**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFP SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFP NUMBER AND TITLE:** | RFP# 202407142 Educator Credentialing System |
| **RFP ISSUED BY:** | Department of Education |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | October 29,2024 |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | December 9,2024 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | December 16,2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |

**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department’s answer.**

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| **1** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix D | Are respondents expected to provide narrative explanations for every line item in Appendix D? |
| **Answer** | |
| The explanation box is there to allow for the Bidder to provide context to the response if they determine that is needed. If the Bidder determines that they need additional space, they can attach additional pages. | |

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| **2** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV, Section III P20 and Appendix D | If respondents are to provide narrative explanations for every line item in Appendix D, is it acceptable to provide those responses in a separate document (or within File #3)? |
| **Answer** | |
| The explanation box is there to allow for the Bidder to provide context to the response if they determine that is needed. If the Bidder determines that they need additional space, they can attach additional pages. A Bidder may determine that a narrative explanation may not be necessary in Appendix D for each box as a complete narrative will be provided under Part IV, Section III, 1 in reference to the Scope of Work as outlined in Part II. | |

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| **3** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E | As Appendix E instructs respondents to provide “supporting evidentiary artifacts” for each line item, would it be acceptable to provide any narrative responses in a separate document (or within File #3)? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, this is acceptable. | |

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| **4** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E | What is considered a “supporting evidentiary artifact” for responses in Appendix E (i.e., separate documents, narrative responses, etc.)? |
| **Answer** | |
| Proposers are encouraged to format artifacts in a manner that makes sense for the information being shared. Separate documents or narrative responses would be acceptable evidentiary artifacts. | |

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| **5** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General | How many Department users will access the system? Please provide a breakdown of the number of users by Department program and role. |
| **Answer** | |
| *Role – Approximate Number of Users at DOE:*  System Administrator – 5  Certification Evaluator – 2  CHRC Specialist – 1  Office Specialist – 5  DOE Clerk [Read Only] – 1  Data Analyst – 5  Commissioner – 1 | |

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| **6** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General | Does the Department have a required or desired page limit for responses? |
| **Answer** | |
| No. There are no page limitations. | |

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| **7** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Page 10 | On Page 10 of the RFP, the Department lists the following architecture feature requirement: “Modularity: Phased implementation by differing agencies, allowing agencies to use modules that are important to them.” If a phased implementation approach is acceptable, what is the desired order in which Department Programs are to be implemented? |
| **Answer** | |
| The immediate priority is functionality related to the tracking of existing credentials, submission of applications, and the processing of applications (inclusive of Criminal History Record Check (CHRC) functionality).  Less immediate priorities include data reporting functionality.  More specific modular progression can be established cooperatively with the Department as implementation is set into motion. | |

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| **8** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General | Please elaborate upon any timing considerations for when specific programs / areas / functions will need to be fully transitioned to the new solution. |
| **Answer** | |
| The desired date of implementation for application functionality is summer 2025. Specific target dates for additional functionality can be established cooperatively with the Department. | |

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| **9** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General – Budget | What costs has the Department incurred for the initial set up, ongoing maintenance, hosting, software licensing, support, and enhancements (i.e., “change orders”) over the lifetime of the current systems to be replaced by the new solution? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department has incurred $1,402,007.50 in costs over the lifetime of the current contract. | |

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| **10** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General | What presentations, software demonstrations and/or estimates / quotes has the Department programs received related to this project and from whom |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department has not received any presentations/demonstrations/estimates/quotes related to this current RFP. The gathering of proposals will be followed by an opportunity for bidders to provide software demonstrations. | |

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| **11** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General | For data conversion requirements, please inventory all data sources, file formats, and size of the current data sets to be converted and migrated into the new system. |
| **Answer** | |
| Data is entered into the Maine Educator Information System by citizens seeking educator credentials. Educator information is provided to NEO, our core data system, from MEIS in a nightly run.  File format : CSV  File Size:  **MEIS to NEO**   1. Header file: 30 MB (approx.) 2. Endorsement file: 17 MB (approx.) 3. Certification Status file: 10 MB (approx.)   The Educator Position information is provided to MEIS from NEO, our DOE core data system, in a nightly run. That file is  **NEO to MEIS**   1. NEOStaff file: 15 MB (approx.)   Additional files are provided to and from our Fingerprinting and Background Check processors and the Department of Public Safety. | |

