



**INDIANA COMMISSION** *for*  
**HIGHER EDUCATION**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: [00-001]**

**Solicitation For: Qualitative and Quantitative Research, Analysis and Reporting of the  
Factors Impacting Postsecondary Enrollment in Indiana**

**11/6/2023**

**Response Due Date: 12/15/2023**

Allison Kuehr, Associate Commissioner for Marketing & Communications  
Indiana Commission for Higher Education  
101 W. Ohio St. Ste. 300  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

**SECTION ONE  
GENERAL INFORMATION AND REQUESTED PRODUCTS/SERVICES**

**1.1 INTRODUCTION**

It is the intent of the Indiana Commission for Higher Education to solicit responses to this Request for Proposal (RFP) in accordance with the statement of work, proposal preparation section, and specifications contained in this document. This RFP is being posted to the Commission’s website (<http://www.in.gov/che/3171.htm>). Neither this RFP nor any response (proposal) submitted hereto are to be construed as a legal offer.

**1.2 DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

The following are explanations of terms and abbreviations appearing throughout this RFP.

IAC	Indiana Administrative Code
IC	Indiana Code
Commission	Indiana Commission for Higher Education
Contract Award	The acceptance of the Commission’s Award Recommendation
CUF	Commercially Useful Function – A business function that supports the scope of this solicitation
Implementation	The successful implementation of the specific service at the Indiana Government Center as specified in the contract resulting from this RFP
Products	Tangible good or manufactured items as specified in this RFP
Proposal	An offer as defined in IC 5-22-2-17
Respondent	An offeror as defined in IC 5-22-2-18. The State will not consider a proposal responsive if two or more offerors submit a joint or combined proposal. One entity or individual must be clearly identified as the respondent who will be ultimately responsible for performance of the contract.
Services	Work to be performed as specified in this RFP
State	The State of Indiana
State Agency	As defined in IC 4-13-1, “state agency” means an authority, board, branch, commission, committee, department, division, or other instrumentality of the executive, including the administrative, department of state government.
Total Bid Amount	The amount that the respondent proposes in the Cost Proposal that represents their total, all-inclusive price.

Vendor Any successful respondent selected as a result of the procurement process to deliver the products or services requested by this RFP.

### 1.3 PURPOSE OF THE RFP

The purpose of this RFP is to select a vendor that can satisfy the need for qualitative and quantitative research into the factors that impact Hoosiers’ decisions to pursue education and training after high school and potential solutions to address barriers to enrollment and completion. The selected vendor must provide thorough demographic and statistical analysis. The selected vendor is expected to create a full report on the findings with implications and recommendations for engaging prospective youth and adult students.

In this document, the terms “college” and “education and training after high school” are used to apply to all options of postsecondary education from less than a year certificate to a two- or four-year degree.

### 1.4 BACKGROUND

In 2022, the Commission sounded the alarm that Indiana’s college-going rate had reached its lowest point in recent history – steadily declining from 65 percent in 2015 to 53 percent in 2020. The Commission’s recent data show that 53 percent of the high school graduating class of 2021 enrolled in college immediately following graduation. This includes students who pursued less than a one-year certificate up through a four-year degree.

The decision to pursue education and training after high school is deeply personal and often impacted by internal and external factors such as cost, negative commentary in the media, questioning the value of postsecondary education, family obligations, lack of childcare, stress and uncertainty about the future. Qualitative and quantitative research into these factors will guide the development of the Commission’s strategic objectives and initiatives around policy, communications and resource allocation. Additionally, research into potential solutions to address barriers, such as offering assistance with costs of living, will aid in the Commission’s development of its 2025 legislative priorities.

The services sought in this RFP are to support the Commission with its obligations under this project and this law, including the direct outreach, triage of responses and the reporting of data to the General Assembly.

### 1.5 SUMMARY SCOPE OF WORK

The Commission is expecting work to begin in January 2024, and conclude in six (6) months. The Commission has allocated **\$1 million** to complete this work.

Vendors without a physical presence in Indiana are welcome to respond but must either be willing to travel to Indiana during the project timeline and/or subcontract with another vendor that is located in Indiana. This is critical to complete the qualitative research portion of the project.

## Audiences

The key audiences for this research include:

1. High school students: Students currently enrolled in a high school in Indiana
2. Young adult students: Individuals between the ages of 19-24 who are either enrolled in college, enrolled in but withdrew from college, or never enrolled in college
3. Adult students: Individuals between the ages of 25-65 who either have some college experience but no degree or certificate, considered enrolling in college but never did, or are actively considering enrolling in college
4. General population: Individuals between the ages of 25-65 who never planned to pursue college
5. Parents and family members: Individuals who are currently parenting high school student(s)
6. Parents and family members: Immediate relatives of adult students (see audience number 3 for a definition of “adult students”)
7. High school teachers, school counselors and additional school personnel: Staff members who are employed at Indiana-based organizations that prepare Hoosier youth to enroll in and be successful at college
8. Employers based in Indiana
9. Youth-serving community-based organizations: Organizations that serve individuals under the age of 18
10. Representatives from Indiana’s higher education institutions

### **Scope of Work**

Qualitative and quantitative research is needed to provide substantial insight into the perceptions of Hoosiers. The vendor must offer incentives to increase participation in both qualitative and quantitative research. An overview of the questions the agency intends to explore with the audiences listed above includes, but is not limited to:

1. Do Hoosiers plan on attending or going back to some form of education and training after high school?
2. If Hoosiers do not plan on attending or going back to some form of education and training after high school, what are they planning on doing?
3. What are the motivating factors for Hoosiers to attend or go back to college?
4. How do Hoosiers learn about college?
5. Are available college programs user friendly to young adults, adult learners and family members?
6. What are the motivating factors for Hoosiers who chose not to attend or go back to some form of education and training after high school?
7. What are Hoosiers’ perceptions of the costs associated with college (net price vs. sticker price) and the value of higher education?
8. Are Hoosier high school teachers, school counselors and additional school personnel encouraging students not to pursue college?
9. Do Hoosier school counselors have enough capacity to counsel students on education and training after high school opportunities?
10. Do representatives from Indiana’s higher education institutions believe incoming students are prepared for the transition to college?
11. How are Hoosier employers encouraging employees to pursue additional education and training?
12. Are Hoosiers aware of state financial aid programs?

