

**MASSACHUSETTS  
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**FUNDING FORMULA DEVELOPMENT FOR THE STATE  
UNIVERSITIES**

**DECEMBER 26TH, 2014**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

The Department of Higher Education is seeking a firm or firms to work with the DHE on one (or both) of the projects outlined below regarding the design and development of the Funding Formula Massachusetts Public State Universities.

#### **Project #1 Formula Development Consultant**

- a) Determine core set of appropriate performance metrics
- b) Establish the individual funding levels, calculations and methodologies that will be used to determine how each of the metrics will be valued and the impact they will have on overall institutional funding.

#### **Project #1 Tasks**

1. Examine operational goals and needs for each college
2. Present current disparities or inequalities in state funding between colleges on a per student basis.
3. Define key areas of performance that will have impact on the formula (e.g. student success and degree production in high-need fields).
4. Determine requisite non-performance aspects of the formula (e.g. base cost of operations and stop loss provisions).

#### **Project #2 Funding Formula Dashboard Application/Tool Developer**

- a) Document all elements of the tool and tool requirements (e.g. types of data, underlying calculations and explanations of how calculations address the provisions of the Formula),
- b) Develop a user friendly dashboard-like interface for the tool
- c) Generate a users-manual for the tool.

#### **Project #2 Tasks**

1. Generate a mechanism for easily modifying the weights applied to the formula parameters.
2. Enable efficient loading of diverse campus-level performance outcomes data, state budget amounts and constraints and other inputs to be determined
3. Create user-friendly visualizations for viewing the impact of changes in data and weights and to compare results from different iterations of the formula
4. Enable additional required functions that will make the tool useful for exploring alternative budget scenarios
5. Create thorough documentation that will make the tool accessible to a diverse end-user audience.

## 1.2. OBJECTIVE

It is intended that this RFP will allow the Department of Higher Education to procure one (or two) vendors that will be the most responsive and able to facilitate the above charge at a competitive price in a manner consistent with Massachusetts State Finance and Procurement laws.

## 1.3. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

### **Projects 1 and 2**

The selected vendor or vendors must be licensed to conduct business in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

### **Project #1**

The selected vendor must have demonstrated experience in conducting comprehensive reviews of public education funding models. They will have deep knowledge and understanding of funding formulas for public higher education and will be able to provide detailed explanations of specific formulas and metrics that have been implemented in other state higher education systems.

### **Project #2**

The selected vendor will have advanced expert-level ability with Excel, substantial experience in the development of end-user data and research tools, familiarity with higher education data, and strong statistical skills. Some experience with developing tools specifically for funding formulas. Ability to work effectively with data providers and analysts.

## 1.4. PERFORMANCE PERIOD

The period of performance of any contract resulting from this RFP is tentatively scheduled to begin on or about January 22, 2015, and extend through June 30, 2015. Amendments extending the period of performance, if any, shall be at the sole discretion of the Department of Higher Education and subject to appropriation in the FY2016 General Appropriation Act.

## 1.5. ADA

The Department of Higher Education complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Firms may contact the RFP Coordinator to receive this Request for Proposals in alternative formats.

## 2. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR RESPONDENTS

## **2.1. RFP COORDINATOR**

The RFP Coordinator is the sole point of contact for the Department of Higher Education for this Procurement. All communication between the respondents and the Board of Higher Education upon receipt of this RFP shall be with the RFP Coordinator, as follows:

Name / Title: Sean Nelson, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance  
Address: One Ashburton Place, Room 1401  
City, State Zip Code: Boston, MA 02108  
Phone Number: 617-994-6918  
E-Mail Address: [snelson@bhe.mass.edu](mailto:snelson@bhe.mass.edu)

Any other communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the Board of Higher Education. Firms are to rely on written statements issued by the RFP Coordinator. Communication directed to parties other than the RFP Coordinator may result in disqualification of the Firm.

## **2.2. ESTIMATED SCHEDULE OF PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES**

- Issue Request for Proposals: December 26th, 2014
- Proposals Due: January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 5:00 pm
- Evaluate Proposals: January 12<sup>th</sup> 2015 – January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015
- Selection of Vendor: January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015
- Contract Start Date: January 22<sup>th</sup>, 2015

The Department of Higher Education reserves the right to revise the above schedule.

## **2.3. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

Proposals are to be submitted to the Department of Higher Education, attention: Sean Nelson, no later than 5:00 pm Eastern Standard Time on Thursday, Friday, December 26<sup>th</sup> 2014. Respondents are required to submit two (2) original copies and three (3) duplicates of their proposal. The original copies of the proposal must have wet ink signatures on the letter of submittal, which must be signed by an individual authorized to legally bind the entity to a contract with the Department of Higher Education.

The Department of Higher Education assumes no responsibility for delays caused by any delivery service. Proposals deemed late will not be accepted and will be automatically disqualified from further consideration as mandated by Massachusetts [801 C.M.R 21](#). Failure to respond to any portion of the procurement document may result in rejection of the proposal as non-responsive.

## **2.4. PROPRIETARY INFORMATION/PUBLIC DISCLOSURE**

Materials submitted in response to this competitive procurement shall become the property of the

Department of Higher Education, and will remain confidential until the contract with the elected vendor has been fully executed. Once a contract has been executed, all proposals will become public records as defined by Massachusetts Public Record Law.

## **2.5. MINORITY & WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS PARTICIPATION**

The DHE encourages participation in all of its contracts by certified Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (MWBE) firms. Participation may be either on a direct basis in response to this solicitation or on a subcontractor basis. Any affirmative action requirements set forth in federal regulations or statutes included or referenced in the contract documents will apply.

## **2.9. CONTRACT FOR SERVICES**

The selected vendor will be expected to enter into a standard contract for services as required by Massachusetts State Finance and Procurement laws. This contract will originate from the Department of Higher Education.

