

State of Oregon



National Career Readiness Certificate Study

Intermediate Request for Proposal: OregonBuys #S-52500-00011876

HECC #24-073

Date of Issue: 10/18/2024 Closing Date: 11/15/2024 at 3:00 PM Pacific Time

Single Point of Contact (SPC): Karen DeHut karen.e.dehut@hecc.oregon.gov

1. INTRODUCTION

The State of Oregon, acting by and through the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (“HECC”), is issuing this Request for Proposal (“RFP”) for a Contractor to assess Oregon’s use of a General Mental Ability (“GMA”) Assessment (currently using ACT’s National Career Readiness Certificate) for workforce development as further described in this RFP.

HECC anticipates the award of one Contract from this RFP. The initial term of the Contract is anticipated to expire March 31, 2025. HECC reserves the right to amend the resulting Contract for related services and time as HECC determines necessary.

HECC is conducting this intermediate procurement under the authority of OAR 125-246-0170(2)(c)(C).

The estimated budget for this work is under \$40,000. This project is funded with state general funds.

2. BACKGROUND

The State of Oregon enacted ORS 660.343 which requires HECC to deliver a GMA Assessment - the National Career Readiness Certificate (“NCRC”) - and to make it available to all Oregonians. Since 2012 over 85,000 Oregonians have taken the assessment.

HECC is issuing this RFP to determine 1) the perceived value of the NCRC by employers and job seekers, 2) the value of the certificate for screening applicants in apprenticeship programs by programs who have included the NCRC as part of their Oregon Bureau of Labor & Industries approved programs, 3) the benefit of a GMA in assisting job seekers in differentiating their skills from others in the job market, 4) to what extent the NCRC has been integrated into the workforce system within regional labor markets.

HECC’s Office of Workforce Investments aims to align education, training, and employment opportunities with the needs of employers and communities. By leveraging partnerships with employers, educational institutions, government agencies, and community organizations, Oregon’s workforce development system strives to create a dynamic and resilient workforce capable of driving sustainable economic growth and prosperity for all residents.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

This project is intended to:

- a) Assess the value of the NCRC and GMA’s to employers and job-seekers in Oregon.
- b) Quantify the number of apprenticeship programs that have included the NCRC as part of their application process and assess the value of the NCRC for these programs.
- c) Identify what if any variability exists among the Workforce Regions in the perceived value and usage of the NCRC.

The Successful Proposer will perform the following activities to achieve the above:

- a) Facilitate qualitative data collection (e.g. through surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.) and analysis of the effectiveness of the NCRC, and to better understand and capture information, key issues, opportunities, solutions, recommendations, priorities,

and other topics as deemed necessary to create necessary assessments and process to meet the outcomes of the project.

- b) Collect and analyze quantitative data on participation in, completion of the NCRC, including data on the number, occupations, industries, wages and demographics of the Oregonians who have earned on NCRC vs. those who have not;
- c) Aggregate collected data and findings in a report that includes recommendations.
- d) Respond to other requests deemed necessary as agreed to by HECC.

4. TASKS AND DELIVERABLES

The proposed Tasks and Deliverables below are examples of what HECC thinks it may want. Proposer should use their experience and expertise to propose how the work shall progress, including the number, frequency, and content of meetings with the HECC and staff.

Task #1: Kick-Off Meeting and Ongoing Project Coordination

The Successful Proposer will facilitate a Kick-Off Meeting with the HECC and other key interested parties to be scheduled as soon as possible after the review of documents. A critical goal of the Kick-Off Meeting will be to discuss the Successful Proposer's Project Plan.

The Successful Proposer will also work with HECC staff to develop a schedule for regular project check-ins. The Successful Proposer will be responsible for coordinating and facilitating these check-ins.

Task #2: Project Plan Revision

The Successful Proposer will submit a revised Project Plan to the HECC.

Task #3: Data Collection

The Successful Proposer will implement the Project Plan, collecting quantitative and qualitative data as described in the Project Scope.

Task #4: Report Development and Revisions

The Successful Proposer will analyze the information gathered in Task #3, seek additional information, and begin development of recommendations for a Final Report. The Final Report will provide assessment, analysis, recommendations (including recommendations on priorities), and a suggested timeline to implement the recommendations. It is understood that the development of the Final Report may be an iterative process among members of the HECC staff, and the Successful Proposer.

Task #5: Final Report

The Successful Proposer will provide a Final Report for HECC..

5. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Proposals **must** be submitted through the state's electronic procurement system, OregonBuys, no later than 3:00 PM Pacific Time on November 15, 2024. The OregonBuys number is shown on the first page of this RFP. HECC cannot accept any proposals outside of the OregonBuys system.

6. PROPOSAL CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must address each of the items listed in this section and all other requirements set forth in this RFP. Proposer shall describe the Goods to be provided or the Services to be performed or both. A Proposal that merely offers to provide the Goods or Services as stated in this RFP will be considered non-Responsive to this RFP and will not be considered further.

A. Proposal Certification Sheet

The Proposer shall complete and submit the Proposer Information and Certification Sheet (Attachment A).

