

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
BACKGROUND SCREENING SERVICES
FOR
THE
RETIREMENT SYSTEMS OF ALABAMA

RFP 19000000009

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SECTION I

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THE PROPOSER

A. PURPOSE:

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

This Request for Proposals (RFP) solicits vendor proposals for background screening services for the Teachers' Retirement System of Alabama (TRS), the Employees' Retirement System of Alabama (ERS), the Judicial Retirement Fund of Alabama (JRF), and the Public Education Employees' Health Insurance Plan (PEEHIP), hereinafter collectively referred to as The Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA).

The contract period will begin October 2019 and end September 30, 2024.

B. TERMS OF PROPOSAL

Vendor agrees that any proposal submitted will remain valid for a period of ninety (90) days from the date received by the RSA.

C. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:

All proposals will be submitted (six (6) copies) in a sealed wrapper with the following plainly marked on the front:

RETIREMENT SYSTEMS OF ALABAMA
BACKGROUND SCREENING SERVICES
RFP 19000000009
OPENING September 9, 2019

Proposals will be sent to:

Via UPS or FedEx:

Retirement Systems of Alabama
Director of Office Services
201 South Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

Via US Mail:

Retirement Systems of Alabama
Director of Office Services
P.O. Box 302150
Montgomery, AL 36130-2150

Proposals may be hand-delivered to Room 574 of the Retirement Systems Building, 201 South Union Street, Montgomery, Alabama.

Proposals must be received no later than 2:00 p.m. CST on September 9, 2019, to be considered. Proposals will not be accepted after this date and time. The RSA reserves the right to reject any and all responses to this RFP.

D. KEY DATES:

RFP 19*009 Key Dates:	
Activity	Date
RFP issued	August 16, 2019
Deadline to submit questions	August 26, 2019
Responses to questions posted to RSA website	August 27, 2019
Proposals due by	September 9, 2019
Proposal opening date	September 9, 2019
Finalist conferences	September 11, 2019
Award of Contract	September 16, 2019

E. DELIVERY SCHEDULE:

The RSA desires to utilize this service beginning on October 2019.

F. PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

Payments will be made monthly in arrears. Payment terms are Net 30.

G. SELECTION OF FIRM:

The RSA expects to contract with the successful Vendor. All responding Vendors will be notified in writing within a reasonable length of time following the selection. Prior to the selection of a firm, two or more Vendors may be requested to make oral presentations via phone to the evaluation committee. The proposal shall become the property of the RSA.

H. ECONOMY OF PREPARATION:

Proposals should be prepared simply and economically and provide a concise description of the proposer's response to the requirements of this RFP. Emphasis should be on clarity. The RSA will not be responsible for any costs incurred by any proposer in the preparation of a proposal.

I. NEWS RELEASES:

News releases pertaining to this RFP, the service, or the audits to which it relates will be made only with prior written approval of the CEO or their representative.

J. ADDENDA TO THE RFP:

Any modifications made to the RFP prior to the proposal due date will be provided through STAARS VSS and the RSA website at rsa-al.gov.

K. CONTACT POINT:

Any questions regarding this RFP must be submitted electronically via email by August 26, 2019, at 2:00 p.m. CST to Mr. Brian Stewart, Director of Human Resources at brian.stewart@rsa-al.gov.

A consolidated list of questions and answers will be posted on the RSA website by August 27, 2019.

L. MINIMUM EXPERIENCE QUALIFICATIONS:

Vendor must have been in business for a minimum of three years providing background screening services on a nationwide basis and must demonstrate that they have specific public sector experience. Research staff must have and maintain credentials and/or licenses required by the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).

M. AGENTS:

No agents fees will be payable by the RSA or successful proposer. The RSA will respond only to parties interested in proposing and performing the services.

SECTION II

SERVICES REQUIRED

A. SCOPE OF WORK

Vendor will provide upon request by the RSA, a complete pre-employment background screening package to include, at a minimum, a Social Security trace, a global Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and Denied Parties report, a National Criminal report, and a complete criminal report from all Federal Districts, the State, and the Counties in which the applicant has lived or has worked in, for a minimum of 10 years, unless restricted by individual state mandates relating to the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). Services in detail would include:

1. SSN Trace – To include name, social security number, current, and former addresses.
2. National Criminal Search - National misdemeanor and felony arrest/conviction information to include:
 - a. Department of Corrections (DOC)
 - b. Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)
 - c. Department of Public Safety (DPS)
 - d. Multi-State Sex Offender Database
 - e. AppALERT
 - f. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) – also known as “Terrorist Watchlist”
 - g. FBI Most Wanted Terrorists
 - h. FBI Most Wanted Fugitives
 - i. U.S. Marshals Service Wanted
 - j. U.S. Customs Service Wanted
 - k. U.S. Department of Justice Wanted
 - l. U.S. Secret Service Wanted
 - m. U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency Wanted
 - n. Other regarded Federal Wanted Fugitives Lists
 - o. Other regarded State Wanted Fugitives List
 - p. Other regarded Local Wanted Fugitives List
3. County-Level Search - County misdemeanor and felony arrest/conviction information to include:
 - a. Date of charge or arrest
 - b. Change Information
 - c. Degree of Charge
 - d. Date of Disposition
 - e. Disposition
4. Federal Level Search - Federal misdemeanor and felony arrest/conviction information to include:
 - a. Date of charge or arrest
 - b. Change Information
 - c. Degree of Charge
 - d. Date of Disposition
 - e. Disposition

