

State of North Dakota

North Dakota Department of Commerce
Workforce Division
1600 E. Century Avenue, Bismarck ND 58505

Request for Proposal (RFP)

RFP Title: Student Retention Study

RFP Number: SRC000402

Issued: August 12, 2026

Table of Contents

1. Section One – Instructions	4
1.1 Purpose of RFP	4
1.2 Procurement Officer Contact Information	4
1.3 Definitions	4
1.4 RFP Schedule	5
1.5 Assistance to Individuals with a Disability.....	5
1.6 Secretary of State Registration Requirements	5
1.7 Supplier Registration.....	6
1.8 NDBuys State Procurement Website	6
1.9 Amendments to the RFP	6
1.10 Deadline for Questions and Objections	7
1.11 Preproposal Conference or Site Inspection	7
1.12 Offer Held Firm	7
1.13 Offeror Responsible for Costs.....	7
1.14 Taxes	7
1.15 Proposal Receipt Deadline – Late Proposals Rejected	8
1.16 Proposal Opening	8
1.17 Amendment and Withdrawal of Proposals	8
1.18 News Releases	8
1.19 Conflict of Interest.....	9
1.20 Attempt to Influence Prohibited	9
1.21 Collusion Prohibited	9
1.22 Protest and Appeal	9
1.23 Specifications Prepared by Non-State Personnel	9
1.24 Supplier/Payee Registration	9
 2. Section Two – Background.....	 11
2.1 Background Information.....	11
2.2 Budget	11
 3. Section Three – Scope of Work	 12
3.1 Scope of Work.....	12
The Department of Commerce Division of Workforce is soliciting proposals for the selected vendor to design and execute a statewide, mixed methods research study to understand patterns, drivers, and outcomes related to outmigration and retention of in-state, out-of-state, and international students. The scope includes, but is not limited to, the components below.	
3.2 Requirements	12
3.3 Experience and Qualifications	15
 4. Section Four – Proposal Instructions	 17
4.1 Proposal Preparation.....	17
4.2 Proposal Submission Instructions	17
Upload Response Through the State Procurement Website (NDBuys):	
4.3 Proposal Format.....	18

4.4 Technical Proposal.....	18
Section 1 – Cover Letter.....	18
Section 2 – RFP Amendments.....	19
Section 3 – Scope of Work Strategy	19
Section 4 – Experience And Qualifications	19
References	20
Section 5 – Contract Provisions	20
Section 6 – Open Records and Confidentiality	21
4.5 Cost Proposal	21
 5. Section Five – Award and Proposal Evaluation	 23
5.1 Award.....	23
5.2 Responsiveness	23
5.3 Responsibility – Supplementary Investigation	23
5.4 Evaluation Criteria	23
5.5 Cost Proposal Evaluation.....	24
5.6 Clarifications of Proposals – Discussions	24
5.7 Right of Rejection	24
5.8 Best and Final Offers.....	24
5.9 Tie Proposals	25
5.10 Negotiations.....	25
5.11 Notice of Intent to Award	25
5.12 Contract Approval	25
5.13 Evaluation Debriefing.....	26
 6. Section Six – Contract Information.....	 27
6.1 North Dakota Contractual Requirements – Background.....	27
6.2 State Contract Terms and Conditions – Offeror’s Proposed Changes.....	27
6.3 Contract Provisions.....	27
6.4 Contractual Terms and Conditions – No Material Changes	28
6.5 Scope of Work.....	31
6.6 Contract Term	31
6.7 Right to Inspect Place of Business.....	31
The Department of Commerce Division of Workforce is soliciting proposals for the selected vendor to design and execute a statewide, mixed methods research study to understand patterns, drivers, and outcomes related to outmigration and retention of in-state, out-of-state, and international students. The scope includes, but is not limited to, the components below.	38

Attachments

One - Cost Proposal

Two - Technical Proposal Evaluation Worksheet

Three - Contract

1. Section One – Instructions

1.1 Purpose of RFP

The State of North Dakota, acting through its Department of Commerce (Commerce), Workforce Division (the STATE) is soliciting proposals for a comprehensive study to understand the factors driving student retention and outmigration across high school, college, and training program transitions. The project will integrate data from education, workforce, and community systems to identify when students leave, where they go, why they depart, and what motivates others to stay. This evidence base will guide the State in designing targeted, high impact retention strategies, improving employer partnerships, strengthening financial and career pathway incentives, and expanding community embedded experiences that encourage graduates to build their futures in North Dakota. The study will also establish a repeatable methodology to track long term outcomes, measure return on investment (ROI), and inform ongoing policy and program improvements in collaboration with state, federal, education, and industry partners.

