



STATE OF INDIANA

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION 24-76140

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

**ON BEHALF OF THE
Indiana Department of Education**

**SOLICITATION FOR:
K-12 Robotics Program/Competition Providers**

Response Due Date and Time:

August 1, 2023 @ 3:00 PM ET

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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION 24-76140

1.1 Introduction

This is a Request for Information (RFI) issued by the Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) on behalf of the Indiana Department of Education regarding the K-12 Robotics Program/Competition Providers.

It is the intent of IDOA to solicit responses to this Request for Information in accordance with the specifications contained in this document and associated attachments. Neither this RFI nor any response (proposal) submitted here to is to be construed as a legal offer.

[THE STATE MAY ELECT TO LIMIT PARTICIPATION IN ANY FUTURE COMPETITIVE SOLICITATION TO VENDORS THAT RESPOND TO THIS RFI.](#)

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE OF THE RFI

The purpose of this RFI is to identify K-12 robotics program/competition providers that meet the requirements and support the goals outlined in [IC 20-20-45.5](#) Robotics Competition Program. The information provided in responses to this RFI will be used to publish a list of preferred or pre-approved providers that schools can identify as partners in a Robotics Competition Grant. Grants are anticipated to be awarded to schools in September 2023.

Information within received responses may also be used to determine maximum award amounts for the Robotics Competition Grants awarded to schools.

There will NOT be a contract resulting directly from this RFI; however, the State may elect to develop guidance for schools based on the results of this solicitation. Respondents should provide full details about their program, competition (s), and/or solution in order for the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) to gain a clear understanding of the K-12 robotics competition/competition landscape.

Relevant Indiana Code (IC)

IC 20-20-45.5 states that:

Sec. 1. As used in this chapter, "allowable expenses" means:

- payment of a stipend for a robotics team mentor;
- fees, kits, and supplies required to:
 - a. establish or maintain a robotics team; or
 - b. participate in a robotics competition; and
- event registrations, materials, transportation costs, travel costs, and other expenses associated with attendance at a robotics competition.

Sec. 2. As used in this chapter, "eligible school" means a:

1. public school, including a charter school (as defined in IC 20-24-1-4); or
2. state accredited nonpublic school.

Sec. 3. As used in this chapter, "eligible team" means a robotics competition team consisting of:

1. students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are enrolled in an eligible school; and
2. at least one (1) adult who is a team mentor and team coach.

Sec. 4. As used in this chapter, "fund" refers to the robotics competition program fund established by section 8 of this chapter.

Sec. 5. As used in this chapter, "program" refers to the robotics competition program established by section 7 of this chapter.

Sec. 6. As used in this chapter, "robotics competition" means a competition that:

1. requires participating teams to design, construct, program, and operate robots; and
2. is sponsored by a nonstock, nonprofit corporation, described under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and exempt from taxation under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, that has as one (1) of its organizational purposes the goal of encouraging young people to develop an interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Sec. 7. The robotics competition program is established to provide grants to eligible teams to expand opportunities to increase interest and improve skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) through participation in competitive robotics programs that:

1. provide hands on learning experiences;
2. establish community partnerships to increase awareness of local workforce and postsecondary opportunities;
3. highlight career opportunities through adult mentors; and
4. prioritize a connection to manufacturing, machining, and fabrication skills for students in grades 9 through 12.

Sec. 8. The robotics competition program fund is established. The department shall use money in the fund to provide grants to eligible teams to develop and implement competitive robotics programs.

Sec. 9. (a) The fund consists of the following:

1. Appropriations from the general assembly.
2. Gifts to the fund.
3. Grants, including grants from private entities.
4. Other state funds that are transferred to the fund.

b. The expenses of administering the fund shall be paid from money in the fund.

c. The treasurer of state shall invest the money in the fund not currently needed to meet the obligations of the fund in the same manner as other public money may be invested. Interest that accrues from these investments shall be deposited into the fund.

d. Money in the fund at the end of a state fiscal year does not revert to the state general fund.

Sec. 10. Subject to appropriation by the general assembly, the department shall administer the program and fund.

Sec. 11. (a) Beginning July 1, 2023, an eligible team may apply to the department to receive a grant from the fund on a form provided by the department.

