj@blr.arkansas.gov.
- **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 Committees reserve 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 Committees 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 the original proposal **and** the Official Proposal Price Sheet;

- e. Failure to complete and sign the Official Proposal Price Sheet(s);
- f. Any wording by the Vendor in its response to this RFP, or in subsequent correspondence, that 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.

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 BLR. 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 shall 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. An official authorized to bind the Vendor to any resulting Contract must sign the Official Proposal Price Sheet.

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.

1.9 PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

Proposals and documents pertaining to the RFP become the property of the BLR, and after release to the Committees, shall be open to public inspection pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act of 1967,

Arkansas Code § 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.

If the proposal contains information that the Vendor considers confidential and proprietary, the Vendor shall 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. ***Submission of a redacted copy is at the discretion of the Vendor, but if no information is redacted, the entire proposal will be considered available as public information once published to the Committee members.***

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 BLR office 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.

1.11 BID EVALUATION

The Committees 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 Committees.

1.12 ORAL AND/OR WRITTEN PRESENTATIONS/DEMONSTRATIONS

The Committees will select a small group of Vendors from among the proposals submitted to attend a meeting of the Committees to answer questions and to make oral and written presentations to the Committees. The date of this meeting will be announced by the Committees at least one (1) week prior. All presentations are subject to be recorded.

The Successful Vendor selected by the Committees shall also attend the October 16, 2019 meeting of the Policy Making Subcommittee of the Legislative Council and the October 18, 2019 meeting of the Legislative Council, in order to answer any questions that may arise regarding the Contract.

1.13 INTENT TO AWARD

After complete evaluation of the proposal, the intent to award will be announced at the meeting of the Committees at which select Vendors' oral presentations are given (See Section 1.12). The date of this meeting will be announced by the Committees at least one (1) week prior. The purpose of the announcement is to establish a specific time in which vendors and agencies are aware of the intent to award. The Committees reserve 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, 2020, with an option for one (1) renewal of up to six (6) months. The Committees and the BLR will have the option to renegotiate at the 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.

If any part of the work is to be subcontracted, the Vendor must disclose in its proposal the following information: 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 Committees. The Vendor shall not delegate any duties under the Contract to a subcontractor unless the Committees, have 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 Committees, the Arkansas Legislative Council, 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 Committees 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 Committees be responsible for or accept liability for any Vendor-owned items.

The Successful Vendor shall indemnify and hold harmless the Committees and their members, the Arkansas Legislative Council 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 Committees, the Arkansas Legislative Council, 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 and the Committees 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 chairs of the Committees. 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 Committees', the Arkansas Legislative Council'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 Committees 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 is in good standing under the laws of 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, the Committees and the BLR may terminate the Contract at any time. In the event of termination, the Successful Vendor agrees to apply its best efforts to bring work in progress to an orderly conclusion, in a manner and form consistent with the Contract and satisfactory to the Committees.

1.29 VENDOR QUALIFICATIONS

The Successful Vendor must, upon request of the Committees, furnish satisfactory evidence of its ability to furnish products or services in accordance with the terms and conditions of this proposal. The Committees reserve 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 Committees;
- Provide documentation that it is 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 Committees and 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 MATERIALS & COPYRIGHT

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

SECTION 2. OVERVIEW

2.0 OBJECTIVES

It is the objective of the Committees, by entering into a Contract for education adequacy consulting services, to provide to the members of the Arkansas General Assembly detailed and accurate information concerning the current efficacy of the biennial adequacy study and evaluation undertaken by the Committees, and to provide the Committees with recommendations regarding reform or replacement of the current methods for determining educational adequacy in the State of Arkansas.

To fulfill this stated purpose, the Successful Vendor shall use the following definition of “educational adequacy” to serve as a basis for identifying resources required for adequacy:

- The standards included in the state’s curriculum frameworks, which define what all Arkansas students are to be taught, including specific grade-level curriculum and a mandatory thirty-eight (38) Carnegie units defined by the Arkansas Standards of Accreditation to be taught at the high school level, and opportunities for students to develop career-readiness skills;
- The standards included in the state’s testing system. The goal is to have all, or all but the most severely disabled, students perform at or above proficiency on these tests; and
- Sufficient funding to provide adequate resources as identified by the General Assembly.

