

New Hampshire Department of Education

Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

21 South Fruit Street Suite 20

Concord, New Hampshire 03301

May 18, 2022

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**RFP VR-2022-4**

**Vocational Rehabilitation**

**Greater New England**

**Blindness & Employment Conference**

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# SECTION 1 – Overview and Schedule

## A. Executive Summary

Services for the Blind and Vision Impaired (SBVI) will be sponsoring a two-day conference addressing issues of blindness adjustment, training, employment issues, access technology, and motivational strategies calculated to encourage and inspire conference participants in coming to understand that blindness or vision loss need have minimal limits on what a person who is blind or has low vision may accomplish. We envision this conference occurring in Concord, New Hampshire, during the month of October 2022, preferably around the date of October 15, 2022, which is nationally known as National Blindness Awareness Month, formally National White Cane Safety Day. Correction: National Blindness Awareness Day. If proximity to this date cannot be managed, any point during the month of October, which is also recognized as Disability Employment Awareness Month, would be acceptable. The contractor would serve as the onsite point person, and behind the scenes logistical administrator, throughout the conference.

All program locations should be fully accessible.

## B. Schedule

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **EVENT** | **DATE** | **LOCAL TIME** |
| RFP Released to Proposers | 5/18/22 |  |
| Proposer Inquiry Period Ends | 5/25/2022 | 4:30 PM |
| Final Agency Responses to Proposer Inquiries | 6/1/2022 | 4:30 PM  |
| Proposers Submit Proposals | 6/24/22 | 4:30 PM  |
| Estimated Review and Scoring of Proposals | 7/1/2022 |  |
| Estimated Notification of Selection and Begin Contract Negotiations | 7/5/2022 |  |
| Estimated Date of Approval of Final Contract/Work Begins (Governor & Executive Council Approval) | July/Early August 2022 |  |

## C. Definitions

**Conference Planning Team (CPT**); Representatives within (SBVI) and other individuals within Vocational Rehabilitation assisting with the planning/implementation of the conference.

**Entity:** Name of individual or organization putting forth a bid to facilitate conference.

# SECTION 2 –Agency Overview

TheNew Hampshire Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is an employment program for individuals who experience a disability. VR focuses on service delivery that assists individuals in preparing for, obtaining, retaining, and advancing in employment.

Services for Blind and Vision Impaired (SBVI), assists eligible New Hampshire citizens with disabilities to secure suitable employment, as well as financial and personal independence. SBVI provides appropriate individualized rehabilitation services necessary for individuals experiencing blindness or vision impairment. VR services are especially customized to assist customers, focusing on assistive technology and alternative ways to accomplish tasks. SBVI also offers pre-employment training services for Youth who are blind and vision impaired. SBVI transforms the lives of people who are blind, or vision impaired by helping them embrace their disability and achieve their employment aspirations.

# SECTION 3 – Proposed Scope of Work

Services for the Blind and Vision Impaired (SBVI) will be sponsoring a two-day conference addressing issues of blindness adjustment, training, employment issues, access technology, and motivational strategies calculated to encourage and inspire conference participants in coming to understand that blindness or vision loss need have minimal limits on what a person who is blind or has low vision may accomplish. We envision this conference occurring in Concord, New Hampshire, during the month of October 2022, preferably around the date of October 15, 2022, which is nationally known as National Blindness Awareness Day, formally National White Cane Safety Day. If proximity to this date cannot be managed, any point during the month of October, which is also recognized as Disability Employment Awareness Month, would be acceptable. The contractor would serve as the onsite point person, and behind the scenes logistical administrator, throughout the conference.

The contractor will assist the Administrator of SBVI and his Conference Planning Team (CPT) in carrying out the following duties; these duties are not listed in any order of priority, but it is expected that an experienced conference planner will understand how to prioritize the following:

**Pre-Conference:**

* Set up regular CPT meetings via Zoom or conference call sufficient to address all logistics for the targeted October 2022 conference.
* Attend the conference call meetings.
* Work with the Administrator of SBVI and the CPT in drafting an agenda for each preparation meeting.
* Maintain minutes of these meetings and a list of Action Items to keep the successful vendor and State accountable and on track to present the conference.
* Work with New Hampshire Department of Education SBVI Administrator and communication specialists in getting the registration posted on the Department’s Website (or if not achievable through the Department’s communication channels) to develop a platform for receiving and documenting all aspects of conference registration and to post a draft agenda at least six weeks before the conference is scheduled to occur.
* Send out a save-the-date notice to the potentially interested audience for this event, e.g. blind, vision impaired, and deaf-blind participants; Teachers of the Blind and Vision Impaired (TVIs), other partners and stakeholders that frequently engage with SBVI; parents or families of participants; and other professionals and Access Technology vendors who work collaboratively with SBVI.
* Work with the Administrator of SBVI and members of the CPT to draft a communication for potential exhibitors and place it on the designated website for the conference.
* Contact exhibitors from a list provided to encourage participation in the conference.
* Answer exhibitor questions.
* Arrange interpreters for the conference with Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services; the Administrator of SBVI or members of the CPT can assist the conference planner with identifying where interpreters may be accessed in the Concord, New Hampshire, area.
* Registration volunteers or staff of the conference planning vendor need to be on site with sufficient time to set up registration tables and manage other conference logistics prior to each day of the conference
* A minimum of two volunteers or conference planning staff are needed to manage all aspects of conference registration. Ideally all registration will have transpired before participants arrive, leaving the table to distribute name tags, agendas in appropriate formats, and check off participant attendance, but in consultation with the Administrator of SBVI and the membership of the CPT, manage any on-site registrations that may have to occur because of technical challenges or other variables that prohibit registration via a Website prior to the event.
* Arrange for Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) Credits.
* Contact presenters, confirm their time slot and date, and ask about their equipment needs.
* Make copies of the agenda in regular print, large print, Braille, and electronically via a flash drive.
* 3 weeks prior to the conference, all accommodation requests are to be submitted to the Administrator of SBVI or a designated member of the CPT, so that the conference planning vendor can arrange to see that these accommodations are honored as far as practicable.
* One week prior to the conference get the final participant list, make a registration sign in sheet for the volunteers or conference planning staff to use when checking people in, and bring extra copies for the Administrator of SBVI and members of the CPT to have at their disposal, in their preferred formats.
* Confirm the availability of name tags and make sure that a system supporting the development, delivery, and distribution of the name tags is created.
* Arrange for the sourcing of high-quality conference tote bags of sufficient size to contain a welcome package, agency marketing materials, and other items, consistent with items regularly made available during a conference of this caliber and character.
* We (SBVI and the Department of Education, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation) anticipate paying for participant transportation and hotel accommodations. The conference organizing vendor must develop a system, in concert with the Administrator of SBVI and the members of the CPT, to facilitate transportation, rooming logistics, and available rooms for the conference venue with the identified hosting conference facility.
* Conduct an evaluation of available conference venues, in terms of quality of facilities; space; proximity to restaurants and other retail establishments; accessibility of facilities, with a particular emphasis on distance between sleeping accommodations and the conference meeting rooms; availability of in-house food options; other characteristics generally valued by professional conference organizers; flexibility of facility management; and price in exchange for value—instead of price alone as an objective factor. This task should be taken in concert with the Department procedures.
* In collaboration with the Administrator of SBVI and the CPT, develop an electronic survey tool that is sent after the conference ends.

**Conference:**

* On the evening prior to the conference, the successful conference organizer will want to put registration materials in close proximity to the registration tables.
* Meet exhibitors and help them with any set-up issues.
* Meet registration volunteers or conference organizer staff and give them instructions on protocol for registration set up.
* During the conference, serve as a point of contact for questions and help direct people to the appropriate SBVI leadership and staff. Troubleshoot issues that arise.
* Ensure that exhibitors are on deck and ready to present during their designated time slot, if the conference format has exhibitors slated to present, commercial style, during periods of the conference.

**Post Conference:**

* Set up a debrief meeting with the Administrator of SBVI and the CPT to evaluate all aspects of the conference, for potential use in any future events that may occur.
* Manage close-out administrative details with the hotel and other relevant conference service providers.
* Send out electronic surveys to conference participants. Leave survey open for two weeks, then close and send a report to the Administrator of SBVI and the CPT.

## Targeted Populations

Adults and students with blind and low vision disabilities seeking information, training, encouragement and empowerment to obtain their employment goals.

Parents, caregivers, and professionals assisting those who are blind and low vision to realize their career ambitions.

Focus on New England residents.

## Reporting

* The Contractor will set up regular CPT meetings via Zoom or conference call sufficient to address all logistics for the targeted October 2022 conference. The
* The Contractor will attend all conference call meetings.
* The Contractor will maintain minutes of meetings and a list of action items to keep all parties accountable and on track.