(b) To receive a grant, an eligible team must show proof of the following in its application:

1. A partnership for the purposes of a robotics competition with at least one (1) sponsor, business entity, higher education institution, or technical school.
2. An adult robotics team mentor.
3. A spending plan.
4. A commitment to compete in a robotics competition.
5. For grades 9 through 12, a commitment to creating an original, iteratively designed robot.
6. A local in kind or cash match from other private or local funds in an amount equal to at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the amount of the awarded grant.

Sec. 12. (a) The department shall develop guidelines to award grants, after June 30, 2023, to eligible teams for allowable expenses. The guidelines developed by the department must include a maximum grant award allotment for each eligible team based on the:

1. level of programming; and
2. level of competition;

of various robotics competitions as determined by the department.

(b) The department shall award grants in a manner that maximizes the number of eligible teams that will be able to receive funds, with an emphasis on increasing the number of high school teams, and that expands the geographical distribution of eligible teams.

Sec. 13. The department shall establish guidelines to accommodate the participation of students with disabilities on an eligible team or in a robotics competition.

Sec. 14. The department may adopt rules under IC 4-22-2 to implement this chapter.

Please provide information on the following:

Organization Name:

Organization Address:

CEO or President of the Organization:

Point of Contact for the Purposes of this RFI:

Number of current robotics teams supported by the organization at the elementary level:

Number of current robotics teams supported by the organization at the middle level:

Number of current robotics teams supported by the organization at the high school level:

Which of the following grade levels does the organization support in implementing robotics programs and preparing for robotics competitions? (elementary school, middle school, high school)

Provide a list of schools the organization currently supports in robotics competition programs. Please indicate if schools use a stipend or salary model for mentor/coach compensation.

Evidence of Eligibility for Partner Organizations:

Respondents should provide a detailed response to the below questions confirming their organization is in alignment with Indiana Code to assist schools in fulfilling a commitment to compete in a robotics competition

Indiana Code requires funds to be used for a robotics program that:

- Requires participating teams to design, construct, program, and operate robots; and,
- is sponsored by a nonstock, nonprofit corporation, described under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and exempt from taxation under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, that has as one (1) of its organizational purposes the goal of encouraging young people to develop an interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); and,

Questions for Respondents:

1. Provide evidence (e.g., narrative, program materials) to support that the organization meets the eligibility requirements (see above) to participate as a partner in the Robotics Competition Grants to school programs.
2. The Robotics Competition Grants Program provides grants to schools to fund team participation in robotics competitions that:
 - a. provide hands on learning experiences;
 - b. establish community partnerships to increase awareness of local workforce and postsecondary opportunities;
 - c. highlight career opportunities through adult mentors; and
 - d. prioritize a connection to manufacturing, machining, and fabrication skills for students in grades 9 through 12.

Please provide evidence (e.g., narrative, program materials) to show how the organization supports teams in each supported grade level to prepare for competitions meeting the above requirements.

3. Describe the competition hierarchy beyond local competitions including regional, state, national, and international competitions. Include the requirements necessary to advance to the next levels of competition beyond local competitions.

Evidence of Cost from Partner Organizations:

The Robotics Competition Grant to school programs provides funding support for the following allowable expenses:

- payment of a stipend for a robotics team mentor;
- fees, kits, and supplies required to:
 - a. establish or maintain a robotics team; or

- b. participate in a robotics competition; and
- event registrations, materials, transportation costs, travel costs, and other expenses associated with attendance at a robotics competition.

Questions for Respondents

1. Provide quotes of average expenditures of robotics competition teams at each supported grade level incurred for materials and supplies as a team is beginning, developing, advancing, and achieving at high levels in competition. Price quotes should include off-the-shelf-kits as well as per-item prices for add-ons or replacement parts.
2. Provide quotes of average expenditures of robotics competition teams at each supported grade level incurred for event registrations at local, regional, state, national, and international competitions sponsored by the organization.
3. Provide quotes of average expenditures for a school to host a local/regional robotics competition.
4. Provide an estimate for the range of stipends paid to robotics team coaches.

IDOE may request in-person presentations/demonstrations from Respondents of this RFI for the purpose of collecting additional information and/or receiving clarification on response details.

The Indiana Department of Education is requesting information to formalize a list of suitable partner organizations to create guidelines to be included in a Robotics Competition Grant to schools. The information collected from this RFI will allow the vendor community to apprise the Indiana Department of Education on information that should be considered as part of the scope of work for the grant application.

