

**Acknowledgment of Amendments**

***Request for Information (Questions & Answers)***

**Temporary Staffing Services for Call Center**

**Amendment Number Two (2)**

**September 22, 2021**

1. Please reconfirm the due date for this procurement by providing it in response to answers to questions?  **Please refer to Amendment One of the RFP dated 9/22/2021.**

1. Why has this bid been released at this time? **This is a Request for Proposals (RFP), not a Bid.**
2. Are bidders permitted to deviate in any way from any manner of quoting fees you may be expecting? For example, if there is a pricing page in the RFP, can bidders submit an alternate fee structure? If there is no pricing page in the RFP, do you have any preference for how bidders should quote fees or can bidders create their own pricing categories? **This is a Request for Proposals (RFP), not a Bid. Please see page 39 Attachment D - for the Budget Summary Form.**
3. Please describe your level of satisfaction with your current or recent vendor(s) for the same purchasing activity, if applicable. **This is a new contract, current or recent vendor for The Educator Licensure Call Center is not applicable.**
4. Has the current contract gone full term? **Not applicable.**
5. Have all options to extend the current contract been exercised? **Not applicable.**

1. Who is the incumbent, and how long has the incumbent been providing the requested services?

**Not applicable.**

1. To what extent will the location of the bidder’s proposed location or headquarters have a bearing on any award? **The Vendor shall provide all services directly related to this contract from an office(s) located in the United States. Indicate your agreement with this requirement and identify any locations outside the State of Mississippi in which you propose to provide the services described in this solicitation**.
2. How are fees currently being billed by any incumbent(s), by category, and at what rates? **Not applicable.**
3. What estimated or actual dollars were paid last year, last month, or last quarter to any incumbent(s)? **Not applicable.**

1. Is previous experience with any specific customer information systems, phone systems, or software required?  **Page 11 specifies the Customer Services Professional minimum qualifications, educational requirements, and experiences.**
2. What is the minimum required total call capacity? **Not applicable to vendor.**
3. What is the minimum simultaneous inbound call capacity? **Please refer to the RFP page 10 #5. Call Center Project Description.**
4. What is the maximum wait time? **The average wait time varies based on time of year.**
5. What is the maximum hold time? **Not applicable. MDE to manage the Call Center.**
6. What percentage of inbound calls must be answered by a live operator? **Not applicable. MDE to manage the Call Center.**
7. What percentage of calls must be resolved without a transfer, second call, or a return call? **Not applicable. MDE to manage the Call Center.**
8. What is the maximum percentage of calls that can be terminated by the caller without resolution? **Not applicable.**
9. Is there a minimum or maximum number of operators and supervisors? **Please refer to the RFP #9 - Contractor Deliverables.**
10. What is the required degree of dedication for the call center? **Not applicable. MDE to manage the Call Center.**
11. What is the required degree of dedication for the operators? **Not applicable. MDE to manage the Call Center.**
12. Are callers required or allowed to connect with a message verification system or pre-recorded message before connecting to a live operator, or must a live operator be the initial contact?  
    **Not applicable**.
13. What are the recording requirements for inbound and outbound phone calls and how long must recordings be maintained? **Not applicable.**
14. What are the recording and storage requirements for non-phone communications? **Not applicable.**
15. What information is to be included in call logs? **Not applicable.**
16. What is the current number of seats for operators and supervisors at your existing call center? **This contract is a** n**ew initiative.**
17. What is the current average wait time for phone calls? **The average wait time varies based on time of year.**
18. What is the current average handle time for phone calls and other types of communications? **Please refer to the RFP #5. Call Center Project Description.**
19. What is the current average after-call work time for operators? **Not applicable.**
20. Over the past year, what is the percentage of calls received in English versus non-English?  
    **Not applicable.**
21. Over the past year, what percentage of calls received were in Spanish? **Not applicable.**
22. What time of day, days of the week, or times of the year do calls typically peak? **Please refer to the RFP #5. Call Center Project Description.**
23. Please let us know whether you have received this email, and when and how answers will be provided. **The RFP states on page 4: Copies of all questions submitted, and the**