13. What are the outcomes (financial and social) of those who completed a degree or credential?
14. What supports are needed to assist individuals to pursue and complete a degree or credential?
15. What perceptions do family members of students – both young adults and adults – have about college?
16. What terms for the word “college” resonate with Hoosier students?
17. Do Hoosiers who earned a degree or credential believe it was worth it?
18. What are the perceived career and wage outcomes for those who earned a degree or credential?

#### *Qualitative Research – Interviews*

An important part of understanding how Hoosiers perceive the value of education and training after high school is to meet them where they are, such as places of worship, community organizations, restaurants, schools and businesses. The Commission has existing partnerships with all the entities mentioned in the previous sentence and can establish connections with the vendor. The Commission requests that the vendor conducts one-on-one in-person, virtual or phone interviews with members of the audience groups listed in this proposal. The purpose of the interviews is to get candid insight from audience members into the value of college.

#### *Qualitative Research – Focus Groups*

Focus groups will be divided into the audience groups listed in the proposal. The vendor will test various messaging strategies that were developed from the findings of the interviews. Additionally, the vendor will discuss and gauge the impact of various policy levers to increase college enrollment and completion.

The selected vendor must have the ability to conduct interviews and focus groups in Spanish. The additional ability to conduct interviews and focus groups in Burmese is preferred, but not required.

#### *Quantitative Research – Survey*

An online survey will be provided to high school, young adult and adult Hoosier students and conducted after the interviews and focus groups. The vendor must use incentives and other strategic methods to engage those who do not want to attend college. The survey population sample will be diverse and representative of various demographics within Indiana. The questions within the survey will depend on the findings of the qualitative research to reinforce what was heard.

#### *Demographic Diversity and Analysis*

It is imperative that this research includes a thorough look into the perceptions of Hoosiers from diverse backgrounds. Results from the qualitative and quantitative research must be cross tabulated by race and ethnicity, gender and socioeconomic status. All demographics must be included in the analysis; however, special attention must be paid to highlight those groups with historically low participation in college. Demographics with trending declines in pursuing postsecondary education and training include students from low-income households, Black students, Hispanic or Latino students, and male students. Additional demographics may include, but are not limited to, veterans, individuals with disabilities and first-generation

students. This will allow the Commission to determine specific messaging strategies and policy levers that resonate with each audience.

*Statistical Analysis*

The vendor will conduct in-depth statistical analysis, including the development of audience segmentation to identify key mindsets within the broader audience. This analysis will also be segmented by the type of research conducted.

*Reporting*

The Commission requires touchpoints with the research firm throughout the entirety of the project. The touchpoints will provide the Commission with preliminary findings from each of the research methods.

A full report will be provided to the Commission on the findings from the qualitative and quantitative research. The report will include implications and recommendations for engaging prospective youth and adult Hoosier students.

**Tentative Timeline**

It is anticipated that this research will conclude after six (6) months beginning in January 2024 and concluding in June 2024. This will provide the Commission with time to develop legislative recommendations for the 2025 legislative session. A tentative timeline is as follows:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Interviews	January – February
Focus Groups	March – April
Survey	April
Statistical Analysis	May
Reporting	June

These figures are only an estimate and are not to be construed as an amount to be offered under this RFP.

**However, when completing Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises Participation Plan Form (Attachment A) and Indiana Veterans’ Participation Plan Form (Attachment A1) please use the total bid amount from the Cost Proposal.**

1.6 RFP OUTLINE

The outline of this RFP document is described below:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>
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Section 1 - General Information and Requested Products or Services	This section provides an overview of the RFP, general timelines for the process, and a summary of the products/services being solicited by the State/Agency via this RFP.
Section 2 - Proposal Preparation Instructions	This section provides instructions on the format and content of the RFP including a Cover Letter, Business Proposal, and a Cost Proposal.
Attachment A	M/WBE Participation Plan Form
Attachment A1	IVOSB Participation Plan Form
Attachment B	Q&A

### 1.7 QUESTION/INQUIRY PROCESS

All questions/inquiries regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing by the deadline of November 20, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. ET. Questions/inquiries must be submitted in Attachment B, Q&A Template, via email to akuehr@che.in.gov and must be received by the time and date indicated above.

Following the question/inquiry due date, the Q&A document will be posted to the Commission’s website. If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, or if additional information is necessary for a clearer interpretation of provisions of this RFP prior to the due date for proposals, an addendum will be posted to the website as well. The Commission may extend the due date and time of proposals to accommodate such additional information requirements, if required.

### 1.8 DUE DATE FOR PROPOSALS

All proposals must be received at the email address in section 1.9 below no later than the Response Due Date listed above. Responses are limited to no more than 15 pages, excluding appendices, and must include description of the entity interested in providing the services, including:

- Cover Letter
- Business Proposal
- Cost Proposal
- Appendices (if necessary)

The following timeline is only an illustration of the RFP process. The dates associated with each step are not to be considered binding. Due to the unpredictable nature of the evaluation period, these dates are commonly subject to change. At the conclusion of the evaluation process, all Respondents will be informed of the evaluation team’s findings.

