

**Informal Competitive Solicitation (ICS)
Grant Development Assistance
Iowa College Student Aid Commission**

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Background

Consistent with the informal competition procedures provided for in 11 Iowa Administrative Code § 106.9, the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (hereinafter, "Agency") seeks an experienced grant development assistance Service Provider ("Service Provider") to provide grant writing services and grant development assistance. The Service Provider will seek grant funding in support of the Agency's mission. The Agency's mission is to advocate for and provide a continuum of services to support Iowa students and families as they explore and finance educational opportunities beyond high school. More information about the agency can be found at its home page: <http://www.iowacollegeaid.gov/>.

The Agency anticipates that the term of any resulting contract will be for one year beginning by November 1, 2011 and may be extended by up to four (4) one-year terms at the option of the Agency.

Scope of Services

The Agency seeks grant development assistance from an experienced Service Provider capable of providing a wide range of services. At the Agency's request, the Service Provider shall:

1. assist grant project strategic planning;
 - a. provide expert advice and consultation to Agency staff for grant project strategic planning;
 - b. serve as an authority and resource for grantsmanship to the Agency;
2. identify grant opportunities;
 - a. research grant opportunities;
 - b. identify grant funding opportunities and prospective funding sources, including governmental and non-governmental sources;
 - c. provide expert advice and consultation to Agency staff in identifying grant opportunities;
3. conduct research;
 - a. conduct grant-specific research and compile data required for grant proposals;
 - b. identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges to implementing and administering a specific grant;
 - c. compile demographic, financial, employment, and other data relevant to need for grant funding;
 - d. identify potential partnerships to leverage resources and grant funds;
4. write grant proposals and submit grant applications;
 - a. provide expert advice and consultation to Agency staff in the development of grant proposals;
 - b. draft high-quality, well-written grant proposals;
 - c. prepare proposals consistent with rules and procedures set forth for a given grant program;
 - d. file grant applications consistent with deadlines, conditions, and guidelines specific to respective grant opportunities;
5. evaluate grant-funded projects and provide expert advice and consultation for the evaluation of grant project implementation.

Requirements

The Agency will evaluate applications based on the criteria described in this Informal Competitive Solicitation (ICS). In addition, the Service Provider must meet the following requirements:

1. The Service Provider must file a complete application. (See *Application Contents*.)
2. The Service Provider must have a successful record of obtaining grant funds related to education, or college financial aid, or service to low-income and disadvantaged people.
3. The Service Provider must have a successful record of experience in obtaining grant funds for Iowa-based institutions or organizations.
4. The Service Provider must be knowledgeable about state and national issues concerning access to postsecondary education.
5. The Service Provider must be knowledgeable about U.S. Department of Education grant-related policies and procedures.
6. The Service Provider must be knowledgeable about governmental and non-governmental sources of funding.

Applications

Applicants must send four (4) copies of a complete application to the address indicated below. In addition, applicants must provide an electronic copy of their application in Microsoft Word format by e-mail to the address indicated below.

All packages shall be clearly labeled as to content and sender. The costs of preparation and delivery of the application are solely the responsibility of the applicant.

Applications Address

Applications must be sent to:

Anthony G. Girardi
Statistical Research Analyst
603 E 12th Street 5th Floor
Des Moines IA 50319-9017

Electronic copies must be sent to:

tony.girardi@iowa.gov

Application Due Date

Applications must be received by October 4, 2011, 4:30 PM CST. Late responses will not be accepted. E-mailed copies of applications do not constitute complete applications.

All information submitted by an applicant will be treated as a public record by the Agency. If an applicant identifies – at the time its application is filed – confidential information contained in the application, that information shall be treated as confidential information in accordance with the public record laws of the State of Iowa; in such an instance, the applicant should file an additional copy of the application which includes only non-confidential information.

The Agency is an equal opportunity employer and contractor.