**responses shall be posted to the MDE’s website,** [**www.mdek12.org**](http://www.mdek12.org/)**, under the**

**Public Notices section and shall be available to the general public on Wednesday,**

**September 22, 2021. Questions and answers shall become part of the final Contract**

**as an attachment.**

1. By the “Key Personnel Resumes” does MDE refer to the resumes of proposed staff (Call Center-Customer Service Representative/Agent ) to work on this project within your office or You refer to the resumes of our Account Management or Service delivery team (Staffing Delivery Manager- to oversee staffing needs and serves as the primary liaison to work directly with MDE representative, Recruitment Manger, Recruiter etc.)?

**The Offeror staff.**

1. For How many vendors MDE is going to award this contract? **Please refer to Amendment One of the RFP dated 9/22/2021.**
2. Is this the new contract or any existing contract is expiring? **This is a new contract.**
3. Is there any particular budget for overall project or Not to Exceed Hourly Bill Rate range available for the Customer Services Representatives? **The RFP states on Page 14 - #15 Available Budget: Because of the scope of this project, we believe it should be possible for different proposers to arrive at vastly differing estimates of resources required. It is anticipated that this shall allow the proposers to explain exactly what the State shall receive for this amount of funds and shall allow evaluators to determine the best proposals based upon the qualifications and the description of what the State shall receive in exchange for this amount.**
4. So you are looking to have a firm hire local employees to staff a local call center that you will operate and run? **The Staffing Agency will provide hiring of staff for Customer Services Professionals in a Call Center for the Division of Educator Licensure**. **Page 13 (#10) - MDE will manage the Call Center and supervise the staffing employee(s).**
5. This is not an outsourcing customer service management engagement**? Unable to provide an answer as question is written.**
6. Is this a new initiative? If not, please provide the names of the current vendor(s) providing

the services. **This is a new initiative;** **current vendor for The Educator Licensure - Call**

**Center is not applicable*.***

1. Can you please let us know the previous spending of this contract? **Not applicable*.***

1. Please confirm if we can get the proposals or pricing of the incumbent(s). **Not applicable.**
2. Are there any pain points or issues with the current vendor(s)? **Not applicable.**
3. Please confirm the anticipated number of awards. **Please refer to Amendment One of the RFP dated 9/22/2021.**
4. How many vendors will be awarded for this contract? **Please review response for number 44.**
5. What is the anticipated date of award and contract execution? **Page 35 of the RFP: Tentative Timeline - October 18, 2021 (proposed notice of Intent to Award). The anticipated fully contract execution date is on or before December 29, 2021.**
6. What will be the budget for this contract? **Please see response for number 37.**
7. Is Subcontracting allowed for this opportunity, if so, are there any specific participation goals to be met?***Page 23 (STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS)***

***# 2.* ASSIGNMENT/SUBCONTRACTING:Contractor acknowledges that it was selected by the State to perform the services required hereunder based, in part, upon Contractor’s special skills and expertise. Contractor shall not assign, subcontract, or otherwise transfer this agreement, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the State, which the State may, in its sole discretion, approve or deny without reason. Any attempted assignment or transfer of its obligations without such consent shall be null and void. No such approval by the State of any subcontract shall be deemed in any way to provide for the incurrence of any obligation of the State in addition to the total fixed price agreed upon in this agreement. Subcontracts shall be subject to the terms and conditions of this agreement and to any conditions of approval that the State may deem necessary. Subject to the foregoing, this agreement shall be binding upon the respective successors and assigns of the parties.**

1. Is this a new contract or are there any incumbents? If there is an incumbent, could you please let us know the incumbent name? **New contract, no incumbents.**

