

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT MANAGEMENT
523 EAST CAPITOL AVENUE
PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA 57501-3182

Training for Employment Services Providers who work with People with Disabilities
PROPOSALS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN November 2, 2020

RFP #: 2130

State POC: Jordan Trumbo

EMAIL: Jordan.trumbo@state.sd.us

READ CAREFULLY

FIRM NAME: _____ AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ TYPE OR PRINT NAME: _____

CITY/STATE: _____ TELEPHONE NO: _____

ZIP (9 DIGIT): _____ FAX NO: _____

E-MAIL: _____

PRIMARY CONTACT INFORMATION

CONTACT NAME: _____ TELEPHONE NO: _____

FAX NO: _____ E-MAIL: _____

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 PURPOSE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

The Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) is publishing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to establish training and Community of Practice activities for employment service providers (employment specialists) who work with people with disabilities in South Dakota. The intent of this RFP is to develop a 5-year training plan and deliver training for employment specialists who work with people with disabilities. This training will target new employment specialists as well as existing employment specialist's development. The training will include a combination of regional in-state training, on-line training and regular meetings with employment specialists to develop networking and promote best practices. This RFP will solicit proposals from agencies or independent contractors who poses experience and credentials to provide a high-quality training to employment service providers.

An Employment Specialist is an individual who either works through an agency or privately to provide employment services to individuals with disabilities in the areas of job seeking, job development, and job maintenance.

The South Dakota Department of Human Services/Division of Rehabilitation Services completed a training needs survey with employment service provider staff as well as DRS/SBVI staff in August of 2020. The proposal will need to show the trainers qualifications and capacity to meet our current training as well as potential training needs over the five-year period of the RFP.

1.2 ISSUING OFFICE AND RFP REFERENCE NUMBER

The Department of Human Services/Division of Rehabilitation Services/Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired is the issuing office for this document and all subsequent addenda relating to it, on behalf of the State of South Dakota, Department of Human Services/Division of Rehabilitation Services/Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired . The reference number for the transaction is RFP #2130. This number must be referred to on all proposals, correspondence, and documentation relating to the RFP.

1.3 LETTER OF INTENT

All interested offerors must submit a **Letter of Intent** to respond to this RFP.

The letter of intent should be received in the via mail by no later than September 28th, 2020. If submitted by mail the envelope should be addressed to:

Request for Proposal #2130
Proposal Due November 2, 2020
Buyer Jordan Trumbo
Department of Human Services
3800 E Hwy. 34, Hillsview Properties Plaza
c/o 500 E Capitol Ave
Pierre SD, 57501-5070

Be sure to reference the RFP number in your letter.

The Letter of Intent may be submitted to Jordan Trumbo via email at Jordan.trumbo@state.sd.us. Please place the following in the subject line of your email: "**Letter of Intent for RFP 2130**".

1.4 SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

RFP Publication	September 14, 2020
Letter of Intent to Respond Due	September 28, 2020
Deadline to Submit Written Questions	October 5, 2020
Responses to Offeror Questions	October 16, 2020
Proposal Submission	November 2, 2020
Oral Presentations/discussions (if required)	November 2, 2020
Anticipated Award Decision/Contract Negotiation	November 16, 2020

1.5 SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL

All proposals must be completed and received in the Department of Human Services/Division of Rehabilitation Services/Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired by the date and time indicated in the Schedule of Activities.

Proposals received after the deadline will be late and ineligible for consideration.

An original and 2 identical copies of the proposal shall be submitted, also include an electronic version with submission. **The cost proposal must be in a separate sealed envelope and labeled "Cost Proposal."**

Due to security concerns the State will not accept electronic proposals on portable media so Offerors must provide a secure location where the State can electronically download the Offeror's proposal(s). This secure location can be a SFTP site, an encrypted FTP site or a webpage using SSL if files are only downloaded and nothing has to be uploaded. Offeror's shall reference their secure web location in the paper copy of their proposal.

All proposals must be signed, in ink, by an officer of the responder, legally authorized to bind the responder to the proposal, and sealed in the form intended by the respondent. Proposals that are not properly signed may be rejected. The sealed envelope should be marked with the appropriate RFP Number and Title. **Proposals should be addressed and labeled as follows:**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL #2130
PROPOSAL DUE November 2, 2020
Buyer Jordan Trumbo
Department of Human Services
3800 E Hwy 34, Hillsvew Properties Plaza
c/o 500 E Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501-5070**

No proposal shall be accepted from, or no contract or purchase order shall be awarded to any person, firm or corporation that is in arrears upon any obligations to the State of South Dakota, or that otherwise may be deemed irresponsible or unreliable by the State of South Dakota.

