



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Information Acknowledgement Form

Page <u>1</u> of <u>10</u> pages	SUBMIT REPLY TO: Department of Economic Opportunity Office of Property and Procurement 107 East Madison Street, B-047 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-4128 Telephone Number: 850-245-7455		
AGENCY RELEASE DATE: December 4, 2017			
SOLICITATION TITLE: Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Application Management System		SOLICITATION NO: 18-RFI-004-LAJ	
RESPONSES WILL BE OPENED: January 5, 2018 @ 3:00 PM, Eastern Standard Time			
This is a Request for Information (RFI) as defined by section 287.012(22), Florida Statutes. Responses to this RFI are not offers and cannot not be accepted by DEO to form a binding contract. §287.012(22), Fla. Stat. (2016). Information received in response to this RFI, however, may be used to develop future procurements. Respondents to this RFI will not be prohibited from submitting bids to such future procurements based solely on having responded to this RFI. §287.057(17)(c), Fla. Stat. (2016). Vendors, then, are encouraged to respond with solutions that meet all or part of the specified requirements listed in greater detail in Section B of this RFI.			
RESPONDENT NAME:		<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 10px;"/> *Authorized Representative's Signature <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 10px;"/> *Name and Title of Authorized Representative *This individual must have the authority to provide this Response.	
RESPONDENT MAILING ADDRESS:			
CITY - STATE - ZIP:			
PHONE NUMBER:			
TOLL FREE NUMBER:			
FAX NUMBER:			
EMAIL ADDRESS:			
FEID NO.:			
TYPE OF BUSINESS ENTITY (Corporation, LLC, partnership, etc.):			

RESPONDENT CONTACTS: Please provide the name, title, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the official contact and an alternate, if available.			
PRIMARY CONTACT:		SECONDARY CONTACT:	
NAME, TITLE:		NAME, TITLE:	
ADDRESS:		ADDRESS:	
PHONE NUMBER:		PHONE NUMBER:	
FAX NUMBER:		FAX NUMBER:	
EMAIL ADDRESS:		EMAIL ADDRESS:	

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**SECTION A
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF RESPONSES**

The instructions for this RFI have been designed to help ensure all responses are reviewed in a consistent manner, as well as to minimize costs and response time. INFORMATION SUBMITTED IN VARIANCE WITH THESE INSTRUCTIONS MAY NOT BE REVIEWED.

- A.1 SOLICITATION NUMBER** **18-RFI-004-LAJ**
- A.2 SOLICITATION TYPE** **Request for Information (RFI)**
- A.3 PROGRAM OFFICE** **Div. of Workforce Services, Bureau of One-Stop & Program Support**
- A.4 ISSUING OFFICE** **Lori Jones/Vincent McKenzie
Purchasing Analyst/Purchasing Manager
107 East Madison Street, B-047
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
(850) 245-7471/(850) 245-7463 (Office Number)
Lori.Jones@deo.myflorida.com
Vincent.McKenzie@deo.myflorida.com**

A.5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Listed below is the calendar of important actions and dates/times by which the actions must be taken or completed. If DEO finds it necessary to change any of these dates/times, it will be accomplished by addendum. All listed times are local in Tallahassee, Florida.

	Estimated Calendar of Events	Date
1.	Date of Issuance and publication on the Florida Vendor Bid System website at: http://vbs.dms.state.fl.us/vbs/main_menu	12/4/2017
2.	Technical Questions Regarding RFI due to DEO	12/12/2017 @ 3:00 P.M.
3.	Department Responds to Technical Questions	12/20/2017
4.	Responses Due	1/5/2018 @ 3:00 P.M.
5.	Oral Presentations, if scheduled	TBD if Scheduled

Addenda or clarifications to this RFI will be posted on the Florida Vendor Bid System (VBS). **It is the Respondent’s responsibility to monitor the Florida Vendor Bid System for any updates to this RFI.**

