NEBRASKA STATE TREASURER

Request for Information

TAXPAYER TRANSPARENCY WEBSITE DESIGN

August 14, 2023

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I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Nebraska State Treasurer's Office (hereinafter "NSTO") is looking to provide public access to public information in a timely, accurate, efficient, and easily accessible and useable manner. NSTO is looking for third-party technical capability and resource capacity to efficiently administer the posting of multiple government expenditure databases on a central, online transparency platform and for information regarding the feasibility and availability of software that can allow NSTO to publish data and allow members of the public to search and interact with the data as needed. This includes the ability to download the data into commonly readable formats and the ability to create detailed reports and analytics. There are several audiences that a solution will cover, the general public, journalists and research analysts, key staff of Nebraska State Agencies, NSTO's internal staff, and vendors that do business with the State of Nebraska. A solution would yield cloud-based software that simplifies the ability to publish data sets maintained by NSTO, while maximizing user's convenience and accessibility to information when visiting the site.

Nebraska's Taxpayer Transparency Act, NEB. REV. STAT. §§ 84-602.01 to 84-602.04, requires NSTO to "develop and maintain a single, searchable website with information on state receipts, expenditures of state funds, and contracts which is accessible by the public at no cost," NEB. REV. STAT. § 84-602.04. NSTO currently provides such a website accessible at www.StateSpending.Nebraska.gov.

This RFI is for the benefit of the NSTO and is intended to provide competitive information to assist the NSTO in the possible selection of Respondents of transparency technology services as contemplated herein. Each Respondent responding to this RFI is responsible for submitting a response that complies with the approved submission procedures and satisfies the objectives set forth in this RFI. The NSTO may select one or more qualified Respondents to provide transparency technology services. The successful proposing Respondent(s) selected through this process will be expected to provide **all** items described in the scope of services described below; provided, however, the NSTO may select one or more qualified Respondents to provide only certain services identified in the scope of services. The NSTO shall not bear any costs of a responding Respondent ("Respondent") in connection with responses to this RFI. The issuance of the RFI or the receipt of any Responses submitted pursuant hereto creates no obligation, expressed or implied, on the part of either the Respondent or NSTO. In addition, NSTO reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to change the deadline for the submission of questions or Responses under this RFI.

Potential Respondents are advised that materials contained in Responses are subject to the Nebraska Public Records Statutes and may be viewed and/or copied by any member of the public, including news agencies and competitors, in accordance with Public Records Statutes

(NEB. REV. STAT. §§ 84-712 through 84-712.09). Respondents claiming a statutory exception to the Nebraska Public Records Statutes should indicate in the emailed transmittal letter (Section IV (c) that confidential materials are included and should specify which statutory exception provision applies.

II. ESTIMATED PROCUREMENT CALENDAR

EVENT	DATE
RFI Release	Monday, August 14, 2023
Deadline for Submission of Questions	Friday, September 1, 2023 by 5 PM
Official Answers to Submitted Questions	Friday, September 15, 2023 by 5 PM
RFI Responses due to NSTO	Friday, October 6, 2023 by 5 PM
Product Demonstration for Selected Respondent(s) (At NSTO discretion)	Selected Respondents will be notified individually by 5 PM on Friday, October 20, 2023 Presentations would be done the week of November 6 – November 10, 2023
NSTO to notify Respondents of any potential contract resulting from this RFI	Friday, November 17, 2023

Times are Central Standard/Daylight Savings (US), NSTO reserves the right to change the calendar as needed, provided that all respondents are notified of any calendar changes.

Respondents are responsible for entering content suitable for public viewing, since all the questions are accessible to the public. Respondents must not include any information that could be considered personal, security sensitive, inflammatory, incorrect, collusory, or otherwise objectionable, including information about the Respondent's company or other companies. NSTO reserves the right to edit or delete any submitted questions that raise any of these issues or that are not in the best interest of NSTO or this Response.

Selected Respondents who are asked to participate in Product Demonstrations will be expected to prioritize this in their schedules. NSTO will make every effort to find a mutually convenient time for the Respondent and NSTO. However, failure to appear at the scheduled time of the demonstration may result in disqualification or other action that NSTO deems appropriate.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES/WEBSITE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

This section will provide a detailed discussion of the website design services offered by the Respondent and the proposed features to be developed by the Respondent. Responses should meet the below described minimum functionality requirements, and the discuss the below described opportunities for enhanced features.

The Website Design and Development should also include a project plan and estimated timeline for design, development, and completion. Information regarding the technical requirements to host, support, and operate the website should also be described. If the technical requirements vary based on the scope of a potential contract, Responses should describe the differences. Respondent should identify any sub-contractors who would be required to execute proposed Services, and the role each propose sub-contractors would perform. If the Respondent would not use any sub-contractors, so state.