1.6 CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION – LOWER TIER COVERED TRANSACTIONS

By signing and submitting this proposal, the offeror certifies that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation, by any Federal department or agency, from transactions involving the use of Federal funds. Where the offeror is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, the bidder shall attach an explanation to their offer.

1.7 NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The State of South Dakota requires that all contractors, vendors, and suppliers doing business with any State agency, department, or institution, provide a statement of non-discrimination. By signing and submitting their proposal, the offeror certifies they do not discriminate in their employment practices with regard to race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, ancestry, national origin or disability.

1.8 RESTRICTION OF BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

For contractors, vendors, suppliers, or subcontractors with five (5) or more employees who enter into a contract with the State of South Dakota that involves the expenditure of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) or more, by submitting a response to this solicitation or agreeing to contract with the State, the bidder or offeror certifies and agrees that the following information is correct:

The bidder or offeror, in preparing its response or offer or in considering proposals submitted from qualified, potential vendors, suppliers, and subcontractors, or in the solicitation, selection, or commercial treatment of any vendor, supplier, or subcontractor, has not refused to transact business activities, has not terminated business activities, and has not taken other similar actions intended to limit its commercial relations, related to the subject matter of the bid or offer, with a person or entity on the basis of Israeli national origin, or residence or incorporation in Israel or its territories, with the specific intent to accomplish a boycott or divestment of Israel in a discriminatory manner. It is understood and agreed that, if this certification is false, such false certification will constitute grounds for the State to reject the bid or response submitted by the bidder or offeror on this project and terminate any contract awarded based on the bid or response. The successful bidder or offeror further agrees to provide immediate written notice to the contracting executive branch agency if during the term of the contract it no longer complies with this certification and agrees such noncompliance may be grounds for contract termination.

1.9 MODIFICATION OR WITHDRAWAL OF PROPOSALS

Proposals may be modified or withdrawn by the offeror prior to the established due date and time.

No oral, telephonic, telegraphic or facsimile responses or modifications to informal, formal bids, or Request for Proposals will be considered.

1.10 OFFEROR INQUIRIES

Offerors may email inquiries concerning this RFP to obtain clarification of requirements. No inquiries will be accepted after the date and time indicated in the Schedule of Activities. Inquiries must be emailed to Jordan Trumbo at Jordan.trumbo@state.sd.us with the subject line "RFP #2130".

The Department of Human Services/Division of Rehabilitation Services/Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired will to respond to offeror's inquiries (if required) via e-mail. In addition, all inquiries and the State's response will be posted on the state's e-procurement system. Offerors may not rely on any other statements, either of a written or oral nature, that alter any specification or other term or condition of this RFP. Offerors will be notified in the same manner as indicated above regarding any modifications to this RFP.

1.11 PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

The proposal of the successful offeror(s) becomes public information. Proprietary information can be protected under limited circumstances such as client lists and non-public financial statements. An entire proposal may not be marked as proprietary. Offerors must clearly identify in the Executive Summary and mark in the body of the proposal any specific proprietary information they are requesting to be protected.

The Executive Summary must contain specific justification explaining why the information is to be protected. Proposals may be reviewed and evaluated by any person at the discretion of the State. All materials submitted become the property of the State of South Dakota and may be returned only at the State's option.

1.12 LENGTH OF CONTRACT

The duration of the contract shall be 12 months beginning January 1, 2021. The State shall have the option to renew the agreement under the same terms and conditions for up to five (5) total successive periods of one (1) year with approved annual inflation

1.13 GOVERNING LAW

Venue for any and all legal action regarding or arising out of the transaction covered herein shall be solely in the State of South Dakota. The laws of South Dakota shall govern this transaction.

1.14 DISCUSSIONS WITH OFFERORS (ORAL PRESENTATION/NEGOTIATIONS)

An oral presentation by an offeror to clarify a proposal may be required at the sole discretion of the State. However, the State may award a contract based on the initial proposals received without discussion with the Offeror. If oral presentations are required, they will be scheduled after the submission of proposals. Oral presentations will be made at the offeror's expense.

This process is a Request for Proposal/Competitive Negotiation process. Each Proposal shall be evaluated, and each respondent shall be available for negotiation meetings at the State's request. The State reserves the right to negotiate on any and/or all components of every proposal submitted. From the time the proposals are submitted until the formal award of a contract, each proposal is considered a working document and as such, will be kept confidential. The negotiation discussions will also be held as confidential until such time as the award is completed.