# SECTION 4 – Bidder Requirements

4.1 The bidder shall have conference management experience.

 4.2 Applicants must demonstrate they are able to deliver community-based, culturally competent services in environments accessible to individuals with blindness, physical, mental, and sensory impairments.

4.3 The bidder shall provide examples of projects that were performed of comparable scope.

4.4 If awarded the contract, bidders will need to register with the New Hampshire Secretary of State’s office and be in good standing. They must also carry comprehensive general liability insurance against all claims of bodily injury, death, or property damage of at least $1,000,000 per occurrence and $2,000,000 aggregate.

# SECTION 5 – Process for Submitting a Proposal

## A. Proposal Submission, Deadline, and Location Instructions

All proposals must be submitted electronically no later than midnight on Friday, June 24, 2022. Send to the attention of:

Daniel B. Frye, Administrator

Services for the Blind and Vision Impaired

Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

Division of Workforce Innovation

21 S. Fruit Street, Suite 20

Concord, NH. 03301

Daniel.B.Frye@doe.nh.gov

Proposal submissions must be received by the Agency’s RFP Point of Contact no later than the conclusion of the Proposal Inquiry Period (see Schedule of Events section, herein). Submissions received later than the conclusion of the Proposal Inquiry Period shall not be considered properly submitted and may not be considered.

The Agency intends to issue official responses to properly submitted inquiries on or before the date specified in the Schedule section, herein; however, this date is subject to change at the Agency’s discretion. The Agency may consolidate and/or paraphrase questions for sufficiency and clarity. The Agency may, at its discretion, amend this RFP on its own initiative or in response to issues raised by inquiries, as it deems appropriate. All questions and responses will be posted on the New Hampshire Department of Education website (www.education.nh.gov). Oral statements, representations, clarifications, or modifications concerning the RFP shall not be binding upon the Agency. Official responses by the Agency will be made only in writing by the process described above.

## B. Proposal Inquiries

All inquiries concerning this RFP, including but not limited to, requests for clarifications, questions, and any changes to the RFP, shall be submitted via email to the following RFP designated Point of Contact:

Daniel B. Frye, Administrator

Services for the Blind and Vision Impaired

Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

Division of Workforce Innovation

21 S. Fruit Street, Suite 20

Concord, NH. 03301

Daniel.B.Frye@doe.nh.gov

## C. Restriction of Contact with Agency Employees

From the date of release of this RFP until an award is made and announced regarding the selection of a Proposer, all communication with personnel employed by or under contract with the Agency regarding this RFP is forbidden unless first approved by the RFP Point of Contact listed in the Proposal Inquiries section, herein. Agency employees have been directed not to hold conferences and/or discussions concerning this RFP with any potential contractor during the selection process, unless otherwise authorized by the RFP Point of Contact. Proposers may be disqualified for violating this restriction on communications.

## D. Validity of Proposal

Proposals must be valid for one hundred and eighty (180) days following the deadline for submission of Proposals in Schedule of Events, or until the Effective Date of any resulting Contract, whichever is later.

## SECTION 6 - Content and Requirements for a Proposal

Proposals must include the following information:

1. Name of entity;
2. Contact information including phone number, mailing address, and email address;
3. Description of your entity-providing a brief history and experience in carrying out work described in the scope of work;
4. Description of how you propose to carry out the scope of work above (i.e. Is it a single person, group of people, organizational structure). Include biographic information for each person that would be working on this project;
5. Cost structure including time, supplies, travel;
6. The name and person authorized to enter into a contract with the State of New Hampshire and their resume or other credentials.
7. At least three references with phone and email contact information

# SECTION 7 – Evaluation of Proposals

1. **Criteria for Evaluation and Scoring**

Each responsive Proposal will be evaluated and considered with regard to the following criteria:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TECHNICAL SCORING | POINTS |
| APPROACH - how this assignment is managed and executed | 50 |
| Experience- knowledge and successful conference organizer candidates | 15 |
| Quality of references  | 10 |
| Budget Outline | 25 |
| TOTAL POTENTIAL TECHNICAL POINTS AWARDED | 100 |

Services for the Blind and Vision Impaired, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Workforce Innovation, New Hampshire Department of Education reserves the right to determine the most advantageous proposal taking into consideration price and all proposal criteria set forth above.