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A.6 QUESTIONS

Any questions from Respondents concerning this RFI shall be submitted in writing, via email, identifying the submitter, to Lori Jones and Vincent McKenzie at lori.jones@deo.myflorida.com and vincent.mckenzie@deo.myflorida.com by the date and time specified in section A.5, Calendar of Events. All questions and/or changes to the RFI will be posted on the Department of Management Services (DMS) Florida Vendor Bid System (VBS) as an addendum. It is the prospective Respondent's responsibility to periodically check the VBS for any RFI updates. DEO bears no responsibility for any delays or resulting impacts associated with a prospective Respondent's failure to obtain the information made available through the Florida Vendor Bid System. Respondent's questions should be submitted as an attachment via email in the format included in Attachment A– Technical Questions Submittal Form.

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SECTION B – INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

B.1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The State of Florida, Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), Division of Workforce Services, is requesting information regarding a web-based solution to support Florida's Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Program. The solution will provide the Division of Workforce Services and customers (employers and consultants) with an integrated, adaptable, and scalable web-based application management system to support the entire Florida WOTC Program.

Pursuant to Rule 60A-1.042, F.A.C., an agency may request information by issuing a written Request for Information (RFI). Agencies may use a RFI in circumstances including, but not limited to, determining whether or not to competitively procure a commodity or contractual services, determining what solicitation process to use for a particular need, or research general, special, and/or technical specifications for a solicitation.

B.2 BACKGROUND

The WOTC program offers businesses the opportunity to earn a federal tax credit for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. The maximum tax credit ranges from \$1,200 to \$9,600 dependent upon the employee hired. As the state workforce agency, DEO is responsible for processing certification requests that are submitted by Florida-based businesses within 28 calendar days of the employee's start date. Florida also receives requests for information from other states' WOTC units via mail. To apply for the tax credit, employers and/or their designated consultants must submit their certification requests to the Florida WOTC unit via the online application management system or via mail. After the certification request has been reviewed and processed, it is placed in a status of Certified, Denied, or Pending, and the employer or consultant is informed of that determination. Determinations are either automated (completed automatically) by the electronic application management system or manually (determined after a review by WOTC unit staff). For Program Year 2016 (July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017), the Florida WOTC unit received a total of 277,981 certification requests; 89% were submitted online (247,460) and 11% (30,521) were mailed-in.

B.3 SPECIFICATIONS

The Respondent(s) should provide information highlighting a comprehensive solution which delivers consistent and uniform information across the WOTC Program. The list below contains requirements and components necessary for the proposed web-based solution, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- An enhanced customer interface that provides for ease of use and incorporates data validation methodology;
- User account functionality providing various user account types and allowing for account registration by external users;
 - This would include a web-based portal accessible by other state WOTC units to exchange information as required to process out-of-state requests.
- Enhanced application management tools for Florida WOTC unit staff to fully assist employers and consultants, which include, but are not limited to:
 - Automated eligibility determination, where applicable; and
 - Functionality allowing manual eligibility determination when necessary, including communication

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with employers and consultants to request additional information when applications are incomplete and/or require further documentation.

- Automation of manual or paper-based processes to increase workflow efficiencies, reduce operational costs, and ensure critical information needed to effectively manage the WOTC Program is readily accessible;
- Capability to upload and store documentation used to support eligibility determinations;
- Reporting capabilities to meet the needs of federal and state reporting requirements;
- Administrative management functionality in support of data security, reporting, audits, and user safeguards against fraudulent actions;
- A technical architecture and underlying functionality that is adaptable, scalable, and flexible to support continuous process improvement and changes based on applicable state and federal laws;
- Capability to exchange information and data through interfaces with other state agencies including, but not limited to, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Department of Education (DOE), and Department of Corrections (DOC) as well as federal agencies, upon data sharing agreements being established;
- Timely access to information and data necessary for performance measurement and quality management of the Florida WOTC Program; and
- Other enhancements, features, and innovations provided by the Respondent not identified above.