2.0 STANDARD CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP will include the State's standard terms and conditions as seen in Attachment A. The Offeror should indicate in their response any issues they have with any specific contract terms. If the Offeror does not indicate any contract term issues, then the State will assume the terms are acceptable.

- 2.1** The South Dakota Department of Human Services intends to make payment installments which align with milestones and deliverables as outlined in the winning Offeror's proposal, and as negotiated by the parties.

3.0 SCOPE OF WORK

- 3.1** The Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) is publishing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to establish regular training and Community of Practice activities for employment specialists in South Dakota. The intent of this RFP is to provide contracted employment specialists the opportunity for initial training, continuing staff development, continuing education credits, and means of support and community to increase their capacity to provide services to individuals with disabilities receiving Vocational Rehabilitation Services from DRS/SBVI. This RFP will solicit proposals from agencies or independent contractors who poses experience and credentials to provide quality training to employment service providers for a period of five years.
- 3.2** Our employment specialist staff includes a wide variety of individuals across the state with extremely varied levels of experience, training, and current certification held.
 - 3.2.1** Sixty-six percent of respondents hold a Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) certification, and twenty-two percent of these respondents that aren't already certified would like to be. We would like to provide opportunities for newer employment specialists to get training that would help them to pass their Certified Employment Specialists Program certification exam as well as provide currently certified employment specialists the opportunity to improve their skills and obtain continuing education credits.
 - 3.2.2** Twenty-eight percent of respondents supervise employment specialists and may benefit from training formats that provide them assistance and guidance on how to share their learning with new staff.
- 3.3** The South Dakota Department of Human Services/Division of Rehabilitation Services completed a training needs survey with employment service providers as well as DRS/SBVI staff in August of 2020. The proposal will need to show the trainers capacity to address and meet our current training as well as potential training needs over the five-year period of the RFP.
- 3.4** Training needs identified in our survey include
 - 3.4.1** Communication/Partnership with VR Staff
 - 3.4.2** Billing and Reports
 - 3.4.3** Understanding Service Requirements/Fee Rates
 - 3.4.4** Understanding the Role of the VR Counselor and VR Services
 - 3.4.5** Job Development-Contacting Employers
 - 3.4.6** Job Development-Job Carving
 - 3.4.7** Job Development-Job Matching
 - 3.4.8** Job Development-Job Site Analysis
 - 3.4.9** Job Coaching Strategies
 - 3.4.10** Job Coaching Fading
 - 3.4.11** Follow Along Services
 - 3.4.12** Other topics recommended by survey respondents
 - 3.4.12.1** Federal/State Regulations and Changing Policies
 - 3.4.12.2** Programs that aid adults regarding employment
 - 3.4.12.3** Developing natural supports

- 3.4.12.4 Discovering interests and motivation
- 3.4.12.5 Disclosure and use of Assistive Technology
- 3.4.12.6 Role of VR in Transition Services
- 3.4.12.7 Job development in the world of COVID-19.
- 3.4.12.8 Plan for Sustaining Employment.

- 3.5** Training formats are very fluid in South Dakota at this time due to COVID-19 and are primarily virtual to maintain participant and trainer safety. Per survey data, staff are more willing to participate in virtual training, but would be willing to participate in-person when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. Proposals must include a combination of regional in-person training and on-line training.
- 3.6** In our need's assessment survey, it was also identified that a guided Community of Practice was necessary and would be helpful in networking, sharing of ideas/processes, and overall development of employment service staff. A monthly or quarterly virtual Community of Practice should be established as an addition to regularly held training.

4.0 PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS AND COMPANY QUALIFICATIONS

- 4.1** Proposals that indicate a higher level of certification, education, and experience will be taken as preference over those that do not illustrate this. Include resumes of both potential trainers and the individual who will be responsible for the delivery of services through this RFP.
- 4.2** The offeror is cautioned that it is the offeror's sole responsibility to submit information related to the evaluation categories and that the State of South Dakota is under no obligation to solicit such information if it is not included with the proposal. The offeror's failure to submit such information may cause an adverse impact on the evaluation of the proposal.
- 4.3** **Offeror's Contacts:** Offerors and their agents (including subcontractors, employees, consultants, or anyone else acting on their behalf) must direct all of their questions or comments regarding the RFP, the evaluation, etc. to the buyer of record indicated on the first page of this RFP. Offerors and their agents may not contact any state employee other than the buyer of record regarding any of these matters during the solicitation and evaluation process. Inappropriate contacts are grounds for suspension and/or exclusion from specific procurements. Offerors and their agents who have questions regarding this matter should contact the buyer of record.
- 4.4** The offeror may be required to submit a copy of their most recent audited financial statements upon the State's request.
- 4.5** Provide the following information related to at least three previous and current service/contracts, performed by the offeror's organization, which are similar to the requirements of this RFP. Provide this information for any service/contract that has been terminated, expired or not renewed in the past three years.
- a. Name, address and telephone number of client/contracting agency and a representative of that agency who may be contacted for verification of all information submitted;
 - b. Dates of the service/contract; and
 - c. A brief, written description of the specific prior services performed and requirements thereof.