50. Could you please share the previous spending done on this contract, if any? **Not applicable**.

51. What is the total number of resources who are currently working on this project? Please let us

know their position name and hourly rate? **This is a new initiative**

52. Considering the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, if the proposed candidates are not

available at the time of award, will the agency allow us to provide replacement personnel with

similar or more skill sets? **Please refer to page 11 #5.2 Minimum qualifications.**

53. Are hourly rate ranges acceptable for proposed personnel? **Page 39 (Attachment D)**

**Budget Summary Form: (Offeror to include a detailed budget narrative and insert a chart**

**that addresses all costs for services with each applicable budget category). Provide a clear**

**and concise description of the computations used to arrive at the total amounts indicated.**

54. Is it entirely onsite work or can it be done remotely to some extent / Does the services need to be delivered onsite or is there a possibility for remote operations and performance? **Page 10 of the RFP: The Customer Service Professionals for the Educator Licensure - Call Center, duties and responsibilities are expected to be performed onsite at the Mississippi Department of Education in Jackson, MS.**

55. How many people are currently working onsite and offsite? **Not applicable.**

56. Could you please provide the list of holidays observed by the client? **Not applicable.**

57. Are there any mandated Paid Time Off, Vacation, etc.? **Not applicable.**

58. Can the state please clarify how needs for FTE vendor supplied contractors will be

disseminated to awardees post award? **Page 13 #10 - The specific responsibilities of MDE**

**to** **include Manage the Call Center and supervise the staffing employee(s); Training and**

**educate staff on the licensure guidelines and Supply office space, equipment,**

**computers/phones etc. for the Call Center.**

59. Can the state please provide a detailed explanation for how points will be awarded for the pricing section of this solicitation (i.e. lowest bill rate receives maximum points, and next lowest vendor receives a prorated amount; lowest bill rate receives maximum points, and the next lowest vendor receives a predetermined amount of points)? **Refer to Section 23 of the RFP.**

60. How many references, if any, does the state require? **Please refer to Amendment One of the RFP dated 9/22/2021.**

61. Can the state please provide incumbent information and current bill rates for contracts in place for similar services? **New Initiative, incumbent is not applicable.**

62. Can the state please provide the total amount of FTE contract, vendor supplied Call Center Admins utilized during the 2019-20 SY? **Not applicable, new initiative.**

63. Can the state please provide the total amount of billing, broken down by vendor and classification, for all vendor supplied Call Center Admins utilized during the 2019-20 SY? **Not applicable, new initiative.**

64. Can the state please describe the supplies and materials that contracted providers will have access to at the Call Center? (wifi, computer access, testing material, office supplies, etc.)? **Not applicable.**

65. Can the district please clarify if there is a deadline for questions to be submit and if so, when the answers to those questions would be received back by? **The RFP states on page 4: Copies of all questions submitted, and the responses shall be posted to the MDE’s website,** [**www.mdek12.org**](http://www.mdek12.org/)**, under the Public Notices section and shall be available to the general public on Wednesday, September 22, 2021. Questions and answers shall become part of the final Contract as an attachment.**

66. If multiple vendors are awarded, how will the state disseminate the FTE to each vendor. **Please refer to Amendment One to the RFP dated 9/22/2021.**

67. Can the state confirm if this is a sole-source or multi-sourced bid award? **This is a Request for Proposal (RFP), a sole-source or multi-sourced bid award is not applicable.**

68. The State anticipate these positions to be full-time or provide as-needed support for existing State employee call-offs, absences, etc.? **MDE anticipate these to be temporary full-time** **positions.**

69. Reference Evaluation criteria B.1 - Compliance and monitoring: Outside of monitoring of contractor personnel, does the State require any additional performance monitoring activities? **Please refer to Section 4 of the RFP - Scope of Work and Responsibilities.**

70. Can proposals be submit via the MAGIC system in lieu of hardcopy? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

71. Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like,from India or Canada) **The Vendor shall provide all services directly related to this contract from an office(s) located in the United States. Indicate your agreement with this requirement and identify any locations outside the State of Mississippi in which you propose to provide the services described in this solicitation.**

72. Whether we need to come over there for meetings?  **Not applicable.**

73. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA (like, from India or Canada)? **The Vendor shall provide all services directly related to this contract from an office(s) located in the United States. Indicate your agreement with this requirement and identify any locations outside the State of Mississippi in which you propose to provide the services described in this solicitation.**

74. Can we submit the proposals via email? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

75. Are the services requested by this solicitation a new requirement? **This is a new initiative.**

76. How are the services requested by this solicitation currently being provided? (Contractor

staff or MDE employees)? **Current providers are not applicable.**

77. What are the names of the current company/companies providing the requested services?

**Current company/companies are not applicable**.

78. Will the MDE please provide the contract number(s) for the current contract(s) for these

services? **Not applicable**.

79. Will it be acceptable to propose hiring resources currently working under the existing

contract(s)? **Not applicable**.

80. What are the total expenditures for the last 12 months for these services described in the scope

of work? **Not applicable**.

81. Is a hard copy of the complete original required? **Please refer to Amendment One dated**

**9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

82**.** If a hard copy of the complete original proposal is not required, how are offerors to submit the

electronic version of the complete original? (via USB delivered by FedEx or UPS, or submitted in the

Mississippi Accountability Governmental Information Collaboration System (MAGIC)?

**Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

83. May a table of contents be included? **Please response for number 82.**

84**.** The instructions for proposal components are different. Will MDE please clarify the proposal

organization, components, parts, tabs, etc.? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021,**

**(Instructions for Delivery).**

85. The instructions in RFP 2.1, Instructions for Delivery, and 16, Format and Procedure for Delivery

of Proposals, provide conflicting information for where Attachment A should be included in proposals.

Will the MDE please provide clarification? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021**

**(Instructions for Delivery).**

86. Tab 7 – Any additional relevant information Part IIIis the Additional Datasection which shall

provide any additional information that shall aid in evaluation of the response. Question: Are the two

sections requesting the same information? If no, will the MDE please clarify the difference between the

information to be provided in each section? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021**

**(Instructions for Delivery).**

87. Part IV is the Corporate Experience and Capacity.RFP Section 2.1.a, Instructions for Delivery,

requires proposals be organized as stated. RFP Section 16, Format and Procedure for Delivery of

Proposals, requires Part IV – Corporate Experience and Capacity, which is not required by RFP Section

2.1.a. Question**:** In which Component and/or Tab should Part IV – Corporate Experience and Capacity

be included? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

88. Are electronic copies to be submitted via MAGIC, or on a USB? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

89. RFP Section 2.1.c states one (1) **BLIND** hard copy of Component 1 is required, and Section 3, Responsiveness and Responsibility of the Offeror, requires one (1) USB with a **redacted** version of the proposal. Question: Is a hard copy required? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

90. Will the MDE please provide examples of special programs Customer Service Professionals provided by the vendor may assist with? **The vendor will not need to assist with special programs for services provided by the Customer Service Professionals. MDE will be responsible for training and educate staff on the licensure guidelines**.

91. Where are the document data entry procedures stored? **Not applicable to the vendor**.

92. Will the vendor have access to the document data entry procedures for training employees? Or will the MDE train employees? **MDE will train the temporary staffing employees on document data entry procedures.**

93. What is the projected staffing level of effort to provide bi-lingual services**?** **Page 11 (5.3 -Special Experience): Ability to provide bi-lingual services such as Spanish, preferred.**

94. Will MDE please clarify “fixed price contract”? Does fixed price or unit price refer to an hourly fixed price per temporary staffing resource provided? Or a monthly fixed price for all staff provided, etc.? **Please refer to the RFP Section 8 - Type of contract.**