5. Statewide Search - State misdemeanor and felony arrest/conviction information to include:
 - a. Date of charge or arrest
 - b. Charge Information
 - c. Degree of Charge
 - d. Date of Disposition
 - e. Disposition

6. Employment Verification Search – Employment information to include:
 - a. Dates of employment
 - b. Position
 - c. Salary
 - d. Performance overview
 - e. Reason for termination
 - f. Rehire eligibility
 - g. Any additional information which can be provided

7. Education Verification Search – Education information to include:
 - a. Dates of Attendance and School Name
 - b. Degree Level
 - c. GPA
 - d. Professional Certifications if known

B. GENERAL CONDITIONS

- Vendor's service must be completely Internet-based, and provide the RSA with a secure web-based client access capability for ordering and receiving reports and account management. The system must allow web-based report requests and review of reports electronically 24 hours per day, seven (7) days per week. The system must use integrated data encryption for security and confidentiality in data access and transfer and shall require personal, individual user identifications and passwords for authorized access. The system shall incorporate an auto-logout feature, password failure lockout, and periodic mandatory password reset. The system must require a hardened password with no fewer than eight (8) alpha-numeric or symbol, case-sensitive characters.
- Assigned administrator(s) of the RSA's account shall have the ability to view all activity and reports as performed by another designated RSA staff member. This ensures work can be completed in the event a fellow staff member is out on leave and for audit verification. If pricing varies based on a number of administrators or users, please include options in the cost proposal.
- Vendor must demonstrate sufficient Internet security and operational policy to guarantee absolute confidentiality and protection of all personal data. Any breach in confidentiality or privacy will be grounds for immediate cancellation of this contract.
- The system shall be designed to generate the requested reports based on user's web-based inquiry supplying a candidate's name, current address, date of birth, and Social Security number.
- The system shall complete all reports within 72 clock hours from the time of request transmittal. Each request shall be assigned a unique case number and be electronically date/time stamped for verification purposes. National Criminal reports must be an instant search feature, and State-wide criminal reports for Alabama only must be completed in less than four (4) clock hours from the time of request transmittal.
- Vendor must possess the ability to accept bulk data in the form of an Excel spreadsheet to run checks on multiples of applicants. Doing so will cut down on user error and time.

- Vendor must provide a telephone number for customer service, answered by a company employee, and provide an assigned Account Manager to the RSA account for purposes of account management, dispute resolution, and assistance. Customer service must be available, at a minimum, from 8:00 am CST to 5:00 pm CST, Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays. Voice mail requests for call-back must be satisfied within one (1) hour during normal business hours or within the first hour of the following business day.
- Vendor agrees that all screening services shall be conducted in accordance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) and any other applicable federal, state, or local laws. The RSA asserts that information provided will be used for employment purposes only and that all report requests will be contingent upon full disclosure to the candidate and a signed written consent form/s.
- Vendor shall procure and maintain at its own expense insurance for any liability arising as a result of the Vendor's (including at any tier, the Vendor's subcontractors, sub-consultants, agents, employees and those for whom the Vendor is liable) acts or omissions in connection with this Contract, which shall protect the Vendor and protect the RSA and the State and/or end-users (as applicable) as additional insured parties.
- Vendor must notify the RSA within eight (8) hours if a known security breach has been detected. A notice must be sent to the Information Security Officer at network.security@rsa-al.gov or by calling 334-517-7411.
- Vendor must provide at their expense, full credit monitoring, and identity recovery services if a breach is found resulting from an error committed by the Vendor or their subcontractor(s).

SECTION III

INFORMATION REQUIRED FROM PROPOSERS

Proposals must be submitted in the format outlined below:

A. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FIRM:

1. BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

State the full name and address of your organization, and if applicable, the branch office or other subordinate element that will perform or assist in performing the work hereunder. Indicate whether you operate as an individual, partnership, or corporation; if as a corporation, include the state in which you are incorporated. State whether you are licensed to operate in the State of Alabama.

2. PRIOR EXPERIENCE

As part of your proposal, include a brief statement (maximum five pages) concerning the relevant experience of persons from your firm who will be responsible for implementing the proposed solution for the RSA. Do not include general corporate background brochures.

3. WORKFORCE:

Identify lead individuals by name and title and include a resume of each.

4. AUTHORIZED OFFICIALS

Include the names and telephone numbers of personnel in the organization authorized to execute the proposed contracts with the RSA.

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND COMMENTS

The proposer must disclose any alleged issues, investigations, and/or citations. Include any other information believed to be pertinent but not specifically requested elsewhere in this RFP.