RESPONSE FORMAT AND ATTACHMENTS

Respondents should submit responses to the RFI describing how they will meet the specific requirements of this RFI and the deliverables included within. All narrative responses must be provided to the State in Microsoft Word format. Respondents must structure their response according to the questions outlined above to facilitate the State's review of the responses. [THE TOTAL RESPONSE SHOULD NOT BE MORE THAN 15-20 PAGES IN LENGTH.](#)

If you would like to provide a response/feedback to this RFI to be included as a suitable partner organization in the Robotics Competition Grant to schools for Indiana Department of Education, you must provide your response to the State as shown in the RFI Timeline and Response Submission section below.

RFI TIMELINE

The following timeline is only an illustration of this RFI process. The dates associated with each step are not to be considered binding.

Anticipated RFI Dates:

Activity	Date
Issuance of RFI	July 11, 2023
Deadline to Submit Written Questions (3:00PM Eastern Time)	July 18, 2023
Response to Written Questions/RFI Amendments	July 25, 2023
Due Date for Submissions	August 1, 2023

QUESTION / INQUIRY PROCESS

All questions/inquiries in regards to RFI 24-76140 must be submitted in writing via email using **Attachment A**, Questions and Answers Template, by the deadline of **July 18, 2023, by 3:00PM ET** to rcohen@idoa.in.gov. The email subject line should contain the following phrase:

“REQUEST FOR INFORMATION 24-76140, QUESTION AND INQUIRIES.”

Following the question/inquiry due date, IDOA will compile a list of the questions/inquiries submitted by all Respondents. The responses will be posted to the IDOA website as soon as possible. Only answers posted on the IDOA website will be considered official and valid by the State. No Respondent shall rely upon, take any action, or make any decision based upon any verbal communication with any State employee.

Please note that Robert Cohen (rcohen@idoa.in.gov) is the State’s single point of contact for this RFI.

Inquiries are not to be directed to any other staff member of the Indiana Department of Education.

Such action may disqualify respondent (s) from further consideration in this RFI and any subsequent RFP process.

If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFI, or if additional information is necessary for a clearer interpretation of provisions of this RFI prior to the due date for submissions, an addendum will be posted on the IDOA website.

CLARIFICATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The State reserves the right to request clarifications on information submitted to the State. The State also reserves the right to conduct discussions, either oral or written, with the Respondents. These discussions could include requests for additional information, requests for cost information or technical requirements, response attachment revision, etc. Additionally, in conducting discussions, the State may use information derived from the responses submitted by competing Respondents only if the identity of the Respondent providing the information is not disclosed to others. The State will provide equivalent information to all Respondents which have been chosen for discussions.

The Procurement Division will schedule all discussions. Any information gathered through oral discussions must be confirmed in writing.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is important to note that all information submitted in Respondent’s proposals to this RFI will be kept confidential and will not be made available to the public unless this RFI does not result in the release of a solicitation at a later date. If a solicitation results from this RFI, then the information contained in the proposal submissions for this RFI must be made available to the public once the resulting solicitation has been awarded and the protest period has ended.

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 award, the entire solicitation file may be viewed and copied by any member of the public, including news agencies and competitors.

Please note citing “Confidential” on an entire section is not sufficient. The Public Access Counselor (PAC) provides guidance on APRA. Respondents are encouraged to read guidance from the PAC on this topic as this is the guidance IDOA follows:

- [18-INF-06; Redaction of Public Procurement Documents Informal Inquiry](#)

Respondents claiming a statutory exception to the APRA must indicate so on a separate attachment labeled **“Confidential Documentation Listing”**. That document should include 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.

When claiming confidential information, respondents should submit two versions of their response:

- 1) A confidential version (for the State’s review and evaluation)
 - a. Confidential Information must be clearly marked in a separate folder.
- 2) A redacted version (for public records requests)

If the Respondent does not identify the statutory exception, the Procurement Division will not consider the submission confidential. The State also reserves the right to seek the opinion of the PAC for guidance if the State has doubts the cited exception is applicable.

Prices are **NOT** confidential information.

RESPONSE SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Firms interested in providing information to IDOA should submit responses via email to Robert Cohen at rcohen@idoa.in.gov. All responses must be received no later than **August 1, 2023, by 3:00PM ET**. The subject line of the email submission must clearly state the following:

“RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR INFORMATION 24-76140”

Templates outlined in this document should be returned in their native file format.

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