B. Introduction to Proposer and Proposer's Relevant Experience

Describe Proposer. Describe the firm. How long has it been in business? From which locations will the services be performed? How does Proposer support diversity, equity, and inclusion? How does Proposer support responsible environmentally sustainable practices?

The Proposal must contain information that clearly demonstrates that Proposer has a minimum of three years of professional experience within the past five years, successfully providing services that are comparable to those described in this RFP.

HECC prefers Proposers that have experience working with a government entity. If your firm has this experience, include a discussion that describes the experience.

Proposals should contain a discussion on Proposer's ability to successfully complete the Project on time and within budget.

C. Proposer's Implementation Plan

The Proposer shall describe how they intend to do the work. The description should include:

- Proposer's knowledge and understanding of the Project.
- The approach that Proposer will take in performing the work described in this RFP; must include a sample timeline and proposed schedule.
- If possible, how Proposer's plans will help HECC achieve the goals outlined in HECC's Equity Lens. Working toward equity requires an understanding of historical contexts and the active investment in changing social structures and practice over time to ensure that individuals from all communities have the opportunities and support to realize their full potential. The HECC applies its Equity Lens to all aspects of its work.

- If possible, how Proposer’s plans will further responsible environmentally sustainable practices and products used in this Project.

D. Key Person Experience and Resumes

The Proposer should describe its relevant experience and include the resumes of all key staff to perform the Services.

E. Cost Proposal

For each activity described in the Tasks and Deliverables Section, the cost proposal must include identifiable costs, time estimates for completing each activity, and a summary of all proposed costs pertaining to each deliverable listed in accordance with the itemized activity. HECC prefers Proposals with a fixed fee per task/deliverable, but will consider Proposals to state the hourly rates for Proposer’s key staff performing the Services and a total not-to-exceed limitation per each task/deliverable.

7. EVALUATION

Proposals shall be evaluated on the following criteria and scored out of 100 possible points:

Experience (25 points possible)

- How well has the Proposer demonstrated their experience in conducting research and reports of this nature?
- How familiar and experienced is Proposer with this subject matter?
 - Does Proposer have direct experience evaluating the GMA assessments?
 - How well has the Proposer demonstrated experience and/or capability to assess the workforce systems?

Project Approach (25 points possible)

- How well does the Proposer clearly and concisely describe their intended approach to performing the work described in this solicitation?
- How well does the Project Approach demonstrate an understanding of the Project requirements?
- Does the Proposer offer any new or enhanced ideas to add value to the work described in this solicitation?
- Does Proposer itself, or through their Project Approach further HECC’s goals of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility?

Cost Proposal (25 points possible)

- How clearly and concisely does the Proposer convey the cost per deliverable?
- How clearly and concisely does the Proposer convey the basis on which

prices are quoted?

- How well do the proposed costs align with the Proposer's Project Approach?
- What is the overall cost?

Resources (20 points possible)

- How well does the Proposer demonstrate they have the resources to successfully provide the Services described in this solicitation in the timeframe required by HECC?

Public Information/Past Performance (5 points possible)

- Publicly available information, if any, may be used to evaluate Proposers.
- Past performance with State of Oregon agencies, if any, may be used to evaluate Proposers.

Proposers will then be ranked in order of median scores calculated from points awarded by a scoring evaluation committee. After an initial evaluation session, HECC may ask leading Proposers for interviews.

8. SUCCESSFUL PROPOSER REQUIREMENTS

A. Insurance

Prior to execution of the Contract, the apparent successful Proposer shall secure and demonstrate to HECC proof of commercial general liability insurance coverage in the amounts of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate, unless otherwise negotiated. Policies can usually be obtained for short-term durations for relatively low cost—please consult an insurance broker if you do not already carry the above-described insurance.

B. Taxpayer Identification Number

The apparent successful Proposer shall provide its Taxpayer Identification Number on a completed W-9 form (which can be found here: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>). The apparent successful Proposer must provide its backup withholding status on the W-9 form if either of the following applies:

- When requested by HECC (normally in an intent to award notice), or
- When the backup withholding status or any other information of Proposer has changed since the last submitted W-9 form, if any.

HECC will not make any payment until HECC has a properly completed W-9.

C. Business Registry

If selected for award, Proposer shall be duly authorized by the State of Oregon to transact business in the State of Oregon before executing the Contract. The selected Proposer shall submit a current Oregon Secretary of State Business Registry number, or an explanation if not applicable.

All Corporations and other business entities (domestic and foreign) must have a Registered Agent

in Oregon. See requirements and exceptions regarding Registered Agents. For more information, see Oregon Business Guide, How to Start a Business in Oregon and Laws and Rules. The titles in this subsection are available at the following Internet site: <http://www.filinginoregon.com/index.htm>.

9. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A. Governing Laws

This RFP is governed by the laws of the State of Oregon. Venue for any administrative or judicial action relating to this RFP, evaluation and award is the Circuit Court of Marion County for the State of Oregon; provided, however, if a proceeding must be brought in a federal forum, then it must be brought and conducted solely and exclusively within the United States District Court for the District of Oregon. In no event shall this Section be construed as a waiver by the State of Oregon of any form of defense or immunity, whether sovereign immunity, governmental immunity, immunity based on the Eleventh Amendment to the Constitution of the United States or otherwise, to or from any Claim or from the jurisdiction of any court.

B. Ownership

All Proposals submitted in response to this RFP become the Property of HECC. By submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP, Proposer grants the State a non-exclusive, perpetual, irrevocable, royalty-free, fully paid-up, worldwide license for the rights to copy, distribute, display, prepare derivative works of and transmit the Proposal solely for the purpose of evaluating the Proposal, negotiating an Agreement, if awarded to Proposer, or as otherwise needed to administer the RFP process, and to fulfill obligations under Oregon Public Records Law (ORS 192.311 through 192.478). Proposals, including supporting materials, will not be returned to Proposer unless the Proposal is submitted late.

C. Cost of Submitting Material

Proposer shall pay all the costs in submitting its Proposal, including, but not limited to, the costs to prepare and submit the Proposal, costs of samples and other supporting materials, or costs to participate in demonstrations.

D. Statewide E-waste

If applicable, Proposer shall include information in its Proposal that demonstrates compliance with the Statewide E-Waste/Recovery Procedure 107-011-050_PR. Download the procedure by visiting www.oregon.gov/DAS, then enter the procedure number into the search bar, and find the procedure in the search results window.

E. Recyclable Products

Proposer shall use recyclable products to the maximum extent economically feasible in the performance of the Services or Work set forth in this document and the subsequent Contract. (ORS 279B.025)

F. Printing , Binding Work

Except as provided in ORS 282.210(2), all printing, binding and stationery work, including the manufacture of motor vehicle registration plates and plates required to be affixed to motor

carriers, for the State or any county, city, town, port district, school district, or other political subdivision, must be performed within the State of Oregon.

ATTACHMENT A — PROPOSAL CERTIFICATION SHEET

Legal Name of Proposer: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

State of Incorporation: _____ Entity Type: _____

Contact Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Any individual signing below hereby certifies they are an authorized representative of Proposer and that:

1. If awarded a Contract, Proposer agrees to perform the scope of work and meet the performance standards set forth in the final negotiated scope of work of the resulting Contract.
2. I have knowledge regarding Proposer's payment of taxes and by signing below I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, Proposer is not in violation of any tax laws of the state or a political subdivision of the state, including, without limitation, ORS 305.620 and ORS chapters 316, 317 and 318.
3. Proposer does not discriminate in its employment practices with regard to race, creed, age, religious affiliation, gender, disability, sexual orientation, national origin. When awarding subcontracts, Proposer does not discriminate against any business certified under ORS 200.055 as a disadvantaged business enterprise, a minority-owned business, a woman-owned business, a business that a service-disabled veteran owns or an emerging small business. If applicable, Proposer has, or will have prior to contract execution, a written policy and practice, that meets the requirements described in ORS 279A.112, of preventing sexual harassment, sexual assault and discrimination against employees who are members of a protected class. HECC may not enter into a contract with an anticipated contract price of \$150,000 or more with a Proposer that does not certify it has such a policy and practice. See <https://www.oregon.gov/DAS/Procurement/Pages/hb3060.aspx> for additional information and sample policy template.
4. Proposer and Proposer's employees, agents, and subcontractors are not included on:
 - A. the "Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons" list maintained by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States Department of the Treasury found at: <https://www.treasury.gov/ofac/downloads/sdnlist.pdf>, or
 - B. the government-wide exclusions lists in the System for Award Management found at: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM>
5. Proposer certifies that, to the best of its knowledge, there exists no actual or potential conflict between the business or economic interests of Proposer, its employees, or its agents, on the one hand, and the business or economic interests of the State, on the other hand, arising out of, or relating in any way to, the subject matter of the RFP. If any changes occur with respect to Proposer's status regarding conflict of interest, Proposer shall promptly notify the State in writing.
6. Proposer certifies that all contents of the Proposal (including any other forms or documentation, if required under this RFP) and this Proposal Certification Sheet are truthful and accurate and have been prepared independently from all other Proposers, and without collusion, fraud, or other dishonesty.
7. Proposer understands that any statement or representation it makes, in response to this RFP, if determined to be false or fraudulent, a misrepresentation, or inaccurate because of the omission of

material information could result in a "claim" (as defined by the Oregon False Claims Act, ORS 180.750(1)), made under Contract being a "false claim" (ORS 180.750(2)) subject to the Oregon False Claims Act, ORS 180.750 to 180.785, and to any liabilities or penalties associated with the making of a false claim under that Act.

8. Proposer certifies it will comply with the Pay Equity law, ORS 652.220, if applicable.
9. Proposer is registered in the State's electronic procurement system, OregonBuys, found here: <https://oregonbuys.gov/bsa/>. (Registration is free by clicking the blue "Register" button on the top right corner of the webpage.)

Authorized Signature

Date

(Printed Name and Title)