This Request for Proposal is designed to obtain a Contract to provide education adequacy consulting services to the members of the House Education Committee and the Senate Education Committee. All responses to this RFP shall reflect the overall goals and objectives stated herein.

SECTION 3. EDUCATION ADEQUACY CONSULTING SERVICES

3.0 SCOPE OF WORK/SPECIFICATIONS

It will be the responsibility of the Vendor to provide the Committees, other legislative committees as authorized, and, ultimately, the members of the Arkansas General Assembly with education adequacy consulting services in order to assist the Committees with determining the need for reform or replacement of the current methods for studying and determining educational adequacy in the state, and in doing so, shall provide analysis and recommendations that include without limitation the following:

A. Adequacy Study:

1. Recommend methods for routinely (biennially) reviewing educational adequacy. The recommendations will provide the Committees a process to follow for determining adequacy, rather than a particular dollar amount;
2. Analysis of the effect of concentrations of poverty on the adequacy targets and whether additional adjustments are necessary to provide adequate funding for local education agencies with high concentrations of poverty;
3. Identification of gaps in growth and achievement among student groups disaggregated by race and income and make recommendations on specific programs to address the gaps in growth or achievement;
4. Analysis of correlation between deficits in student performance and deficits in funding;
5. Review of adequacy cost studies completed in other states and provide a report on best practices in those states;

6. Currently, the state's base-level per-student funding is determined based on a formula called the matrix, which specifies the resources (teachers, principals, central office staff, etc.) schools need and the cost of those resources. The Vendor should:
 - a. Identify any resources school districts need that are not currently provided for through the funding formula and the cost for each;
 - b. Identify the resources on which school districts are spending foundation funding that are not included in the state's funding formula; and
 - c. Assess the need for such spending and recommend solutions to any problems identified; and
 7. Recommend a definition of college-readiness and/or career-readiness, including criteria for determining when students have achieved college-readiness and/or career-readiness as well as standards for determining if school districts are preparing students for college-readiness and/or career-readiness, and address the reason for the continuing need for remediation at the college level. Vendor shall include identification of career and technical programs available to students, including a recommendation for funding methods and policies for ensuring students have equitable access to these programs.
- B. In determining the best method for providing educational adequacy to the public schools of the State of Arkansas, the Committees feel it is also imperative to include in any study by the Successful Vendor the following research analyses, including site visits to Arkansas schools, regarding the size of schools and school districts in the state:
1. Whether local school systems currently have policies regarding the size of schools, including high schools, middle schools, elementary schools, and alternative schools;
 2. Best practices in other states regarding school and school district size;
 3. Educational and extracurricular impacts of school and school district size, and the impact, if any, on the surrounding communities and neighborhoods;
 4. Recommendations for the ideal size for high schools, middle schools, elementary schools, and alternative schools;
 5. Processes that can assist in ensuring public input into the establishment of any school size standards or guidelines;
 6. Recommendations for addressing the needs of school districts whose small size or rural geographic location limits operational efficiency;
 7. Comparison of class size requirements and student/teacher ratios in other states. In completing the comparison, the Vendor shall:
 - a. Assess the variations in class sizes and instructional staffing levels in Arkansas schools and their impact on teacher salaries; and
 - b. Address why salary disparities exist; and
 8. Assess and recommend criteria to be used for identifying isolated schools or isolated school districts. Assess the cost implications of school isolation and recommend funding adjustments that adequately compensate districts for any additional costs.
- C. The Successful Vendor shall also include in its study and final report the following:
1. Evaluation of whether the number of students eligible for free and reduced price meal (FRPM) should continue to be used as a proxy for identifying economically disadvantaged students in several state education aid formulas, primarily National School Lunch (NSL) categorical funding;
 - a. In conducting this evaluation, the Successful Vendor shall consider the federal Community Eligibility Provision that allows high-poverty schools or local education agencies (at least forty percent (40%) of their students must be directly certified as FRPM-eligible) that meet other specified criteria to participate in the program, which provides all of the students in a school with free and reduced price meals without requiring all of the students to be certified as eligible to receive the free and reduced price meals.
 - b. The Successful Vendor shall evaluate the potential impact of this program on state aid formulas that use FRPM counts if more Arkansas schools participate in the program.
 - c. The Successful Vendor shall also examine alternative proxies for identifying economically disadvantaged students, including those used in other states, and provide a recommendation