1. **PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS**

Each proposal will be evaluated and considered with regard to the solution and services proposed, qualifications of the contractor and any subcontractors, experience and qualifications of proposed candidates, cost and the total quality of the proposed solution.

Each proposal will be reviewed and rated by an evaluation team. The Department shall be under no obligation to contact bidders for clarification of their proposals, but it shall reserve the right to do so at any time prior to the award of the contract(s). All proposals received by the deadline will be evaluated based section 7. A Criteria for Evaluation and Scoring section outlined in this RFP.

If the State, determines to make an award, the State will issue an Intent to Award Notice to a contractor based on these evaluations. Should the State be unable to reach agreement with the selected bidder during contract discussions, the State may then undertake contract discussions with the second preferred bidder and so on. Such discussions may continue at the sole option of the State, until an agreement is reached, or all proposals are rejected.

Any resulting contract from this RFP will be a non-exclusive contract. The State reserves the right, at its discretion, to retain other contractors to provide any of the services or deliverables identified under this procurement or make an award by item, part or portion of an item, group of items, or total proposal.

1. **Final Technical Scoring of Proposals**

Following oral interviews in necessary, demonstrations, reference checks (if applicable/appropriate) and/or review of written clarifications of Proposals requested by the Agency, the evaluation team will determine a final score for each Technical Proposal.

1. **No Best and Final Offer**

The Proposal should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms, which the Proposer can offer. There will be no best and final offer procedure. The Proposer should be prepared to accept this RFP for incorporation into a contract resulting from this RFP. Contract negotiations may incorporate some or all of the Proposal.

1. **Rights of the Agency in Accepting and Evaluating Proposals**

The Agency reserves the right to:

* Make independent investigations in evaluating Proposals;
* Request additional information to clarify elements of a Proposal;
* Waive minor or immaterial deviations from the RFP requirements, if determined to be in the best interest of the State;
* Omit any planned evaluation step if, in the Agency’s view, the step is not needed;
* At its sole discretion, reject any and all Proposals at any time; and
* Open contract discussions with the second highest scoring Proposer and so on, if the Agency is unable to reach an agreement on Contract terms with the higher scoring Proposer(s).

# SECTION 8 – Terms and Conditions Related to the RFP Process

1. **RFP Addendum**

The Agency reserves the right to amend this RFP at its discretion, prior to the Proposal submission deadline. In the event of an addendum/addenda to this RFP, the Agency, at its sole discretion, may extend the Proposal submission deadline, as it deems appropriate.

1. **Non-Collusion**

The Proposer’s signature on a Proposal submitted in response to this RFP guarantees that the prices, terms and conditions, and Work quoted have been established without collusion with other Proposers and without effort to preclude the Agency from obtaining the best possible competitive Proposal.

1. **Property of the Agency**

All material received in response to this RFP shall become the property of the State and will not be returned to the Proposer. Upon Contract award, the State reserves the right to use any information presented in any Proposal.

1. **Confidentiality of a Proposal**

Unless necessary for the approval of a Contract, the substance of a Proposal must remain confidential until the Effective Date of any Contract resulting from this RFP. A Proposer’s disclosure or distribution of Proposals other than to the Agency will be grounds for disqualification.

1. **Public Disclosure**

Pursuant to RSA 21-G:37, all responses to this RFP shall be considered confidential until the award of a Contract. At the time of receipt of Proposals, the Agency will post the number of responses received with no further information. No later than five (5) business days prior to submission of a Contract to the Governor & Executive Council pursuant to this RFP, the Agency will post the name and rank or score of each Proposer. In the event that the Contract does not require Governor & Executive Council approval, the Agency shall disclose the rank or score of the Proposals at least 5 business days before final approval of the Contract.

The content of each Proposer’s Proposal shall become public information upon the award of any resulting Contract. Any information submitted as part of a response to this Request for Proposal (RFP) may be subject to public disclosure under RSA 91-A. In addition, in accordance with RSA 9-F:1, any Contract entered into as a result of this RFP will be made accessible to the public online via the website Transparent NH (<http://www.nh.gov/transparentnh/>). Accordingly, business financial information and proprietary information such as trade secrets, business and financials models and forecasts, and proprietary formulas may be exempt from public disclosure under RSA 91-A:5, IV.

If you believe any information being submitted in response to this Request for Proposal, Bid or Information should be kept confidential as financial or proprietary information; you must specifically identify that information in a letter to the agency, and must mark/stamp each page of the materials that you claim must be exempt from disclosure as “CONFIDENTIAL”. A designation by the Proposer of information it believes exempt does not have the effect of making such information exempt. The Agency will determine the information it believes is properly exempted from disclosure.