Application Contents

Complete applications must include the following information:

1. Name and contact information
Include Service Provider name, mailing address, telephone number, e-mail address and name of contact person. The application must identify by name the person(s) who will provide services.
2. Qualifications and Experience
Describe the Service Provider's ability to undertake and perform the services described. List sources, recipients, and dollar amounts of major grants obtained by the Service Provider and provide evidence that the Service Provider meets the requirements outlined in this ICS under **Requirements**. Provide any other evidence relevant to the services outlined. The application must describe the qualifications and experience of the person(s) who will provide services.
3. Service Methodology
Provide a description of the services offered by the Service Provider. The application must identify the person(s) who will provide services. The service methodology should address the activities listed under **Scope of Services** in this ICS. The service methodology should describe the degree and nature of Agency staff involvement in preparation of grants. The Service Provider should outline any services or aspects of work necessary to the overall success of the Agency's grant-seeking efforts.
4. Conflict of Interest Statement
The Service Provider shall disclose any financial, business, or other relationship with the state of Iowa or the Iowa College Student Aid Commission that may have an impact upon the outcome of this contract.
5. References
Provide references including names, addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers.
6. Fee Proposal
Itemized fee schedules for principals, support personnel, and reimbursable expenses. Include any costs to the Agency such as for copying, mailing, and other charges. Fees may be proposed as per-hour rates.

The Agency reserves the right to request additional information from any Service Provider after the response deadline. The Agency also reserves the right to waive any minor irregularities in applications received. The Agency shall be the sole judge of minor irregularities.

The Agency further reserves the right to withdraw any and all parts of this ICS, postpone or cancel the ICS process at any time, and to choose not to enter any contract relating to this ICS. The Agency reserves the right to reject all proposals.

The Agency further reserves the right to negotiate with one or more Service Providers, and as a result of that process, enter into a best and final negotiation with one or more Service Providers.

The Agency reserves the right to select, in its sole discretion, the Service Provider who offers the best prospect of successfully completing a contract for services. The Agency need not award a contract to the Service Provider offering the lowest cost proposal.

If a Service Provider to whom a contract is offered fails to negotiate and deliver an executed contract within 30 days after the contract is offered, the Agency may, at its sole discretion, cancel the offer and offer the contract to the next most-qualified Service Provider.

Evaluation of Applications

An evaluation panel convened by the Agency will evaluate applications based on the criteria outlined below. The panel may also consider relevant information from sources other than the applications. The evaluation panel will determine the Service Provider to whom a contract will be offered, subject to the final approval of the Agency.

Evaluation Criteria

The application must contain all of the information described in the *Application Contents* section of this ICS. Complete applications will be evaluated and a recommendation will be made using the following criteria:

1. Qualifications, Experience, and References
 - The application must demonstrate that the Service Provider meets all of the requirements outlined under **Requirements** in this ICS.
 - Applications will be evaluated for the extent to which Service Provider qualifications, experience, and references indicate that the Service Provider can effectively and satisfactorily provide the services outlined under **Scope of Services** in this ICS.
 - References must be verifiable and must support the other evidence provided in the application.
2. Service Methodology
 - Applications will be evaluated for the extent to which the service methodology proposed by the Service Provider address the **Scope of Services** outlined in this ICS, are appropriate to the needs of the Agency, are workable, and are consistent with Service Provider qualifications.
3. Fee Proposal
 - Applications will be evaluated for the extent to which proposed charges are reasonable and appropriate.
 - Applications will be evaluated on the basis of proposed charges compared to those of other Service Provider applicants. Applicants should note that a contract will not necessarily be offered for the lowest-priced proposal.
4. Iowa-Based Service Provider

- An Iowa-based Service Provider will be given preference over an out-of-state-based Service Provider when their respective applications are commensurate in all other respects.

Questions

All questions should be submitted by e-mail to Tony Girardi, Statistical Research Analyst at tony.girardi@iowa.gov.

Other Information

From the date of issuance of this ICS until announcement of the selected Service Provider, Service Providers may not contact any employee of the State of Iowa other than the identified contact person about this ICS.

The Agency reserves the right to reject any or all applications, in whole or in part, to advertise for new applications, to abandon the need for such services, and to cancel this ICS at any time prior to the execution of a written contract.

The costs of preparation and delivery of the bid proposal are solely the responsibility of the applicant.

By submitting a proposal, the applicant agrees that the Agency may copy the proposal for purposes of facilitating the evaluation of the proposal or to respond to requests for public records. By submitting a proposal, Applicant further agrees that such copying will not violate the rights of any third party.

By submitting a proposal, the applicant agrees that it will not bring any claim or have any cause of action against the Agency based on any misunderstanding concerning the information provided herein or concerning the Agency's failure, negligent or otherwise, to provide the Applicant with pertinent information in this Informal Competitive Solicitation.

The proposal, any resulting contract(s), and services provided are subject to the terms and conditions indicated at the following web address:
http://das.gse.iowa.gov/terms_services.pdf.