B.4 PROCESS

Responses to this RFI will be reviewed by the Division of Workforce Services and other programmatic and Information Technology staff for informational purposes only and **will not result in the award of a contract.** This is a RFI as defined by section 287.012(22), Florida Statutes. Responses to this RFI are not offers and cannot be accepted by DEO to form a binding contract. § 287.012(22), Fla. Stat. (2017). Information received in response to this RFI, however, may be used to develop future procurements. Respondents to this RFI will not be prohibited from submitting bids to such future procurements based solely on having responded to this RFI. § 287.057(17)(c), Fla. Stat. (2017). DEO will review responses received from this RFI to determine the feasibility of issuing a competitive solicitation for services or commodities. Any request for cost information is for budget purposes only.

B.5 INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDENTS

The instructions for this RFI were designed to help ensure all responses are reviewed in a consistent manner. The response must include:

1. Information Acknowledgement Form

Respondents are required to complete, sign, and return the “Information Acknowledgment Form” with their submittal. This form must be completed and signed by a representative who is authorized to provide information on behalf of the Respondent.

If a Respondent fails to submit a signed Information Acknowledgment Form with their reply, DEO reserves the right to contact the Respondent by telephone to inform the Respondent to submit this document by email, which is then followed by a submission through the mail. This right may be exercised when the Respondent has met all other requirements of the RFI.

In the event more than one Respondent submits a joint response, each Respondent of the joint response must complete and sign a separate Information Acknowledgement Form.

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2. Details

Interested Respondents should include the following information in their responses:

- A description of Respondent's ability to provide a Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) system and its complete components;
- Respondent's history with all similar systems, organizational structure, and contact information for each reference: Name, title, phone number, and email address;
- Respondent's experience with contemporary technology that can be applied to the WOTC business processes to create a more flexible and responsive environment; and
- Any other information that Respondent wishes to supply in response to this RFI.

B.6 RESPONSE

It is not necessary to prepare responses using elaborate brochures and artwork, expensive paper and bindings, or other expensive visual presentation aids. Responses should be prepared in accordance with the instructions provided in this document. DEO is not responsible for and will not reimburse any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of information in response to this RFI.

This is strictly a RFI, and in no way does this request bind DEO to solicit bids or proposals in the future. However, in no way does submittal of information pursuant to this RFI give any Respondent any advantage in any solicitation if DEO elects to solicit bids/proposals in the future.

B.7 ORAL PRESENTATION AGENDA

Based upon the completeness of the response, DEO at its sole discretion may invite Respondents for an oral presentation. Each presentation will be scheduled from one (1) to two (2) hours depending on the response and should include the following:

- A high-level overview of the product highlighting the core agency processes the product addresses, including customer references for the product where it is currently installed;
- Information regarding the vendor's experience and competency in the design, development and support of their solution, training and knowledge transfer activities, operations and maintenance of the proposed solution, and, if applicable, any additional vendors partnered with to provide a complete solution;
- A discussion about the approach taken in previous implementations, challenges and risks encountered, and mitigating factors taken into consideration; and
- An opportunity for questions and answers.

B.8 RESPONSE DATE

Sealed RFI responses are due at the time and date specified in Section A.5, "Calendar of Events" in the Office of Property and Procurement, 107 East Madison Street, Room B-047, Caldwell Building, Tallahassee, Florida 32399.

Sealed RFI responses received by DEO are subject to production, disclosure, inspection, and copying, in accordance with Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.

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B.9 NUMBER OF COPIES TO BE SUBMITTED

A signed original Response and five (5) copies thereof shall be bound, enclosed, and sealed individually, and one (1) electronic copy of the signed original Response (on compact disc). The original Response shall be labeled "Original Response" and all copies shall be labeled "Response Copy." The original and copies may be submitted together.