### ***Key RFP Dates***

Activity	Date
Issue of RFP	November 6, 2023
Deadline to Submit Written Questions	November 20, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. ET
Response to Written Questions/RFP Amendments	November 27, 2023
Submission of Proposals	December 15, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. ET
Proposal Determinations	December 29, 2023

No more than one proposal per Respondent may be submitted.

The State accepts no obligations for costs incurred by Respondents in anticipation of being awarded a contract.

#### 1.9 COMMUNICATION WITH THE COMMISSION

All communication, including responses, questions concerning the services being sought, or the response requirements, should be directed to:

akuehr@che.in.gov  
317-232-1016

#### 1.10 PRICING

Pricing on this RFP must be firm and remain open for a period of not less than 180 days from the proposal due date. Any attempt to manipulate the format of the document, attach caveats to pricing, or submit pricing that deviates from the current format will put your proposal at risk. If the proposal is accepted, the pricing must remain firm during the term of the contract unless the scope of work required by the Commission changes.

#### 1.11 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Respondents are advised that materials contained in proposals are subject to the Access to Public Records Act (APRA), IC 5-14-3 *et seq.*, and, after the contract award, the entire RFP file may be viewed and copied by any member of the public, including news agencies and competitors. Respondents claiming a statutory exception to the APRA must indicate so in the Cover Letter. Confidential Information must also be clearly marked. The Respondent must also specify which statutory exception of APRA that applies. The State reserves the right to make determinations of confidentiality. If the Respondent does not identify the statutory exception the Procurement Division will not consider the submission confidential. If the State does not agree that the

information designated is confidential under one of the disclosure exceptions to APRA, it may seek the opinion of the Public Access Counselor. Prices are not confidential information.

There are certain public records which are excepted from the Access to Public Records Act. A list of these items can be found at IC 5-14-3-4.

#### 1.12 TAXES

Proposals should not include any tax from which the State is exempt ([IC 6-2.5-5-16](#)).

#### 1.13 SECRETARY OF STATE REGISTRATION

If awarded the contract, the Respondent will be required to register, and be in good standing, with the Secretary of State ([IC 5-22-16-4](#)). The registration requirement is applicable to all limited liability partnerships, limited partnerships, corporations, S-corporations, nonprofit organizations, and limited liability companies. Information concerning registration with the Secretary of State may be obtained by contacting:

Secretary of State of Indiana  
Corporation Division  
402 West Washington Street, E018  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
(317) 232-6576  
[www.in.gov/sos](http://www.in.gov/sos)

#### 1.14 PAYMENTS

All payments will be 35 days in arrears and via ACH/electronic deposit from the Indiana Auditor of State's office. Invoices must detail expenses and charges in accordance with any purchase orders issued; total payment shall not exceed accepted bid amount. Prior to being paid, vendors must submit a W9 and Direct Deposit form which can be found at the following link: <http://www.in.gov/auditor/2340.htm>.

#### 1.15 COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATION

Responses to this RFP serve as a representation that it has no current or outstanding criminal, civil, or enforcement actions initiated by the State, and it agrees that it will immediately notify the State of any such actions. The Respondent also certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently in arrears in payment of its taxes, permit fees or other statutory, regulatory or judicially required payments to the State. The Respondent agrees that the State may confirm, at any time, that no such liabilities exist, and, if such liabilities are discovered, that State may bar the Respondent from contracting with the State, cancel existing contracts, withhold payments to setoff such obligations, and withhold further payments or purchases until the entity is current in its payments on its liability to the State and has submitted proof such as payment to the State.

#### 1.16 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Any person, firm or entity that assisted with and/or participated in the preparation of this RFP document is prohibited from submitting a proposal to this specific RFP. For the purposes of this RFP “person” means a state officer, employee, special state appointee, or any individual or entity working with or advising the State or involved in the preparation of this RFP proposal. This prohibition would also apply to an entity who hires, within a one-year period prior to the publication of this RFP, a person that assisted with and/or participated in the preparation of this RFP.

#### 1.17 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMITMENT

Pursuant to IC 4-13-16.5 and in accordance with 25 IAC 5, Executive Order 13-04 and IC 5-22-14-3.5, it has been determined that there is a reasonable expectation of minority, woman, and Indiana veteran business enterprises subcontracting opportunities on a contract awarded under this RFP. Therefore, a contract goal for Minority Business Enterprises, Woman Business Enterprises, and Veteran Business Enterprises have been established and all respondents submitting a MWBE or IVOSB Subcontractor Commitment Form will be expected to comply with the regulation set forth in 25 IAC 5, Executive Order 13-04 and IC 22-14-3.5.

Failure to address these requirements may impact the evaluation of your proposal.

#### 1.18 MINORITY & WOMEN’S BUSINESS ENTERPRISES RFP SUBCONTRACTOR COMMITMENT (MWBE)

In accordance with 25 IAC 5-5, the respondent is expected to submit with its proposal a Minority & Women’s Business Enterprises RFP Subcontractor Commitment Form. The Form must show that there are, participating in the proposed contract, Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) and Women’s Business Enterprises (WBE) listed in the Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises Division (MWBED) directory of certified firms located at <http://www.in.gov/idoa/2352.htm>.

If participation is met through use of vendors who supply products and/or services directly to the Respondent, the Respondent must provide a description of products and/or services provided that are directly related to this proposal and the cost of direct supplies for this proposal. Respondents must complete the Subcontractor Commitment Form in its entirety. The amount entered in “TOTAL BID AMOUNT” should match the amount entered in the Cost Proposal.

Failure to meet these goals will affect the evaluation of your Proposal. The Commission reserves the right to verify all information included on the MWBE Subcontractor Commitment Form.