1.2 Procurement Officer Contact Information

The Procurement Officer is the point of contact for this RFP. Offerors shall direct all communications regarding this RFP to the Procurement Officer. Do not add the Procurement Officer to any marketing distribution lists.

Procurement Officer: Laura Nessa

Email: lnessa@nd.gov

Phone: 701-328-7364

TTY Users call: 7-1-1

A person or firm interested in submitting a proposal should ensure all communications related to the procurement are only with the designated point of contact. This section does not restrict communication with state officials or any member of the legislative assembly unless the state official or member of the legislative assembly is involved directly with the procurement for which the person is interested or has submitted a bid or proposal ([N.D.C.C. § 54-44.4-01.1](#)).

Engaging in unauthorized communication or seeking to obtain information about an open solicitation with any state employee or official other than the responsible Procurement Officer or designee is sufficient grounds for suspension or debarment. ([N.D.A.C. § 4-12-05-04\(7\)](#))

1.3 Definitions

For the purposes of this RFP, the acronyms and defined terms are as follows:

Acronym or Term	Name or Definitions
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Contractor:	Entity that has an approved contract with the State of North Dakota
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CT:	Central Time Zone
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OMB:	Office of Management and Budget
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RFP:	Request for Proposal
Solicitation Begin:	Date the solicitation was issued in the RFP Schedule
Solicitation End	Deadline for receipt of proposals listed in the RFP Schedule – Also known as the Solicitation Closing
SPO:	Office of Management and Budget, State Procurement Office
NDBuys:	State Procurement Office Online system

1.4 RFP Schedule

Event	Date and Time
Solicitation Begin	08/12/2026
Deadline for submission of Questions and Objections:	08/26/2026, 5:00 PM, CT
Solicitation Amendment with responses to Questions issued approximately: [(if required)]	09/02/2026
Deadline for receipt of proposals (Solicitation End)	09/15/2026, 5:00 PM, CT

Supplier registration is Required to submit a response to a solicitation posted in NDBuys. See RFP

Section 1.7 – Supplier Registration

Proposal evaluation completed by approximately	09/28/2026
Contract Negotiations (See Section 5.10).	10/07/2026
Notice of intent to award issued approximately	10/02/2026
Secretary of State Registration, if determined to be required.	Prior to Contract Signing
Contract start approximately	10/15/2026

1.5 Assistance to Individuals with a Disability

Contact the Procurement Officer, as soon as possible, if an individual with a disability needs assistance with the RFP, including any events in the RFP schedule, so reasonable accommodations can be made.

1.6 Secretary of State Registration Requirements

The North Dakota Secretary of State has registration requirements for individuals and businesses transacting business in North Dakota. If the successful Offeror is determined to have a registration requirement with the North Dakota Secretary of State, they must be registered before the contract award and registration must remain active for the duration of the contract period ([N.D.C.C. § 54-44.4-09.1](#))

See the OMB [Guidelines to Vendor Registry](#) for more information.

Visit the Secretary of State's [Vendor Registration](#) webpage for information on registration requirements and fees. Visit [FirstStop](#), the Secretary of State's business and licensing software, for online form options.

Check the [Business Records](#) database to see if a business is registered.

Contact Secretary of State's office by [email](#) or call 701-328-2900 (choose menu item 2, then option 1).

If you need to register, fees apply.

Vendors may need to obtain businesses licenses. See the [list of licenses required of businesses](#) in the State of North Dakota. The link includes information on who to contact, application fees, renewal dates, and the legal reference.

1.7 Supplier Registration

Individuals or business entities desiring to be notified of bidding opportunities may complete supplier registration to be notified when solicitations are issued on the State's procurement website (NDBuys) ([N.D.C.C. § 54-44.4-09](#)). Supplier registration does not guarantee a vendor will receive notice of every solicitation ([N.D.A.C. § 4-12-05-01](#)). There are no fees to register as a supplier.

Individuals or businesses entities completing supplier registration must provide contact information for receiving solicitation notices, Tax ID, legal structure, address and phone information. Bidders must also select the commodity codes to identify categories of goods, services, and information technology.