B.10 DISCLOSURE AND OWNERSHIP OF RESPONSES BY DEO

A Respondent's response shall be a public record and subject to production, disclosure, inspection and copying consistent with the requirements of Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.

B.11 RESPONDENT'S DUTIES TO ASSERT EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE AS A PUBLIC RECORD

Any response content submitted to DEO which is asserted to be exempted by law from disclosure as a public record shall be set forth on a page or pages separate from the rest of the reply, and clearly marked "exempt," "confidential," or "trade secret" (as applicable), with the statutory basis for such claim of exemption specifically identified in writing on each and every such page. Failure to segregate and so identify any such content shall constitute a waiver of any claimed exemption as applied to the portion of the response or other document in which the content is set forth.

Pursuant to section 215.985(14), F.S., the Department of Financial Services (DFS), has developed a web-based system that provides information and documentation about government contracts called the "Florida Accountability Contract Tracking System" or "FACTS." An important aspect of this system is the posting of contract images on the Internet, including contract attachments, which may include all or part of a Respondent's response to this RFI.

Any claim of exemption from public disclosure is waived upon submission, unless addressed as set forth above. DEO will attempt to afford protection from disclosure of any trade secret as defined in section 812.081(1)(c), F.S., or section 688.002, F.S., where identified as such in the response, to the extent permitted under section 815.045, F.S., or section 288.075, F.S., and Chapter 119, F.S. Each Respondent acknowledges that the protection afforded by section 815.045, F.S., is incomplete, and hereby agrees that no remedy for damages may arise from any disclosure by DEO.

DEO takes its public records responsibilities under Chapter 119, F.S., and Article I, Section 24 of the Florida Constitution, very seriously. **If a Respondent considers any portion of the documents, data, or record submitted in response to this RFI to be exempted by law from disclosure as a public record, the Respondent must also provide DEO with a separate Redacted Copy of its response, in hard copy and on compact disk at the time of reply submission.**

This Redacted Copy shall contain DEO's RFI name, number, and the name of the Respondent on the cover, and shall be clearly titled "Redacted Copy." The Redacted Copy shall be provided to DEO at the same time the Respondent submits its reply to the RFI and must only exclude or obliterate those exact portions which are exempted by law from public disclosure. Each individual portion of the Redacted Copy that Respondent asserts is confidential must contain a citation to the specific law making the content of the redacted portion confidential.

If it is determined the reply does not contain any information which is exempted by law from public disclosure,

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Respondent shall provide as part of the response, a written statement to that effect which is executed by an authorized representative of the Respondent's company with legal authority to make this determination on behalf of the Respondent.

Respondent shall protect, defend, and indemnify, save and hold harmless, DEO from any and all claims, demands, liabilities, and suits of any nature arising out of, because of, or due to the failure of, DEO releasing information redacted by the Respondent, and to further indemnify DEO for any other loss DEO incurs due to any claim being made against DEO regarding portions of its Redacted Copy being confidential, proprietary, trade secret, or otherwise not subject to disclosure. DEO expressly retains all rights, benefits, and immunities of sovereign immunity in accordance with Section 768.28 Florida Statutes, and nothing in this RFI shall be deemed a waiver of sovereign immunity or limits of liability beyond any statutory waiver.

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**ATTACHMENT A
TECHNICAL QUESTIONS SUBMITTAL FORM**

For Attachment A, Respondent shall complete the form provided based on their questions relating to this RFI. The completed form shall be submitted in accordance with the instructions provided in A.6. The electronic response must be submitted as a Microsoft Word file format. This form may be expanded as needed to facilitate responses to this requirement.

Respondent's Name: _____

Respondent Question Number*	RFI Page Number, Section Number, Subsection Reference*	Question*
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

*Add rows as necessary.

****Authorized Representative's Signature**

****Typed Name and Title of Authorized Representative**

****This individual must have the authority to provide this Response.**