95. It is anticipated that this contract shall be a fixed price contract with payment made upon completion of tasks identified within the proposal. Question: Will payment be made on a monthly firm fixed price OR upon completion of tasks? **Please refer to the RFP Section 8 - Type of contract.**

96. Please clarify “upon completion of tasks identified within this proposal”. **Please refer to the RFP Section 8 - Type of contract.**

97. What is the total number of staff/resources provided during the last 12 months? **Not applicable.**

98. How many resources are currently working under the existing contract(s)? **Not applicable.**

99. Based on current contract performance (if applicable), what percentage of contractors have been converted to employees of the MDE? **Not applicable.**

100. Will MDE please clarify “Part I and Part II of this solicitation”? What parts/paragraphs/sections of the RFP are to be address in the detailed plan? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

101. What is the aggregate annual budget for the contract resulting from this solicitation**?** What is the total budget for the first 12 months of the contract? **Refer to response given for number 37.**

102 Will MDE please explain what is meant by “with vendor evidence”? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

103. What formula will be applied in the Cost Proposal evaluation? **Please refer to the RFP section 23. Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals.**

104. What types of samples does the MDE expect to see? The instructions to do not require samples of previous work. Where in proposals should this information be included? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

105. Does the MDE prefer contract or in-house resources? Which will be evaluated more favorably? How will contract resources be evaluated? Are resources currently working under the existing contract(s) considered in-house staff? **No existing contract.**

106. Does this evaluation item refer to previous training staff have attended as stated on resumes? **Yes**.

107. At least three (3) references for contracts of similar size and scope. Two references for current contracts or awarded in the past three (3) years. Questions: If three (3) references for current contracts of similar size and scope are provided, will it satisfy the requirements? Or is MDE requesting a total of five (5) references? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

108. Is the electronic blind copy to contain only the information specified for Component 1 – Technical Factors? Or should the electronic blind copy contain the entire proposal, with all vendor-identifying information removed, to include pricing and key personnel resumes? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

109. Is the blind hard copy to contain only the information specified for Component 1 – Technical Factors? Or should the blind hard copy contain the entire proposal, with all vendor-identifying information removed, to include pricing and key personnel resumes. **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

.110. The RFP states the contract is 3 years with details about your avg monthly calls and length of time which we can support.  The same document says, ‘temporary staffing services.’ Can you please explain what is meant by this specifically? **The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) through the Office of Teaching and Leading is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified vendors for Temporary Staffing Services for a Call Center. The Staffing Agency will provide hiring of staff for Customer Services Professionals in a Call Center for the Division of Educator Licensure.**

111**.**  Is there an incumbent contractor providing these services to State currently? **No.**

112. Would contractors be working remotely or in the office? **Please refer to response for number 54**.

113. Do you have any preferences on the contractors to be Mississippi resident’s vs out-of-state**? Please refer to response for number 8.**

114. If this is not a new requirement, who are the vendors that are currently providing these services?

**This is a new initiative; current vendors are not applicable.**

115.   What are the benefits that the current incumbents provide to their contract employees?

**Not applicable.**

116.   What has MDE spent on these services over the past 3 years? **Not applicable.**

117.  What are the current hourly bill rates or mark-up percentage that MDE spends for each position?

**Not applicable.**

118.  How many positions has MDE requested in the last 3 years? **Not applicable.**

119.  What has been the average or typical duration (in days, months, or hours) for positions requested in the past? **Not applicable.**

120.  What percentage of temporary personnel has MDE converted to full time employees in the past? **Not applicable to this solicitation.**

121.  What is the required response time from when MDE makes a request for a temporary contractor to

when is a vendor expected provide candidates? **Please refer to the RFP Section 9. Contractor**

**Deliverables.**

122.  Does the client’s evaluation process provide an advantage of any kind for local businesses? **Refer to**

**The RFP section 23. Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals**.

123.  Will justification of a proposer’s cost be used to determine the number of evaluation points given for

cost? **Refer to** **the RFP section 23. Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals**.