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| **12** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General – Budget | What is the Department’s budget for the initial system implementation? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department is looking for the Bidders to provide their estimated cost for the implementation. | |

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| **13** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP page 8 | On Page 8 of the RFP, the Department states, “The current annual contract is approximately $110,000 per year.” The current level of annual expenditure is very low relative to the average annual cost of regulatory systems on the market. What amount was budgeted for ongoing support, software licensing, hosting, and support of the new system? |
| **Answer** | |
| There is no anticipated change to the amount of funds available for ongoing support, software licensing, hosting, and support of the new system. Bidders may include information of the costs that would be incurred for those services on an ongoing basis should their bid be selected. | |

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| **14** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General – Budget | What, if any, amount of the budget is subject to expire by a certain timeframe and when? Please elaborate. |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department receives a budget allocation every year. | |

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| **15** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General | Please provide an approximate number of standard email/letter templates that will be used by the Department that are to be integrated and automated by the system. |
| **Answer** | |
| Between 15-20 separate templates are expected. | |

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| **16** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP page 6 – Purpose and Background | Page 6 of the RFP states, “In Maine, there are more than 150 different endorsements for administrators, educational specialists, teachers, educational technicians and career and technical education (CTE) teachers, each with its own requirements.” Are there any other license, permit, or certification types beyond the 150 endorsement types listed? If so, please provide a comprehensive list of all license, permit, certification, and endorsement types. |
| **Answer** | |
| All certification and endorsement types are available publicly through two sources:   1. State Board of Education Rule Chapter 115, Parts I and II ([download links here](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/05/chaps05.htm)) 2. [CTE Endorsements, set annually by the DOE CTE Team.](https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/cte/resources/certification) | |

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| **17** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP page 1 – Proposal Submission | Given the complexity of the RFP and extensive documentation requirements for the Technical Assessment Form, as well as the short timeline between the publication of an addenda/Q&A and submittal date, can the proposal due date be extended by at least 3-4 weeks? |
| **Answer** | |
| No. We do not expect a completed system as part of a proposal. | |

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| **18** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General | Can the Department provide an inventory of all the reports that need to be replicated within the new system? |
| **Answer** | |
| We do not have a comprehensive list of reports that need to be replicated within the new system. At present, approximately 50 report formats are currently available. The number of report formats required of the new system will be dependent upon the new system’s functionality. | |

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| **19** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| System Requirements Form | For each of the interfaces listed in Section 1.1.4 of the System Requirements Form, can the Department please provide the following information?  a. Direction of the exchange (incoming, outgoing, bidirectional)  b. Integration Type (real-time API or batch file exchange)  c. Format of exchanged data (e.g., JSON, XML, fixed length, CSV, or other delimited text) |
| **Answer** | |
| Not at this time. See 1.1.4.2. | |

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| **20** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP page 6 – Purpose and Background | Page 6 of the RFP reads, “Beyond schools needing direct access, the system communicates data every night to other state  databases and connects to the SBI fingerprinting system.” Can the Department confirm that all of the other state databases that receive feeds from the Department nightly are enumerated in Section 1.1.4 of the System Requirements Form? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, at present the list of state databases enumerated in Section 1.1.4 is exhaustive and reflects the current operation of the certification system. | |

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| **21** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP page 24 – Contract Administration and Conditions | Page 24 of the RFP reads, “Contracts are not considered fully executed and valid until approved by the State Procurement Review Committee and funds are encumbered.” Is it in principle possible that the awarded vendor’s bid could be rejected by the State Procurement Review Committee? If so, what options do the Department and an awarded vendor have at this point to pursue further negotiations? |
| **Answer** | |
| The State Procurement Review Committee has the authority to reject a contract. If the SPRC has concerns, in most cases the SPRC would work to address concerns with the Department to make the needed changes to allow us to proceed with the contract. | |