Respondents are encouraged to contact and work with MWBED at 317-232-3061 to design a subcontractor commitment to meet established goals as referenced in this solicitation.

**Prime Contractors must ensure that the proposed subcontractors meet the following criteria:**

- Must be listed on the IDOA Directory of Certified Firms, **on or before** the proposal due date.
- Prime Contractor must include with their proposal the subcontractor’s M/WBE Certification Letter provided by IDOA, to show current status of certification.
- Each firm may only serve as one classification – MBE, WBE, or IVOSB (see section 1.18).
- A Prime Contractor who is an MBE or WBE must meet subcontractor goals by using other listed certified firms. Certified Prime Contractors cannot count their own workforce or companies to meet this requirement.
- **Must serve a Commercially Useful Function (CUF). The firm must serve a value-added purpose on the engagement, as confirmed by the State.**
- Must provide goods or service only in the industry area for which it is certified as listed in the directory at <http://www.in.gov/idoa/2352.htm>.
- Must be used to provide the goods or services specific to the contract.
- National Diversity Plans are generally not acceptable.

### **MINORITY & WOMEN’S BUSINESS ENTERPRISES RFP SUBCONTRACTOR LETTER OF COMMITMENT (MWBE)**

A signed letter(s), on company letterhead, from the MBE and/or WBE must accompany the MWBE Subcontractor Commitment Form. Each letter shall state and will serve as acknowledgement from the MBE and/or WBE of its subcontract amount, a description of products and/or services to be provided on this project, and approximate date the subcontractor will perform work on this contract. The State may deny evaluation points if the letter(s) is not attached, not on company letterhead, not signed and/or does not reference and match the subcontract amount, subcontract amount as a percentage of the **“TOTAL BID AMOUNT”** and the anticipated period that the Subcontractor will perform work for this solicitation.

By submission of the Proposal, the Respondent acknowledges and agrees to be bound by the regulatory processes involving the State’s M/WBE Program. Questions involving the regulations governing the MWBE Subcontractor Commitment Form should be directed to: Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises Division at (317) 232-3061 or <http://www.in.gov/idoa/2352.htm>.

### **1.19 INDIANA VETERAN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS SUBCONTRACTOR COMMITMENT (IVOSB)**

In accordance with Executive Order 13-04 and IC 5-22-14-3.5, it has been determined that there is a reasonable expectation of Indiana Veteran Owned Small Business subcontracting opportunities on a contract awarded under this RFP. The IVOSB Subcontractor Commitment Form is to be submitted alongside the Respondent’s proposal. The Form must show that they are participating in the proposed contract and IVOSB firms that meet the requirements listed at the Veteran’s Business Program website (<http://www.in.gov/idoa/2862.htm>).

If participation is met through use of vendors who supply products and/or services directly to the Respondent, the Respondent must provide a description of products and/or services provided that are directly related to this proposal and the cost of direct supplies for this proposal. Respondents must complete the Subcontractor Commitment Form in its entirety. The amount entered in **“TOTAL BID AMOUNT”** should match the amount entered in the Cost Proposal.

If the vendor responding to the RFP is an IVOSB certified entity, the letter confirming same should be submitted with their response.

Failure to address these goals may impact the evaluation of your Proposal. The Department reserves the right to verify all information included on the IVOSB Subcontractor Commitment Form.

**Prime Contractors must ensure that the proposed IVOSB subcontractors meet the following criteria:**

- Must be listed on Federal Center for Veterans Business Enterprise ([VA OSDBU](#)) registry or listed on the IDOA Directory of Certified Firms, **on or before** the proposal due date.
- Prime Contractor must include with their proposal either their own or their subcontractor's veteran business Certification Letter provided by either IDOA or Federal Govt. (VA OSDBU), to show current status of certification.
- Each firm may only serve as one classification – MBE, WBE (see Section 1.17) or IVOSB.
- IVOSB must be registered with the Secretary of State (see section 2.3.2).
- **Must serve a Commercially Useful Function (CUF). The firm must serve a value-added purpose on the engagement, as confirmed by the State.**
- Must provide goods or service only in the industry area for which it is certified as listed in the [VA OSDBU](#) or IDOA Certified Firm directories <http://www.in.gov/idoa/2352.htm>.
- Must be used to provide the goods or services specific to the contract.

#### **INDIANA VETERAN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS RFP LETTER OF COMMITMENT**

A signed letter(s), on company letterhead, from the IVOSB must accompany the IVOSB Subcontractor Commitment Form. Each letter shall state and will serve as acknowledgement from the IVOSB of its subcontract amount, a description of products and/or services to be provided on this project, and approximate date the subcontractor will perform work on this contract. The State reserves the right to deny evaluation points if the letter(s) is not attached. The State may deny evaluation points if the letter(s) is not attached, not on company letterhead, not signed and/or does not reference and match the subcontract amount, subcontract amount as a percentage of the **"TOTAL BID AMOUNT"** and the anticipated period that the Subcontractor will perform work for this solicitation.

By submission of the Proposal, the Respondent acknowledges and agrees to be bound by the policies and processes involving the State's IVOSB Program. Questions involving the regulations governing the IVOSB Subcontractor Commitment Form should be directed to: [indianaveteranspreference@idoa.in.gov](mailto:indianaveteranspreference@idoa.in.gov).

#### **1.20 AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

The Respondent specifically agrees to comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.* and 47 U.S.C. 225).

## SECTION TWO PROPOSAL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

### 2.1 GENERAL

To facilitate timely evaluation of proposals, a standard format for proposal submission has been developed and is described in this section. All respondents are required to format their proposals in a manner consistent with the guidelines described below.