A. MINIMUM FUNCTIONALITY REQUIREMENTS

NEB. REV. STAT. § 84-602.04 establishes minimum requirements for a website established pursuant to the Taxpayer Transparency Act. Respondents should review this statute and responses must comply with NEB. REV. STAT. § 84-602.04. Among other items, the website must include:

- ***The sources of all state receipts and the expenditure of state funds by all state entities;***
    - ***The identity, principal location, and amount of state receipts received or expended by the State of Nebraska and all its state entities;***
    - ***The funding or expending state entity;***
    - ***The budget program source; and***
    - ***The amount, date, purpose, and recipient of all expenditures of state funds; and***
- ***Data for fiscal year 2008-09 and each fiscal year thereafter, unless a state entity was made subject to the law after such date.***
- ***All data must be made available on the website no later than thirty days after the end of the preceding fiscal year.***
- ***The website may not include the name, image, or seal of the State Treasure, or a welcome message. NEB. REV. STAT. § 84-602.04 requires the taxpayer transparency website link to a website maintained by the Nebraska Department of Administrative Services ("DAS") for publication of certain state contracts.***

The current taxpayer transparency website includes features additional to the minimum requirements described above, including links to additional state information and resources. Responses should include these features as part of the website design or detail why one or more features should be eliminated or modified.

B. PROPOSED ENHANCED FEATURES

Respondent Responses should also make recommendations for enhancing the functionality or features of the website beyond what is already provided at www.StateSpending.Nebraska.gov. Enhanced features could include, but are not limited to:

- Universal accounting;
- Citizen tax calculator;
- Major tax schedule;

- Ability to check payment status of a warrant;
- Real-time reporting of state receipts and expenditures;
- Details describing how the Respondent will get information loaded to the website; and
- State agency budgeting tools.

The Respondent should become familiar with the DAS website described in NEB. REV. STAT. § 84-602.04 and other state fiscal resources in order to propose and design features that complement the structure and information provided elsewhere.

The initial duration of any Contract resulting from this RFI will be five (5) years from the execution date, subject to appropriation and continued successful performance. NSTO will also have two (2) additional one (1) year options to renew, subject to appropriation and continued successful performance. Respondent shall provide pricing for years 1 – 5, plus pricing for each possible renewal (years 6-7).

IV. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A. RESPONSE FORMAT

Respondent's Responses are to be submitted to Jason Walters, as described below. **All pages of each Response must be in a searchable PDF, single-spaced with a minimum 12-point font, with pages numbered from beginning to end and following the same format as this RFI. Exhibits may utilize a multi-media format.**

B. GENERAL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

The Respondent's response should address all points and questions outlined in this RFI. It should be clear and precise in response to the information, requirements, and format described in this RFI.

NSTO reserves the right to reject all responses to this RFI or to solicit additional information from Respondents subsequent to the response deadline to this RFI. The NSTO may consider any other information, including information not requested or submitted in response to this RFI, and reserves the right to investigate references and past performance of any Respondents with respect to its performance of similar services, compliance with past RFI and contractual obligations, and its lawful payment of suppliers, sub-contractors, and workers.

If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFI, amendments will be provided to all Respondents that responded to the original RFI.

This RFI is not and shall not be construed as an offer to purchase services by the NSTO. Any binding arrangement for services will be evidenced by a separate Agreement executed by the NSTO. Any contact concerning this RFI should be limited and in writing. Jason Walters is designated as the sole point of contact.

NSTO specifically requests that no contact concerning this RFI be made with the Treasurer, or his other employees. Any verbal communication from the employees of the NSTO or any other parties concerning this RFI is not binding on the NSTO, and shall in no way alter a specification, term, or condition of this RFI.

C. Transmittal Letter

A transmittal letter must accompany the Response. The transmittal letter should be brief and signed by an individual who is authorized to submit responses on behalf of the Respondent. All Respondents must acknowledge, in their transmittal letter, receipt of this RFI and any addenda to this RFI. All Responses must be submitted to:

Jason Walters, Deputy State Treasurer - jason.walters@nebraska.gov

D. Response Contents

Responses must include a Table of Contents and an Executive Summary. The Executive Summary should clearly demonstrate that the Respondent has an understanding of the objectives and goals of the Respondent set forth in this RFI.

The Respondent must possess the requisite knowledge and demonstrated experience in website design for public agencies and/or financial accounting. Responses should demonstrate the Respondent can provide services related to the design and development of a searchable, user-friendly, and interactive website that enhances the transparency of state government financial operations to Nebraska's citizens and taxpayers.

1. State the name, address, telephone number, website address, and state of incorporation of Respondent. Include:
   - **a)** The legal name of the Respondent, any alternative names under which the Respondent does business and any named subsidiaries

2. List services designed which are similar to those requested by the Respondent (either currently, or within the last three years). Include the following information:
   - **a)** Types of services offered by the Respondent;
   - **b)** Whether the Services described in this RFI could be provided in compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act or in other languages than those required herein, and any additional associated cost;

3. Provide a brief history of the Respondent, including the length of time the Respondent has been in business, ownership structure, current management, and any significant expected or pending changes.