5.0 PROPOSAL RESPONSE FORMAT

- 5.1** An original and 2 copies shall be submitted.
 - 5.1.1** In addition, the offeror should provide one (1) copy of their entire proposal, including all attachments, in Microsoft Word or PDF electronic format (flash drive, USB drive, etc.) Offerors may not send the electronically formatted copy of their proposal via email.
 - 5.1.2** The proposal should be page numbered and should have an index and/or a table of contents referencing the appropriate page number.
- 5.2** All proposals must be organized and tabbed with labels for the following headings:
 - 5.2.1 RFP Form.** The State's Request for Proposal form completed and signed.
 - 5.2.2 Executive Summary.** The one or two page executive summary is to briefly describe the offeror's proposal. This summary should highlight the major features of the proposal. It must indicate any requirements that cannot be met by the offeror. The reader should be able to determine the essence of the proposal by reading the executive summary. Proprietary information requests should be identified in this section.
 - 5.2.3 Detailed Response.** This section should constitute the major portion of the proposal and must contain at least the following information:
 - 5.2.3.1** A complete narrative of the offeror's assessment of the work to be performed, the offeror's ability and approach, and the resources necessary to fulfill the requirements. This should demonstrate the offeror's understanding of the desired overall performance expectations.
 - 5.2.3.2** A specific point-by-point response, in the order listed, to each requirement in the RFP. The response should identify each requirement being addressed as enumerated in the RFP.
 - 5.2.3.3** A clear description of any options or alternatives proposed.
 - 5.2.4 Cost Proposal.** Cost will be evaluated independently from the technical proposal. Offerors may submit multiple cost proposals. All costs related to the provision of the required services must be included in each cost proposal offered.

See section 7.0 for more information related to the cost proposal.

6.0 PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS

- 6.1** After determining that a proposal satisfies the mandatory requirements stated in the Request for Proposal, the evaluator(s) shall use subjective judgment in conducting a comparative assessment of the proposal by considering each of the following criteria:
- 6.1.1** Specialized expertise, capabilities, and technical competence as demonstrated by the proposed approach and methodology to meet the project requirements;
 - 6.1.2** Resources available to perform the work, including any specialized services, within the specified time limits for the project;
 - 6.1.3** Record of past performance, including price and cost data from previous projects, quality of work, ability to meet schedules, cost control, and contract administration;
 - 6.1.4** Availability to the project locale;
 - 6.1.5** Familiarity with the project locale;
 - 6.1.6** Proposed project management techniques; and
 - 6.1.7** Ability and proven history in handling special project constraints.
- 6.2** Experience and reliability of the offeror's organization are considered subjectively in the evaluation process. Therefore, the offeror is advised to submit any information which documents successful and reliable experience in past performances, especially those performances related to the requirements of this RFP.
- 6.3** The qualifications of the personnel proposed by the offeror to perform the requirements of this RFP, whether from the offeror's organization or from a proposed subcontractor, will be subjectively evaluated. Therefore, the offeror should submit detailed information related to the experience and qualifications, including education and training, of proposed personnel.
- 6.4** Training certifications of established training programs.
- 6.5** The offer's experience in providing Employment Specialists trainings. This will need to include a list of past training and method of the delivery of training.
- 6.6** Five-year training plan that best meets the training needs of this RFP.
- 6.7** The State reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive technicalities, and make award(s) as deemed to be in the best interest of the State of South Dakota.
- 6.8 Award:** The requesting agency and the highest ranked offeror shall mutually discuss and refine the scope of services for the project and shall negotiate terms, including compensation and performance schedule.
- 6.8.1** If the agency and the highest ranked offeror are unable for any reason to negotiate a contract at a compensation level that is reasonable and fair to the agency, the agency shall, either orally or in writing, terminate negotiations with the contractor. The agency may then negotiate with the next highest ranked contractor.
 - 6.8.2** The negotiation process may continue through successive offerors, according to agency ranking, until an agreement is reached or the agency terminates the contracting process.

7.0 COST PROPOSAL

7.1 The Offeror must include a detailed cost proposal for 5 years. Categories include personnel, equipment, and training.

7.1.1 The cost proposal must be in a separate sealed envelope and labeled "Cost Proposal."