- Each item must be addressed in the Respondent's proposal.
- The Cover Letter must be in the form of a letter. The Business Proposal must be organized under the specific section titles as listed below.
- The electronic copies of the proposal should be organized to mirror the sections below and the attachments.
- Please submit all attachments in pdf format.
- Confidential information must also be clearly marked in a separate folder/file.

### 2.2 COVER LETTER

The Cover Letter must address the following topics.

#### 2.2.1 Agreement with Requirement listed in Section 1

The Respondent must explicitly acknowledge understanding of the general information presented in Section 1 and agreement with any requirements/conditions listed in Section 1.

#### 2.2.2 Summary of Ability and Desire to Supply the Required Products or Services

The Cover Letter must briefly summarize the Respondent's ability to supply the requested products and/or services that meet the requirements defined in Section 2.4 of this RFP. The letter must also contain a statement indicating the Respondent's willingness to provide the requested products and/or services subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the RFP including, but not limited to, the State's mandatory contract clauses.

#### 2.2.3 Signature of Authorized Representative

A person authorized to commit the Respondent to its representations and who can certify that the information offered in the proposal meets all general conditions including the information requested in Section 2.3.2, must sign the Cover Letter. **In the Cover Letter, please indicate the principal contact for the proposal along with an address, telephone and fax number as well as an e-mail address, if that contact is different than the individual authorized for signature.**

#### 2.2.4 Respondent Notification

Unless otherwise indicated in the Cover Letter, Respondents will be notified via e-mail.

It is the Respondent's obligation to notify the Commission of any changes in any address that may have occurred since the origination of this solicitation. The Commission will not be held responsible for incorrect vendor/contractor addresses.

#### 2.2.5 Confidential Information

Respondents are advised that materials contained in proposals are subject to the Access to Public Records Act (APRA), IC 5-14-3 *et seq.* (see section 1.11).

Provide the following information:

- List all documents where claiming a statutory exemption to the APRA;
- Specify which statutory exception of APRA that applies for each document;
- Provide a description explaining the manner in which the statutory exception to the APRA applies for each document.

### 2.3 BUSINESS PROPOSAL

#### 2.3.1 Terms

Funding for this project will come from state funds. Vendors must be able to agree to the terms and conditions of the Commission's standard Professional Services Agreement. All payments will be 35 days in arrears and via ACH/electronic deposit from the Indiana Auditor of State's Office. Invoices must detail expenses and charges in accordance with any purchase orders issued; total payment shall not exceed the accepted bid amount. Any and all travel reimbursed via this contract will be subject to the reimbursement rates in the State Travel Policy (vendors should review it on the following website <http://www.in.gov/idoa/2459.htm>).

#### 2.3.2 Registration to do Business

Vendors must be registered, and be in good standing, with the Indiana Secretary of State (IC 5-22-16-4). Vendors may do so at <http://www.in.gov/sos/business/3648.htm>.

#### 2.3.3 References

The Respondent must include a list of at least **three (3)** clients for whom the Respondent has provided products and/or services requested in this RFP. Information provided should include

the name, address, and telephone number of the client facility and the name, title, and phone/fax numbers of a person who may be contacted for further information.

#### 2.3.4 Subcontractors

The Respondent is responsible for the performance of any obligations that may result from this RFP, and shall not be relieved by the non-performance of any subcontractor. Any Respondent's proposal must identify all subcontractors and describe the contractual relationship between the Respondent and each subcontractor. Either a copy of the executed subcontract or a letter of agreement over the official signature of the firms involved must accompany each proposal.

Any subcontracts entered into by the Respondent must be in compliance with all State statutes, and will be subject to the provisions thereof. For each portion of the proposed products or services to be provided by a subcontractor, the Business Proposal must include the identification of the functions to be provided by the subcontractor and the subcontractor's related qualifications and experience.

The combined qualifications and experience of the Respondent and any or all subcontractors will be considered in the State's evaluation. The Respondent must furnish information to the State as to the amount of the subcontract, the qualifications of the subcontractor for guaranteeing performance, and any other data that may be required by the State. All subcontracts held by the Respondent must be made available upon request for inspection and examination by appropriate State officials, and such relationships must meet with the approval of the State.

The Respondent must list any subcontractor's name, address and the state in which formed that are proposed to be used in providing the required products or services. The subcontractor's responsibilities under the proposal, anticipated dollar amount for subcontract, the subcontractor's form of organization, and an indication from the subcontractor of a willingness to carry out these responsibilities are to be included for each subcontractor. This assurance in no way relieves the Respondent of any responsibilities in responding to this RFP or in completing the commitments documented in the proposal. The Respondent must indicate which, if any, subcontractors qualify as a Minority, Women, or Veteran Owned Business under IC 4-13-16.5-1 and Executive Order 13-04 and IC 5-22-14-3.5. See Sections 1.17, 1.18 and Attachments A/A1 for Minority, Women, and Veteran Business Information.

#### 2.3.5 Contact Information

Provide company's contact information and any other general information necessary.

#### 2.3.6 Similar Work Experience

Please describe your company's experience in serving clients of a similar size to the State that also had a similar scope. Please provide specific clients and detailed examples.

### 2.3.7 Company's Technical Information

Please provide any information about your company that will allow the Commission to evaluate the technical aspects proposed by your company as it relates to fulfilling the Scope of Work (Section 1.5) for the service(s) needed by the agency. Please also provide any certifications or qualifications that are required per Section 1.

## 2.4 COST PROPOSAL

### Cost Proposal Narrative

Please provide a brief narrative (not longer than two pages) in support of each item requested in Summary Scope of Work. The narrative should include Respondent's proposed costs and should be focused on clarifying how the Commission's proposed prices (if provided) correspond directly to the Respondent's proposed costs.