## **2.10. NO OBLIGATION TO CONTRACT**

This RFP does not obligate the Department of Higher Education to contract for the services specified herein.

## **2.12. REJECTION OF PROPOSALS**

The Department of Higher Education reserves the right at its sole discretion, and without penalty, to reject any and all proposals received and not to issue a contract as a result of this RFP.

## **2.13. COMMITMENT OF FUNDS**

The Department of Higher Education may obligate funds for a contract resulting from this RFP in a manner consistent with Massachusetts Procurement and Finance Law.

## **3. PROPOSAL CONTENTS**

Submitted proposals are to be no more than ten pages, including all attachments. Proposals must include the following sections in the order listed below:

1. Letter of Submittal
2. Proposal Narrative
3. Management Structure
4. Cost Proposal

Items in this section marked "mandatory" must be included as part of the proposal for the proposal to be considered responsive; however, items marked "mandatory" are not scored unless

otherwise indicated. Items marked "scored" are those that are awarded points as part of the evaluation conducted by the evaluation team.

### **3.1. LETTER OF SUBMITTAL (MANDATORY)**

The Letter of Submittal must be signed and dated by a person authorized to legally bind the respondent to a contractual relationship: e.g., the President or Executive Director of a corporation, the managing partner of a partnership, or the proprietor of a sole proprietorship. The letter of submittal must identify the following:

1. Name, address, principal place of business, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address of the legal entity or individual by whom the contract would be executed.
2. Name, address, and phone number of each principal officer (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Chair of the Board of Directors, etc.).
3. Legal status of the Firm (sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, etc.) and the year the entity was organized to do business as the entity now substantially exists.
4. Federal Employer Tax Identification number or Social Security number.
5. Location of the office/facility from which the consultant would operate.
6. Identification of any State employees or former State employees employed by the firm or serving on the firm's governing board as of the date of the proposal. Include their position and Responsibilities within the Firm's organization. The Department of Higher Education maintains the right to disqualify any proposal as a result of a real or potential conflict of interest as a result of reviewing this information.

### **3.2. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE (SCORED/MANDATORY)**

Respondents are required to submit the following elements in the proposal narrative:

**A. Project Overview** - outline of the approach and methodology for producing the required outcomes detailed in this request for proposals.

**B. Work Plan** - detailing of tasks, activities and project requirements that are necessary to successfully facilitate the charge of the above referenced committee, the metrics used for evaluating campus performance, benchmarks, and funding schematics.

**C. Project Schedule** – A schedule for detailing when each phase of the search will be completed and when deliverables, if any, will be provided.

**D. Deliverables** – A detailed schedule for all deliverables delineated in the project overview.

### **3.3. MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL**

#### **A. Project Management (SCORED/MANDATORY)**

1. **Project Team Structure/Internal Controls** – respondents are Provide a description of the proposed project team structure and internal controls to be used during the course of the project,

including any subcontractors. An organizational chart is to be submitted that indicates the lines of authority for personnel involved in performance of this project.

**2. Staff Qualifications/Experience** – Identify staff, (including subcontractors), who will be assigned to the potential contract, indicate the responsibilities and qualifications of such personnel, and include the amount of time each will be assigned to the project. Provide a resume/curriculum vitae for the named staff including information on their particular skills related to this project, education, experience, significant accomplishments and any other pertinent information. The selected respondent must commit that staff identified in its proposal will actually perform the assigned work.

### **B. Experience of the Firm (SCORED/MANDATORY)**

- 1. Other Experience** - Indicate other relevant experience that indicates the qualifications of the Firm, and any subcontractors, for the performance of the potential contract.
- 2. Contracts** - Include a list of contracts the Firm has had during the last five years that relate to the Firm's ability to perform the services needed under this RFP. List contract reference numbers, contract period of performance, contact persons, phone numbers, fax numbers and e-mail addresses.

### **C. References (SCORED/MANDATORY)**

List names, addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers and e-mail addresses of five business References for which work has been completed and briefly describe the type of services provided. References will be contacted for the top-scoring proposal(s) only.

## **3.4. COST PROPOSAL**

The evaluation process is designed to award this procurement not necessarily to the proposed vendor of least cost, but rather to the proposed vendor whose proposal best meets the requirements of this RFP. However, vendors are encouraged to submit proposals which are consistent with the Department of Higher Education's efforts to conserve state resources. The proposal must specifically set forth the proposed vendor's professional fees and anticipated expenses in a "not to exceed" amount.

### **A. Identification of Costs (SCORED/MANDATORY)**

Identify all costs, including expenses, to be charged for performing the services necessary to accomplish the objectives of the contract. The proposed vendor is to submit a fully detailed budget including staff costs and any expenses necessary to accomplish the tasks and to produce the deliverables under the contract. Costs for subcontractors are to be broken out separately. Please note if any subcontractors are certified Minority and Women's Business Enterprises.

#### **4. EVALUATION AND CONTRACT AWARD**

All proposals will be reviewed by the RFP Coordinator to determine compliance with administrative requirements and instructions specified in this RFP. Only responsive proposals which meet the minimum requirements will be forwarded to the evaluation team for further review.

##### **4.1. EVALUATION PROCEDURE**

Responsive proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the requirements stated in this solicitation and any addenda issued.

##### **4.2. EVALUATION WEIGHTING AND SCORING**

The following weighting and points will be assigned to the proposal for evaluation purposes:

<b>Proposal Narrative</b>	<b>35 points maximum</b>
<b>Management Proposal</b>	<b>35 points maximum</b>
<b>Cost Proposal</b>	<b>30 points maximum</b>
<b>TOTAL FOR WRITTEN PROPOSAL</b>	<b>100 points</b>