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| **22** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP page 36-37 – Priority Levels and Response Time | Pages 36 and 37 show 5 priority levels and associated response times. Are the response and resolution times given in business hours (i.e., hours when the business is open and technical resources are available), or in absolute hours? For example, does a Priority 2 issue identified at 4:00 PM on a Friday need to be resolved by Saturday at midnight, or by Monday at 3:00 PM? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department expects reasonable efforts be made to follow the timelines presented on Pages 36-37. A Priority 1 (Critical) issue (e.g. full system failure) would require immediate attention until resolution, regardless of business hours; lower priority levels could be addressed during business hours. | |

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| **23** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Timeline, p. 1 | Please indicate on what date the selected vendor will be notified of award. |
| **Answer** | |
| The Bidders will be notified after the scoring has been completed. There is no definitive date. The Department plans to do the scoring as quickly as possible. | |

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| **24** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Timeline, p. 1 | Please indicate how the selected vendor will be notified (e.g., email, web posting, etc.) |
| **Answer** | |
| Bidders will receive an award notification letter through email. | |

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| **25** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Part I Purpose and Background, p. 6 | Please indicate what other state databases vendors must interface with and how (i.e., APIs, files, etc.). |
| **Answer** | |
| At present the list of state databases enumerated in Section 1.1.4 is exhaustive and reflects the current operation of the certification system. | |

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| **26** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Part I Purpose and Background, p. 6 | Please indicate what data need to be available to support the required school access of the system. |
| **Answer** | |
| Schools need to be able to access the credentials earned by their employees; CHRC and certifications violations list; upcoming renewals for their employees; and the ability to recommend renewals in the system. | |

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| **27** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Part I Purpose and Background, p. 6 | Can the state provide details on the variety of endorsements and certification areas available to educators? |
| **Answer** | |
| All certification and endorsement types are available publicly through two sources:   1. State Board of Education Rule Chapter 115, Parts I and II ([download links here](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/05/chaps05.htm)) 2. [CTE Endorsements, set annually by the DOE CTE Team.](https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/cte/resources/certification) | |

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| **28** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Part II B.3.d, p. 10 | Are vendors required to use the state’s existing credit card payment provider? |
| **Answer** | |
| No, a bidder is not required to use existing payment card providers, however the bidder’s product must be able to seamlessly integrate with our PayMaine II product. | |

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| **29** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Part II B.3.c, p. 10. | Please indicate what data need to be available to support the public access/public reporting required by the system. |
| **Answer** | |
| The public access to teacher certification is conducted through the DOE’s NEO database; the interaction between certification software and NEO is highlighted in 1.1.4. | |

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| **30** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFP Part II B.3.g, p. 10 | Role based security: Will the state be performing user management administration? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, the state will be performing user management administration. | |

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| **31** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix D. Section 1.1.4.1., p. 4 | Will the system be required to house fingerprints, or simply house an acknowledgement that the candidate has successfully submitted prints to the SBI or other entity? |
| **Answer** | |
| The system does not house fingerprints; it does house the results of the CHRC checks that the fingerprinting initiates, which is information shared via the Mapnet database | |

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| **32** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix D. Section 1.1.4.1., p. 4 | Can the state provide specifications for the required External Systems interfaces? |
| **Answer** | |
| Not at this time. See 1.1.4.2. | |

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| **33** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Can the state provide a process flow for reviewing applications? |
| **Answer** | |
| Applications are received and placed into a review queue. In this queue, they are viewed for required applications material, transcripts and resume. Once reviewed, they are sent to the appropriate evaluator and placed into an open queue. From there the evaluator reviews the application based off requirements set forth in rule and statue. If any deficiencies, a letter is created, posted to educator’s account and emailed. If no deficiencies are found, a certificate is issued. | |

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| **34** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Can the state provide details on any requirement(s) related to reports to Maine Department of Education to be delivered by the system? |
| **Answer** | |
| There are approximately 50 report formats in the existing certification software. Examples include: Applications processed by type within a submitted date range; CHRC or certification violations lists, in total and/or by school district; current credential holders by endorsement type; program completers recommended by institution of higher ed and endorsement type per Title II reporting cycle. | |

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| **35** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **N/A** | Please indicate what other third parties, outside of State of Maine organizations, the system be required to interface with. |
| **Answer** | |
| Third parties with varied levels of access/functionality in the system include applicants, active educators, school administration officials, and educator preparation program staff. | |