## 2.5 EVALUATION

Evaluation of the proposal will be based on the chart below. For detailed information on the evaluation process, please reference the Proposal Evaluation Procedures listed on the Commission's website at the following link: <http://www.in.gov/che/3171.htm>.

Criteria	Points
1. Adherence to Mandatory Requirements	Pass/Fail
2. Management Assessment/Quality (Business Proposal)	<b>45 available points</b>
3. Cost (Cost Proposal)	<b>40 available points</b>
5. Minority Business Enterprise Subcontractor Commitment (not required for RFP submission)	<b>5 points</b> (1 bonus point is available, see Section 1.2.5)
6. Women Business Enterprise Subcontractor Commitment (not required for RFP submission)	<b>5 points</b> (1 bonus point is available, see Section 1.2.5)
7. Indiana Veteran Business Enterprise (IVOSB) Subcontractor Commitment (not required for RFP submission)	<b>5 points</b> (1 bonus point is available, see Section 1.2.6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 (103 if bonus awarded)</b>

***The Commissioner of the Commission for Higher Education or their designee will, in the exercise of their sole discretion, determine which proposal(s) offer the best means of servicing the interests of the State. The exercise of this discretion will be final.***

-- End of Request for Proposal --

**ATTACHMENT A1  
INDIANA VETERAN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS RFP  
COMMITMENT FORM**

In accordance with Section 1.18 of the RFP, the respondent is expected to submit with its proposal an Indiana Veteran Owned Small Business (IVOSB) RFP Commitment Form. The Form must show that there are, participating in the proposed contract, Indiana Veteran Owned Small Business(es) listed in the [VA OSDDBU](#) registry, or listed on the IDOA Directory of Certified Firms that conform to the IVOSB rules as laid out at <http://www.in.gov/idoa/2862.htm>.

If participation is met through use of vendors who supply products and/or services directly to the Respondent, the Respondent must provide a description of products and/or services provided that are directly related to this proposal and the cost of direct supplies for this proposal. Respondents must complete the Commitment Form in its entirety. The amount entered in **“TOTAL BID AMOUNT”** should match the amount entered in the Cost Proposal.

If the vendor responding to the RFP is an IVOSB certified entity, the letter confirming same should be submitted with their response.

Failure to address these goals may affect the evaluation of your Proposal. The Commission reserves the right to verify all information included on the IVOSB Commitment Form.

**Prime Contractors must ensure that the following criteria is met:**

- Must be listed on Federal Center for Veterans Business Enterprise ([VA OSDDBU](#)) registry or listed on the IDOA Directory of Certified Firms, on or before the proposal due date
- Prime Contractor must include with their proposal their own or their subcontractor’s veteran business Certification Letter provided by either IDOA or Federal Govt. (VA OSDDBU), to show current status of certification.
- Each firm may only serve as one classification – MBE, WBE (see Section 1.17) or IVOSB
- **Must serve a Commercially Useful Function (CUF). The firm must serve a value-added purpose on the engagement, as confirmed by the State.**
- Must provide goods or service only in the industry area for which it is certified as listed in the [VA OSDDBU](#) or IDOA Certified Firm directories, <http://www.in.gov/idoa/2352.htm>
- Must be used to provide the goods or services specific to the contract

By submission of the Proposal, the Respondent acknowledges and agrees to be bound by the regulatory processes involving the State’s IVOSB Program. Questions involving the regulations governing the IVOSB Commitment Form should be directed to: [indianaveteranspreference@idoa.in.gov](mailto:indianaveteranspreference@idoa.in.gov).

**STATE OF INDIANA IVOSB COMMITMENT FORM**

**RFP#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DUE DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL BID AMOUNT:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Company Name:</b>	<b>Contact Person:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Sub-Contract Amount:</b>	<b>E-mail:</b>
<b>Sub-Contract Percentage of Total Bid:</b>	<b>Telephone Number:</b> (   )
	<b>Fax Number:</b> (   )
	<b>Describe service/product to be provided and <u>how this is a Commercially Useful Function of the Contract:</u></b>
<b>Provide approximate dates when Sub-Contractor will perform on this project:</b>	

<b>Company Name:</b>	<b>Contact Person:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Sub-Contract Amount:</b>	<b>E-mail:</b>
<b>Sub-Contract Percentage of Total Bid:</b>	<b>Telephone Number:</b> (   )
	<b>Fax Number:</b> (   )
	<b>Describe service/product to be provided and <u>how this is a Commercially Useful Function of the Contract:</u></b>
<b>Provide approximate dates when Sub-Contractor will perform on this project:</b>	

\_\_\_\_\_  
Respondent Firm

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fax Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorizing Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name and Title

Please check if additional forms are attached.  
Page \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

**FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN ITS ENTIRETY WITH COMPLETED LETTERS OF COMMITMENT.**

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**MINORITY & WOMEN'S BUSINESS ENTERPRISES RFP SUBCONTRACTOR**  
**COMMITMENT FORM**

In accordance with 25 IAC 5-5 and Section 1.17 of the RFP, the respondent is expected to submit with its proposal a Minority & Women's Business Enterprises RFP Subcontractor Commitment Form. The Form must show that there are, participating in the proposed contract, Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) and Women Business Enterprises (WBE) listed in the Minority and Women's Business Enterprises Division (MWBED) directory of certified firms located at <http://www.in.gov/idoa/2352.htm>.

If participation is met through use of vendors who supply products and/or services directly to the Respondent, the Respondent must provide a description of products and/or services provided that are directly related to this proposal and the cost of direct supplies for this proposal. Respondents must complete the Subcontractor Commitment Form in its entirety. The amount entered in "**TOTAL BID AMOUNT**" should match the amount entered in the Cost Proposal.