124.  Are the 45 points for cost purely distributed from lowest price? **Please refer to page 20 D. Price/Cost Factors.**

125.  What is MDE’s current vaccination policy? **Please visit the Covid-19 guidelines for the state.**

126. Will contractors be required to complete a drug test? **Page 10 #4 of the RFP: Scope of Work and**

**Responsibilities: Ensure drug screening of staffing employee(s), if requested. Contractor will incur**

**cost of fee(s).**

127. Does the Mississippi Department of Education provide training for the Customer Support

Agents? **Page 13 #10 - The specific responsibilities of MDE to** **include Manage the Call Center and supervise the staffing employee(s); Training and educate staff on the licensure guidelines and supply office space, equipment, computers/phones etc. for the Call Center.**

128. Will the Mississippi Department of Education provide equipment to the Customer Support Agents?

**Please refer to response for number 127.**

129. Are there incumbents for this contract? **Not applicable**.

130. If so, who are they and what are their rates? **Not applicable.**

131. Any shortcomings or areas for improvement you’re looking to solve? **Not applicable.**

132. How long do you typically keep contract employees on for? What are the average contractor durations? **Not applicable, this is a new initiative.**

133. What has been the total amount Mississippi Department of Education has spent on staffing each of the past three years? **Not applicable.**

134. What are you looking for in a collaborative partnership? **Not applicable.**

135. What is the forecasted spend each year for the next three years? **Please refer to response for number 37.**

136. How many references need to be provided in a proposal? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

137. Can you explain how the Mississippi Department of Education determines the amount of Customer Service Agents needed? **Please refer to the RFP section 5. Call Center Project Description.**

138. Can you explain how a vendor would submit a blind copy into Mississippi Accountability Governmental Information Collaboration System? Would a blind copy still be required in MAGIC? **Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021 (Instructions for Delivery).**

139. Can you provide the number of bilingual candidates needed for hire on this contract? **Page 11 (5.3 -Special Experience): Ability to provide bi-lingual services such as Spanish, preferred.**

140. What percentage of contractors can become FTEs? **The percentage of contractors that can become FTEs is not applicable.**

141. Will you be awarding the contract to multiple agencies or just one?

* + If it’s multiple, will there be a primary, secondary, etc.?
  + Will the primary have a lead time on positions versus the secondary vendors?

**Please refer to Amendment One dated 9/22/2021.**

142. It is anticipated that this contract shall be a fixed price contract with payment made upon completion of tasks identified within the proposal – Will this fixed price be decided by labor per hour?

**Please refer to the RFP Section 8 - Type of contract.**

143. Can you give an estimate on how much overtime is expected? **Not applicable.**

144. What is the highest priority for you regarding this engagement? **Not applicable.**

145. When will we receive responses back from these clarification questions? **Please refer to response for number 33.**

146. Has MDE used this RFP model in the past while searching for a Temporary Staffing Services vendor?  If so, is the contract on the Mississippi State Transparency website?

**This is a new initiative for MDE-Office of Teaching and Leading.**

147. Can you explain what you mean by, "this contract shall be a fixed price contract with payment made upon completion of tasks identified within the proposal"?  Are you asking for a lump sum or overall total cost of the project from December 20, 2021 through September 20, 2023, or the hourly cost of each temporary employee hour billed? **Please refer to the RFP Section 8 - Type of contract.**

## **Amendment Number Two**

**NOTE:** *This amendment two (2) is hereby made a part of the Mississippi Department of Education’s Request for Proposals - Questions & Answers. The Vendor acknowledges receipt of said amendment and is made aware of the changes contained therein. By signing this form, the Offeror accepts the changes as part of the contract requirement. Please submit this Amendment with the Request for Proposal (RFP).*

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Authorized Signature Date

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Printed Name