Marking of the entire Proposal or entire sections of the Proposal (e.g. pricing) as confidential will neither be accepted nor honored. Notwithstanding any provision of this RFP to the contrary, Proposer pricing will be subject to disclosure upon approval of the Contract. The Agency will endeavor to maintain the confidentiality of portions of the Proposal that are clearly and properly marked confidential.

If a request is made to the Agency to view portions of a Proposal that the Proposer has properly and clearly marked confidential, the Agency will notify the Proposer of the request and of the date the Agency plans to release the records. By submitting a Proposal, Proposers agree that unless the Proposer obtains a court order, at its sole expense, enjoining the release of the requested information, the Agency may release the requested information on the date specified in the Agency’s notice without any liability to the Proposers.

1. **Non-Commitment**

Notwithstanding any other provision of this RFP, this RFP does not commit the Agency to award a Contract. The Agency reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any and all Proposals, or any portions thereof, at any time; to cancel this RFP; and to solicit new Proposals under a new acquisition process.

1. **Proposal Preparation Cost**

By submitting a Proposal, a Proposer agrees that in no event shall the Agency be either responsible for or held liable for any costs incurred by a Proposer in the preparation of or in connection with the Proposal, or for Work performed prior to the Effective Date of a resulting Contract.

1. **Ethical Requirements**

From the time this RFP is published until a contract is awarded, no bidder shall offer or give, directly or indirectly, any gift, expense reimbursement, or honorarium, as defined by RSA 15-B, to any elected official, public official, public employee, constitutional official, or family member of any such official or employee who will or has selected, evaluated, or awarded an RFP, or similar submission. Any bidder that violates RSA 21-G:38 shall be subject to prosecution for an offense under RSA 640:2. Any bidder who has been convicted of an offense based on conduct in violation of this section, which has not been annulled, or who is subject to a pending criminal charge for such an offense, shall be disqualified from bidding on the RFP, or similar request for submission and every such bidder shall be disqualified from bidding on any RFP or similar request for submission issued by any state agency. A bidder that was disqualified under this section because of a pending criminal charge which is subsequently dismissed, results in an acquittal, or is annulled, may notify the department of administrative services, which shall note that information on the list maintained on the State’s internal intranet system, except in the case of annulment, the information, shall be deleted from the list.

1. **Challenges on Form or Process of the RFP**

Any challenges regarding the validity or legality of the form and procedures of this RFP, including but not limited to the evaluation and scoring of Proposals, shall be brought to the attention of the Agency at least ten(10) business days prior to the Proposal Submission Deadline. By submitting a Proposal, the Proposer is deemed to have waived any challenges to the form or procedures set forth in this RFP.

# SECTION 9 – Contract Terms and Award

1. **Non-Exclusive Contract**

Any resulting Contract from this RFP will be a non-exclusive Contract. The State reserves the right, at its discretion, to retain other contractors to provide any of the Services or Deliverables identified under this procurement or make an award by item, part or portion of an item, group of items, or total Proposal.

1. **Award**

If the State decides to award a Contract as a result of this RFP process, any award is contingent upon approval of the Contract by the Governor and Executive Council of the State of New Hampshire and upon continued appropriation of funding for the Contract.

1. **Standard Contract Terms**

The Agency will require the successful Proposer to execute a Firm Fixed Price/Not to Exceed Contract using the Standard Terms and Conditions of the State of New Hampshire, which is attached as Appendix A.

The Agency may consider modifications of this form during negotiations. To the extent that a Proposer believes that exceptions to the standard form contract will be necessary for the Proposer to enter into the Agreement, the Proposer should note those issues during the Proposer Inquiry Period. The Agency will review requested exceptions and accept, reject or note that it is open to negotiation of the proposed exception at its sole discretion. If the Agency accepts a Proposer’s exception the Agency will, at the conclusion of the inquiry period, provide notice to all potential proposers of the exceptions which have been accepted and indicate that exception is available to all potential proposers. Any exceptions to the standard form contract that are not raised during the proposer inquiry period are waived. In no event is a Proposer to submit its own standard contract terms and conditions as a replacement for the State’s terms in response to this solicitation.

Enclosures:

Attachment A: P-37 Contract Form

Attachment B: ALT W-9 Vendor Application