Failure to meet these goals will affect the evaluation of your Proposal. The Department reserves the right to verify all information included on the MWBE Subcontractor Commitment Form.

Respondents are encouraged to contact and work with MWBED at 317-232-3061 to design a subcontractor commitment to meet established goals as referenced in this solicitation.

**Prime Contractors must ensure that the proposed subcontractors meet the following criteria:**

- Must be listed on the IDOA Directory of Certified Firms, on or before the proposal due date
- Prime Contractor must include with their proposal the subcontractor's M/WBE Certification Letter provided by IDOA, to show current status of certification.
- Each firm may only serve as one classification – MBE, WBE, or IVBE (see section 1.18)
- A Prime Contractor who is an MBE or WBE must meet subcontractor goals by using other listed certified firms. Certified Prime Contractors cannot count their own workforce or companies to meet this requirement.
- **Must serve a Commercially Useful Function (CUF). The firm must serve a value-added purpose on the engagement, as confirmed by the State.**
- Must provide goods or service only in the industry area for which it is certified as listed in the directory at <http://www.in.gov/idoa/2352.htm>
- Must be used to provide the goods or services specific to the contract
- National Diversity Plans are generally not acceptable

**MINORITY & WOMEN'S BUSINESS ENTERPRISES RFP SUBCONTRACTOR LETTER OF COMMITMENT (MWBE)**

A signed letter(s), on company letterhead, from the MBE and/or WBE must accompany the MWBE Subcontractor Commitment Form. Each letter shall state and will serve as acknowledgement from the MBE and/or WBE of its subcontract amount, a description of products and/or services to be provided on this project, and approximate date the subcontractor will perform work on this contract. The State may deny evaluation points if the letter(s) is not attached, not on company letterhead, not signed and/or does not reference and match the subcontract amount, subcontract amount as a percentage of the "**TOTAL BID AMOUNT**" and the anticipated period that the Subcontractor will perform work for this solicitation.

By submission of the Proposal, the Respondent acknowledges and agrees to be bound by the regulatory processes involving the State's M/WBE Program. Questions involving the regulations governing the MWBE Subcontractor Commitment Form should be directed to: Minority and Women's Business Enterprises Division at (317) 232-3061 or <http://www.in.gov/idoa/2352.htm>.

**STATE OF INDIANA MBE/WBE SUBCONTRACTOR COMMITMENT FORM**

**RFP#**

---

**DUE DATE:**

---

**TOTAL BID AMOUNT:**

---

<input type="checkbox"/> MBE Firm <input type="checkbox"/> WBE Firm			
<b>Company Name:</b>	<b>Contact Person:</b>		
<b>Address:</b>	<b>E-mail:</b>		
<b>Sub-Contract Amount:</b>	<table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width:50%; padding: 5px;"><b>Telephone Number:</b> (    )</td> <td style="width:50%; padding: 5px;"><b>Fax Number:</b> (    )</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Telephone Number:</b> (    )	<b>Fax Number:</b> (    )
<b>Telephone Number:</b> (    )	<b>Fax Number:</b> (    )		
<b>Sub-Contract Percentage of Total Bid:</b>	<b>Describe service/product to be provided and <u>how this is a Commercially Useful Function of the Contract:</u></b>		
<b>Provide approximate dates when Sub-Contractor will perform on this project:</b>			

<input type="checkbox"/> MBE Firm <input type="checkbox"/> WBE Firm			
<b>Company Name:</b>	<b>Contact Person:</b>		
<b>Address:</b>	<b>E-mail:</b>		
<b>Sub-Contract Amount:</b>	<table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width:50%; padding: 5px;"><b>Telephone Number:</b> (    )</td> <td style="width:50%; padding: 5px;"><b>Fax Number:</b> (    )</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Telephone Number:</b> (    )	<b>Fax Number:</b> (    )
<b>Telephone Number:</b> (    )	<b>Fax Number:</b> (    )		
<b>Sub-Contract Percentage of Total Bid:</b>	<b>Describe service/product to be provided and <u>how this is a Commercially Useful Function of the Contract:</u></b>		
<b>Provide approximate dates when Sub-Contractor will perform on this project:</b>			

\_\_\_\_\_  
Respondent Firm

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fax Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorizing Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name and Title

Please check if additional forms are attached.

Page \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

**FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN ITS ENTIRETY WITH COMPLETED LETTERS OF COMMITMENT.**



## PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES

### 1.1 PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES

A group of personnel has been selected to act as a proposal evaluation team. Each member of this team (at least 3 members) will be responsible for evaluating proposals with regard to compliance with RFP requirements. All evaluation personnel will use the evaluation criteria stated in Section 3.2. Upon evaluation of the proposals, the team will determine which proposal(s) offer the best means of servicing the interests of the Commission. The exercise of this discretion will be final.

The procedure for evaluating the proposals against the evaluation criteria will be as follows:

- 1.1.1 Each proposal will be evaluated for adherence to requirements on a pass/fail basis. Proposals that are incomplete or do not conform to proposal submission requirements may be eliminated from consideration.
- 1.1.2 Each proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the categories included in Section 3.2. A point score has been established for each category.
- 1.1.4 Based on the results of this evaluation, the qualifying proposal determined to be best servicing the interests of the State, taking to account all factors, may be selected by the Commission for further action, such as contract negotiations. If, however, the Commission decides that no proposal is sufficiently beneficial to the State, the State may take whatever further action is not possible to complete a contract with the Respondent, the Commission may begin contract preparation with the next qualified Respondent to determine that no such alternate proposal exists.