B. COST AND PRICE ANALYSIS

The information requested in this Section is required to support the reasonableness of your proposal price. Use the following format:

- Pricing should be based per screening with no minimum or maximum applicant requirements as these numbers will change each year. The RSA does predict 100 to 200 screenings per contract year. However, the number of screenings may increase during the recheck years for current employees.
- The Vendor's cost proposals must include the cost for each contract year for each of the five (5) packages outlined below. Any cost such as administrative and setup cost required to run each applicant package listed in items 1-5 must be included in the package cost to reflect a true comparison of services. Additional services may be listed as ad hoc services and will be reviewed separately:

1. Package - Current RSA Employees in the US combined with International (Background screening to be a minimum of 10 years) unless restricted by individual state mandates relating to the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).
 - Social Security Trace Report
 - State/County Criminal based off addresses derived from Social Security Trace Report
 - Federal Criminal based off addresses derived from Social Security Trace Report
 - National Criminal Search with National Sex Offender
 - International Criminal Search

2. Package - Pre-Employment (US Only) (Background screening to be a minimum of 10 years) unless restricted by individual state mandates relating to the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).
 - Social Security Trace Report
 - State/County Criminal based off addresses derived from Social Security Trace Report
 - Federal Criminal based off addresses derived from Social Security Trace Report
 - National Criminal Search with National Sex Offender
 - Education Verification
 - Employment Verification

3. Package- Pre-employment (US and International) (Background screening to be a minimum of 10 years) unless restricted by individual state mandates relating to the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).
 - Social Security Trace Report
 - State/County Criminal based off addresses derived from Social Security Trace Report
 - Federal Criminal based off addresses derived from Social Security Trace Report
 - National Criminal Search with National Sex Offender
 - International Criminal
 - Education Verification
 - Employment Verification

4. Package - Pre-Employment (US Only) Secure Access to the RSA Data Center (Background screening to be a minimum of 10 years) unless restricted by individual state mandates relating to the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).
 - Social Security Trace Report
 - State/County Criminal based off addresses derived from Social Security Trace Report
 - Federal Criminal based off addresses derived from Social Security Trace Report
 - National Criminal Search with National Sex Offender
 - Education Verification
 - Employment Verification

5. Package - Pre-employment (US and International) Secure Access to the RSA Data Center (Background screening to be a minimum of 10 years) unless restricted by individual state mandates relating to the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).
 - Social Security Trace Report
 - State/County Criminal based off addresses derived from Social Security Trace Report
 - Federal Criminal based off addresses derived from Social Security Trace Report
 - National Criminal Search with National Sex Offender
 - International Criminal
 - Education Verification
 - Employment Verification

Additional fees passed on to Vendors by reporting entities must be addressed in the Vendor's response. The RSA will not be liable for any expense that is not identified in the Vendor's response.

SECTION IV

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

A. GENERAL:

Proposals will be evaluated by an evaluation committee. Selection will be based on all factors listed below and others implicit within the RFP and will represent the best performance and reasonable costs for the RSA. Oral presentations and interviews (via phone) may be required as part of the evaluation criteria. Vendor must be able to meet every requirement to be considered for award. Award will be all or none to a single vendor.

B. FACTORS:

The following factors will be the minimum criteria in making the selection (order does not indicate priority):

1. PRICING MODEL:

This criterion shall be judged by its reasonableness in relation to the merits of the proposal.

2. QUALIFICATION OF THE FIRM:

This includes the ability of the vendor to meet the terms of the RFP.

3. SERVICE and REPORTING:

Ability to provide background screening services as outlined in Section II, A - Scope of Work and B - General Conditions.

C. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Without qualification, the RSA reserves the right to select a Vendor based on the content of the proposal, experience with the Vendor, cost, and any other relevant information, including, without limitation, recommendations concerning the Vendor's respective record of past performance with other clients. Each Vendor's proposal will be evaluated on their:

- 1) Pricing Model
- 2) Qualifications of the Firm
- 3) Ability to provide the background screening services as outlined in Section II, A - Scope of Work and B - General Conditions

D. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Please answer the following questions:

- a. Does your firm have a written code of ethics, conflict of interest policy, mission statement, or other related policy? If so, please provide such. Also, please complete the Proposer Profile form attached.
- b. List at least three (3) customer references (include a company's name, individual contact's name and telephone number) by completing the Proposer Reference Form attached.
- c. Describe your methodology for running background services that supersede your biggest competitors.

- d. Describe your methodology for conducting education and employment verification services. Explain how you remain in compliance with applicable laws to ensure information is concise and legally obtained.
- e. What is your company's process for resolving consumer disputes? Please include descriptions of dispute documentation, document storage and retrieval, timeliness, internal resources, and any other applicable details.
- f. Please provide a copy of your security policy as an attachment to the proposal.
- g. Describe your system, physical site, and personnel security.
- h. Explain your retention and disposal policy.

SECTION V

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

The following documents are referenced in this RFP and must be completed and submitted with the proposal:

- A. State of Alabama Disclosure Statement (Required by Article 3B of Title 41, Code of Alabama 1975) – two pages
- B. Sample RSA State Contract with required language
- C. Immigration Compliance Certificate
- D. Proposer Profile Form
- E. Proposer References Form
- F. IRS Form W-9
- G. RSA Non-Disclosure Agreement