4. NSTO is requesting information concerning Respondent's technical capability and resource capacity to efficiently administer the posting of multiple government expenditure databases on a central, online transparency platform. These transparency technology services include, but are not limited to, data intake, database administration, data storage and hosting, and online transparency platform design, operation, and maintenance incorporating industry best practices.

E. Respondent Qualifications

1. The exact software proposed by the software Respondent in its Response to this RFI must have been implemented by at least one (1) U.S. State or other large public sector entity within the past five (5) years (calendar years 2019-2023).

2. The exact software proposed by the Respondent must have been implemented within the past five (5) years with four (4) additional clients that may be public sector or private sector entities with revenues or expenditures in excess of $500 million annually.

3. Supervisory personnel on the contract must possess CISA certification.

F. Questions to Be Answered in RFI Response

1. Provide information describing the Respondent's experience in providing transparency technology services to other governments, including three government references.

2. From your past implementations, what concerns, issues or roadblocks could you foresee when transitioning from the current transparency site to a new transparency site? How have you overcome these types of issues and/or roadblocks in the past?

3. Please describe your implementation process, including timeframes. What is the average duration of your typical implementation and the costs associated? Please describe prior implementation experiences and discuss best practices for implementation.

4. Does your system have the ability to house historical information for reference?

5. How does your system get its data? Manual process of running reports and uploading Excel spreadsheets (this is the current process) or through a direct connection with the State's accounting system?

6. If selected for product demonstrations, do you have a demo version of your software for review that you can forward to NSTO for a demonstration?

7. Does your system have the ability to imbed attachments, pictures, videos, and other media within the site with additional information?

8. Is the software provided a standalone system or is another vendor's product required?

9. Does the software integrate with Microsoft Active Directory for authentication?

- Please describe the pricing structure and associated costs of the software. What is the Initial Cost & Annual Software licensing cost? What is the Annual Maintenance Expense? What are the Implementation & Training Expenses? What is the Troubleshooting Expense? Are there any ancillary professional services that result in additional costs?

10. Do you provide customer support? Do we receive a direct private resource and if so, how many hours per year? On average, how long does it take to receive a response to client inquiries? Please describe your customer support service structure.

11. What is the software report capability? Does the software provide a library of standard reports? Does the software include report generation capability or is a third-party tool required to generate the report? Can the reports be exported to Microsoft Word and Excel format?

12. Has your company completed the Viewpoint Diversity Score Business Index survey conducted by the Alliance Defending Freedom?

13. Has your company made any public statements or enacted any policies which commits all assets under management to be used for a social or political purpose? If so, please disclose those commitments.

14. Is your company a member of any organizations or associations which require members to use all assets under management for a social or political purpose? Examples include, but are not limited to, GFANZ, the Net Zero Banking Alliance or Climate Action 100. If so, please disclose those commitments.

15. Do you have any other comments or suggestions that you feel would assist in the success of this project?

G. COMPLAINCE WITH STATE OF NEBRASKA

Each Respondent is responsible to research Nebraska Revised Statutes for their legal responsibilities when doing business with the State. Reference to certain State statutes are proved in this RFI, but are not all inclusive to the legal requirements

The Nebraska Fair Employment Practice Act prohibits Contractors of the State of Nebraska, and their Subcontractors, from discriminating against any employee or applicant for employment, with respect to hire, tenure, terms, conditions, compensations, or privileges of employment because of race, color, religion, sex, disability, marital status, or national origin (Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 48-1101 to 48-1125). Contractors also must certify that they maintain a drug free workplace environment to ensure worker safety and workplace integrity.

V. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Respondents must submit responses that meet all the submission requirements in Section III of the RFI. Only responsive proposals that meet the submission requirements will be evaluated, scored and ranked. NSTO may request additional information for evaluation purposes.

Any submission which fails to meet the submission requirements of the RFI will be found non-responsive without further evaluation unless NSTO, at its discretion, determines that the non-compliance is insubstantial and can be corrected. In these cases, NSTO may allow the Respondent to make minor corrections to the submission.

Respondent scores will be used to rank Respondents and will determine which Respondents will proceed to subsequent stages of the evaluation and/or enter into negotiations with NSTO to receive a Contract award.

The NSTO reserves the right to reject any and all responses, or to select any response deemed to be in the best interest of the taxpayers. Selection of a Respondent(s) will be based on the criteria described below. A Respondent's response should provide a level of clarity and detail that is sufficient to allow the staff of the NSTO to adequately judge the expertise, experience, and capabilities of the Respondent and make an appropriate recommendation. The lowest cost response will not necessarily result in the selection of a Respondent.

1. Respondent's ability to provide the scope of services.
2. The extent to which the Respondent's response compliments the NSTO's transparency resources.
3. Respondent's ability to respond in a timely manner to the needs of the NSTO.
4. Demonstrated understanding of the goals and objectives of the NSTO.
5. Pricing structure.