### 1.2 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Responses will be reviewed by Commission staff for completeness and compliance with each of the requirements outlined in Section 1. Any questions about omissions from a proposal will be referred to the applicant. If, in the judgment of the Commission, a proposal is late, incomplete or does not adhere to or address the guidelines set forth, the response will be omitted from the review process. The Commission may request revision to proposal and budget prior to approval, award or release of funding. The decision of the Commission is final, and applicant will be notified in writing.

The points associated with each category are indicated following the category name (total maximum points = 103). For further information, please reference Section 3.2.3 below. If one or more of the criteria on which the responses to this RFP will be evaluated are found to be inconsistent with applicable federal laws, regulations or policies, the specific criterion or criteria will be disregarded and the responses will be evaluated and scored without taking into account the criterion or criteria.

## Summary of Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
1. Adherence to Mandatory Requirements	Pass/Fail
2. Management Assessment/Quality (Business Proposal)	<b>45 available points</b>
3. Cost (Cost Proposal)	<b>40 available points</b>
5. Minority Business Enterprise Subcontractor Commitment <i>(not required for RFP submission)</i>	<b>5 points</b> (1 bonus point is available, see Section 1.2.5)
6. Women Business Enterprise Subcontractor Commitment <i>(not required for RFP submission)</i>	<b>5 points</b> (1 bonus point is available, see Section 1.2.5)
7. Indiana Veteran Business Enterprise (IVOSB) Subcontractor Commitment <i>(not required for RFP submission)</i>	<b>5 points</b> (1 bonus point is available, see Section 1.2.6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 (103 if bonus awarded)</b>

All of the proposals will be evaluated using the following approach.

### Step 1

Proposals will be evaluated first against Criteria 1 to ensure that they adhere to Mandatory Requirements. Any proposal not meeting the Mandatory Requirements will be disqualified.

### Step 2

The proposals that meet the Mandatory Requirements will then be scored based on Criteria 2 and 3 ONLY. This scoring will have a maximum possible score of 85 points with a potential of 5 bonus points if certain criteria are met. All proposals will be ranked on the basis of their combined scores for Criteria 2 and 3 ONLY. This ranking will be used to create a “short list.” Any proposal not making the “short list” will not be considered for further evaluation.

### Step 3

The short-listed proposals will then be evaluated based on all of the evaluation criteria outlined in the table above.

The section below describes the different evaluation criteria.

#### 1.2.1 Adherence to Requirements – Pass/Fail

Respondents passing this category move to Phase 2 and proposal is evaluated for Management Assessment/Quality and Price.

**The following 2 categories cannot exceed 85 points.**

1.2.2 Management Assessment/Quality  
45 available points

- History of company, services, experience (15 points)
- Explanation of similar work performed (15 points)
- Description of work to be performed (15 points)

1.2.3 Price  
40 available points

Cost scores will then be normalized to one another, based on the lowest cost proposal evaluated. The lowest cost proposal receives a total of 40 points. The normalization formula is as follows.

- *Respondent's Cost Score = (Lowest Cost Proposal/ Cost of Respondent's Proposal) X 40*
  - Example: Three proposals are submitted: \$1,000, \$1,100, \$1,250.  
This proposal (Respondent's Proposal) is \$1,100.  
Respondent's Cost Score would be calculated as  $\$1,000/\$1,100 \times 40 = 36.36$  points.

1.2.5 Minority (5 points) & Women's Business (5 points) Subcontractor Commitment – (10 points)

***This is recommended, but not required for RFP submission.***

The following formula will be used to determine points to be awarded based on the MBE and WBE goals listed in Section 1.16 of this RFP. Scoring is conducted based on an assigned 10-point, plus possible 2 bonus-points, scale (MBE: Possible 5 points + 1 bonus point, WBE: Possible 5 points + 1 bonus point). Points are assigned for respective MBE participation and WBE participation based upon the BAFO meeting or exceeding the established goals.

If the respondent's commitment percentage is less than the established MBE or WBE goal (which can be found at the following link: <http://www.in.gov/idoa/mwbe/2494.htm>), the maximum points achieved will be awarded according to the following schedule:

%	1%	2%	3%	4%	5%	6%	7%	8%
Pts.	0.625	1.25	1.875	2.5	3.125	3.75	4.375	5.0

*NOTE: Fractional percentages will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage. (e.g. 7.49% will be rounded down to 7% = 4.375 pts., 7.5% will be rounded up to 8% = 5.00 pts.)*

The respondent with the greatest applicable CUF participation which exceeds the stated goal for the respective MBE or WBE category will be awarded 6 points (5 points plus 1 bonus point). In cases where there is a tie for the greatest applicable CUF participation and both firms exceed the goal for the respective MBE/WBE category both firms will receive 6 points.

1.2.6 Indiana Veteran Owned Small Business Subcontractor Commitment (5 points).

***This is recommended, but not required for RFP submission.***

The following formula will be used to determine points to be awarded based on the IVOSB goals listed in Section 1.17 of this RFP. Scoring is conducted based on an assigned 5-point, plus possible 1 bonus-point, scale. Points are assigned for IVOSB participation based upon the BAFO meeting or exceeding the established goals.

If the respondent's commitment percentage is less than the established IVOSB goal (which can be viewed at the following link: <http://www.in.gov/idoa/2862.htm>), the maximum points achieved will be awarded according to the following schedule:

%	0%	0.6%	1.2%	1.8%	2.4%	3%
Pts.	-1	1	2	3	4	5

*NOTE: Fractional points will be awarded based upon a graduated scale between whole points. (e.g. a 0.3% commitment will receive .5 points and a 1.5% commitment will receive 2.5 points)*

The respondent with the greatest applicable CUF participation which exceeds the stated goal for the IVOSB category will be awarded 6 points (5 points plus 1 bonus point). In cases where there is a tie for the greatest applicable CUF participation and both firms exceed the goal for the IVOSB category both firms will receive 6 points.