- to the state as to whether FRPM eligibility or another factor should be used to represent economically disadvantaged students in stated education aid formulas;
2. Examination of the way varying levels of property tax assessment and revenue affect the equitability of education resources across the state;
 3. Evaluation of the impact of increasing and declining enrollments on local school systems, including transportation costs, particularly for local jurisdictions with large geographic areas but small populations, and provide recommendations that include the following:
 - a. Strategies for addressing any impacts; and
 - b. Changes in ADM-based funding sources (foundation funding, declining enrollment funding, and student growth) to ensure the funding is more responsive to the enrollment changes occurring in the current year. The changes should establish a threshold at which districts are held harmless for large enrollment increases during the school year;
 4. Examination of best practices in other states for attracting and retaining high quality educational and administrative staff for schools, including without limitation information regarding salaries and benefits and the funding mechanisms for those items;
 5. Examination of best practices regarding attracting, retaining, and compensating school nurses, including without limitation information regarding salaries and benefits and the funding mechanisms employed in other states for those items;
 6. Resources necessary and available for coping with student mental health issues, including best practices in other states;
 7. Study the critical capital needs of public schools in Arkansas in an effort to ensure equitable access to quality school buildings, equipment, and buses. Recommendations should ensure that state funding supports low wealth districts, districts with declining enrollments that nevertheless must replace existing buildings, and growing districts that require frequent new construction;
 8. Identifying best practices and research-based programs for the best use of poverty funds (NSL), as well as funding methodologies available and necessary for supporting students with additional needs including without limitation physical or mental disabilities, learning disabilities, behavioral issues, economic disadvantages, and English language barriers;
 9. Identification and examination of the practices of successful Arkansas schools, including those with large proportions of students with additional needs. The Vendor shall identify practices – financial, instructional, and otherwise – that result in the schools' high performance;
 10. Analysis of the impact of voucher programs and tax credits on funding for public education in the state and in other states;
 11. Assessment of the impact that waivers from state requirements (statute and rules) have on the quality and cost of education, including a recommendation of policy solutions to correct any problems that may be identified;
 12. Examination of the Uniform Rate of Tax funding method to include and examination of the following:
 - a. The extent to which the URT revenue generated by each school district meets the needs of schools and affects the educational equity among districts;
 - b. The impact of increasing URT beyond 25 mills;
 - c. The amount of revenue school districts receive from their debt service millage that exceeds the amount the districts spend on debt service payments; and
 - d. The growth in this excess debt service revenue and districts' use of that funding;
 13. Examination of funding levels to support districts or schools with high concentrations of poverty, and recommend a formula that provides increasing funding rates for districts and schools with higher proportions of economically disadvantaged students that attempts to avoid significant increases or decreases in funding for minor changes in concentrations of poverty;
 14. An examination of professional development and teachers' extra duty time
 15. Comparison of the recommendations previously provided to the Committees by Allan Odden and Lawrence Picus and the policy and funding decisions implemented by the Arkansas General Assembly; and
 16. The convening of panels of educators in the State of Arkansas, which shall occur in a variety of locations throughout the state and seek input on the needs of schools and potential solutions.

In addition to the considerations and recommendations listed in A through C, above, the Vendors may include in their proposal submitted in response to this RFP additional factors the Vendor feels should be included in the study. Inclusion of any additional factors recommended will be subject to the approval of the Committees.

D. The Successful Vendor will provide:

1. A final report of its activities, findings, and recommendations encompassing the requirements listed above;
2. Monthly status updates and reports to the Committees on the project, which will require monthly attendance at meetings of the Committees to answer questions regarding the status updates;
3. Answers to research requests or data inquiries by members of the Committees, as authorized by the chairs of the Committees; and
4. Assistance with draft legislation based on recommendations adopted by the Committees.

The Successful Vendor will also need to be available to attend other meetings of the Committees and other legislative committees, as requested and authorized by the chairs of the Committees.

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 Committees shall vote to authorize the additional work, subject to the approval of the Co-chairs of the Legislative Council, who 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 total contract amount.

3.1 EDUCATION ADEQUACY CONSULTING

The education adequacy 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 Committees and other legislative committees, as approved.