Supplier registration is required to submit a response to a solicitation posted in NDBuys.

Visit the OMB website for instructions:

[Bidders List Registration Website](#)

For assistance with supplier registration, contact State Procurement Help Desk at 701-328-2740 or ndbuys@nd.gov.

1.8 NDBuys State Procurement Website

This RFP and any related amendment and notices will be posted on the North Dakota NDBuys State Procurement System. Offerors are responsible for checking the [NDBuys system](#) to obtain all information and documents related to this RFP.

Notices related to this RFP will be sent to the supplier List for the needed commodity or service and other known potential offerors.

Offerors that are registered for the supplier list and would like to receive notices related to this RFP, locate the solicitation in NDBuys and select the "Participate in RFx" button. If you do not see the "Participate in RFx" button, contact the Procurement Officer to confirm you are already included in the list of offerors to receive notices for the solicitation.

Offerors that have not yet registered for the supplier list and would like to receive notices related to this RFP and must complete the supplier registration. See NDBuys Quick Reference Guides at [NDBuys Quick Reference Guides](#) for how to register.

1.9 Amendments to the RFP

If an amendment to this RFP is issued, it will be provided to all Offerors on the Bidders List for the solicitation and to those prospective Offerors who have contacted the Procurement Officer to receive notices related to the RFP. An Offeror shall include in their proposal any required acknowledgements of amendments to the RFP.

Note: If a supplier has already submitted a response to the solicitation before an amendment was posted, the same response or a revised response needs to be submitted again in order to be considered in evaluation for the solicitation.

1.10 Deadline for Questions and Objections

Offerors should carefully review the RFP including all attachments. Offerors may ask questions to obtain clarification, request additional information, or object to material in the RFP. Questions and objections must be submitted to the procurement officer in writing by the deadline identified in the RFP schedule:

1. Offerors may submit questions within NDBuys using the “Discussions Tab” in the system (see the [OMB website](#) for a quick reference guide); or
2. Offerors may email the question directly to the Procurement Officer.

The Procurement Officer may elect to respond to questions received after the deadline. If no deadline is specified, questions or objections must be received at least seven days prior to the proposal receipt deadline – Solicitation Closing.

Questions and objections should include a reference to the applicable RFP section or subsection.

Responses to questions and requests for clarifications will be distributed as a solicitation amendment unless the question can be answered by referring the offeror to a specific section of the RFP.

Note: If an amendment (i.e., a new round) is issued for the solicitation in NDBuys and an Offeror has already submitted a response beforehand, Offerors are required to resubmit their response or submit a new response to remain under consideration.

1.11 Preproposal Conference or Site Inspection

The STATE will not hold a preproposal conference or site inspection for this RFP.

1.12 Offer Held Firm

Offerors must hold proposals firm for at least 120 days from the deadline for receipt of proposals (Solicitation Closing). The STATE may send a written request to all Offerors to hold their offer firm for a longer period of time.

1.13 Offeror Responsible for Costs

Offeror is responsible for all costs associated with the preparation, submittal, and evaluation of any proposal including any travel and per diem associated with demonstrations and presentations.

1.14 Taxes

The STATE is not responsible for and will not pay itemized local, state, or federal taxes. Purchases of tangible personal property made by a state government agency is exempt from sales tax. The state sales tax exemption number is E-2001, and certificates will be furnished upon request by the purchasing

agency. The contractor must provide a valid Vendor Tax Identification Number as a provision of the contract.

The purchasing agency will determine if services provided under this contract are Form 1099 reportable. The purchasing agency may require the contractor to submit an IRS Form W-9.

The state tax exemption number should not be used by contractors in the performance of a contract.

A contractor or service provider performing any contract, including service contracts, for the United States Government, State of North Dakota, counties, cities, school districts, park board or any other political subdivisions within North Dakota is not exempt from payment of sales or use tax on materials, tangible personal property, and supplies used or consumed in carrying out contracts. In these cases, the contractor is required to file returns and pay sales and use tax just as required for contracts with private parties. Contact the North Dakota Tax Department at 701-328-1246 or visit their website at [North Dakota Tax Department Website](#) for more information.

A contractor performing any contract, including a service contract, within North Dakota is also subject to the corporation income tax, individual income tax, and withholding tax reporting requirements, whether the contract is performed by a corporation, partnership, or other business entity, or as an employee of the contractor. In the case of employees performing the services in the state, the contractor is required to withhold state income tax from the employees' compensation and remit to the state as required by law. Contact the North Dakota Tax Department at 701-328-1248 or visit their website for more information.