As requested, the Vendor must attend various meetings of the Committees and other legislative committees of the Arkansas General Assembly. Hourly compensation will be paid for meeting times. The Vendor shall explain any anticipated limitations in its ability to attend meetings of the Committees or other legislative committees or to provide any of the services described in this Section 3.

All projects shall be paid pursuant to the fee schedule. The Vendor shall submit itemized invoices to the BLR, which will pay the invoices on a monthly basis.

The BLR does not grant the Vendor the exclusive rights to all education adequacy consulting services contemplated under this RFP. In the event the Committees decide that acquisition of these services by another Vendor is in the Committees' best interests, the BLR reserves the right to contract and purchase education adequacy consulting services from a different source outside of the contract resulting from this RFP, and the Committees' 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 education adequacy 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.

SECTION 4. COST PROPOSAL

4.0 COMPENSATION

Compensation for education adequacy consulting services shall be paid based upon the work performed as specified in this RFP. A Vendor seeking consideration shall submit a compensation proposal for education adequacy consulting services as provided throughout the RFP.

The fee schedule 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, travel expenses, etc.) 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 actual travel expenses allowed by law related to attending meetings of the Committees and other legislative committees of the Arkansas General Assembly, or other travel related to work under the Contract as approved by the chairs of the Committees. 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 Committees and the BLR. 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 Committees 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 the type of services requested under this RFP 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.
- Additional disclosures and information that the Committees 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 shall include in its Proposal a complete disclosure of any civil or criminal litigation or indictment involving such Vendor. A Vendor shall 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 Committees with a concise but functional summary of the discussion of each phase of the Vendor's plan in the order of progression. While the Committees expect 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 Committees 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 Committees 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 providing the services required under this RFP 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.
- A detailed description of the plan for assisting the Committees in meeting their 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 the timeframe the Vendor would require to assist the Committees in meeting their 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 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.

A Vendor shall provide information on any conflict of interest with the objectives and goals of the Committees 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 May 2016 and the present and the reason for the loss. The Committees reserve 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 Committees.

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 Committees by evaluation of several factors.

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

Submission of a proposal implies Vendor acceptance of the evaluation technique and Vendor recognition that subjective judgments must be made by the Committees during the evaluation of the proposals.

The Committees reserve, and a Vendor by submitting a Proposal grants to the Committees, 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;
- Pricing;
- Plan for providing services;
- Proposed schedule for providing services;
- Proposed personnel and the credentials of those assigned;
- Compliance with the requirements of the RFP; and
- Past performance.

PROPOSAL SIGNATURE PAGE

Type or Print the following information:

Prospective Contractor Contact Information

Contact Person: _____ Title: _____

Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Email: _____

Confirmation of Redacted Copy

- ☐ YES, a redacted copy of proposal documents is enclosed.
- ☐ NO, a redacted copy of submission documents is not enclosed. I understand a full copy of non-redacted submission documents will be released if requested.

Note: If a redacted copy of the proposal documents is not provided with the Vendor's proposal, and neither box is checked a copy of the unredacted documents will be released in response to any request made under the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Illegal Immigrant Confirmation

By signing and submitting a response to this RFP and by certifying online at <https://www.ark.org/dfa/immigrant/index.php/disclosure/submit/new>, the Vendor agrees and certifies that they do not employ or contract with illegal immigrants. If selected, the Vendor certifies that they will not employ or contract with illegal immigrants during the aggregate term of the contract.

Israel Boycott Restriction Confirmation

By checking the box below, the Vendor agrees and certifies that they do not boycott Israel, and if selected, will not boycott Israel during the aggregate term of the contract.

- ☐ Vendor does not and will not boycott Israel.

An official authorized to bind the Vendor to a resultant contract shall sign below.

The Signature below signifies agreement that any exception that conflicts with the requirements of this RFP will cause the Vendor's proposal to be disqualified.

Authorized Signature: _____ Title: _____

Printed/Typed Name: _____ Date: _____

ATTACHMENT A
OFFICIAL PROPOSAL PRICE SHEET

Note: The Official Proposal Price Sheet must be submitted in a separate envelope or e-mail. Any reference to pricing in the technical proposal shall be cause for disqualification from further considerations for award.

1. Bids should provide at least a 180-day acceptance period.
2. 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 substantially 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:		

Signature, Title

Date