1.15 Proposal Receipt Deadline – Late Proposals Rejected

An Offeror is solely responsible for ensuring their proposal is received by the STATE prior to the Solicitation Closing deadline identified in the RFP schedule regardless of the method of submission. A solicitation amendment will be issued if this deadline is changed. An Offeror may contact the Procurement Officer to inquire whether their proposal has been received. Proposals delivered late will be rejected pursuant to [N.D.A.C. § 4-12-08-13](#).

1.16 Proposal Opening

A public opening not be held.

This is a formal sealed Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Proposals will be secured and held unopened until the Solicitation Closing deadline. Per [N.D.A.C § 4-12-08-04](#), the openings may be made public at the discretion of the purchasing agency. If a public opening is held, only the names of Offerors that submitted proposals can be revealed at the opening, and each proposal will be opened in a manner to avoid disclosure of the contents to the competing Offerors.

1.17 Amendment and Withdrawal of Proposals

Offeror may amend, supplement, or withdraw proposal prior to the Solicitation closing deadline. No changes will be accepted after the Solicitation closing deadline. After the Solicitation closing deadline, Offeror may make a written request to withdraw their proposal and shall provide evidence that a substantial mistake has been made, at which point the STATE may permit withdrawal.

1.18 News Releases

Offerors shall not make any news releases related to this RFP without prior approval of the STATE.

1.19 Conflict of Interest

Under state laws and rules, a state employee or official shall not participate directly or indirectly in a procurement when the state employee or official knows of a conflict of interest. Potential conflicts of interest include state employees or their immediate family members employed by the firm, seeking employment with the firm, or with a financial interest in the firm. Potential conflicts of interest will be addressed in accordance with [N.D.A.C. § 4-12-04-04](#). ([N.D.C.C. § 12.1-13-03](#))

Persons employed by the State of North Dakota, or within one year thereafter, may be prohibited from acquiring a pecuniary interest in a public contract or transaction. Offerors should review [N.D.C.C. § 12.1-13-02](#) to ensure compliance and avoid such conflict(s) of interest.

1.20 Attempt to Influence Prohibited

Offerors must not give or offer to give anything to a state employee or official that might influence or appear to influence procurement decisions. Suspected attempts to influence will be handled in accordance with [N.D.A.C. § 4-12-04-05](#).

1.21 Collusion Prohibited

Offerors must prepare proposals independently, without collusion. Suspected collusion will be handled in accordance with [N.D.A.C. § 4-12-04-06](#).

1.22 Protest and Appeal

An interested party may protest a solicitation pursuant to [N.D.C.C. § 54-44.4-12](#) and [N.D.A.C. § 4-12-14-01](#). When a solicitation contains a deadline for submission of questions and objections, protests of the solicitation will not be allowed if these faults have not been brought to the attention of the Procurement Officer before the specified deadline. If no deadline for questions is specified, protests based upon defects in the solicitation must be made at least seven calendar days before the deadline for receipt of proposals.

An Offeror that has submitted a response to a solicitation and is aggrieved may protest an award or notice of intent to award pursuant to [N.D.C.C. § 54-44.4-12](#) and [N.D.A.C. § 4-12-14-02](#). The protest must be submitted in writing to the Procurement Officer during the protest period, which is seven calendar days beginning the day after the notice of intent to award is issued.

The protestor may appeal the decision of the Procurement Officer to the Director of OMB or designee in writing within seven calendar days after receiving notice of the decision pursuant to [N.D.C.C. § 54-44.4-12](#) and [N.D.A.C. § 4-12-14-03](#).

1.23 Specifications Prepared by Non-State Personnel

When a purchasing agency has specifications prepared by someone other than a state employee or official on behalf of the STATE, that person or business entity must be excluded from submitting bids or proposals in accordance with [N.D.A.C. § 4-12-06-06](#).

1.24 Supplier/Payee Registration

The successful Offeror will be required to complete Supplier/Payee Registration, if not already registered as a Supplier/Payee. Any individual or business who will be receiving payment from a state agency or higher education institution must complete a registration process to collect important

financial and taxpayer information. Payments are generally made by check or automatic clearing house (ACH), and taxpayer information must be collected in compliance with IRS requirements. The State and North Dakota University System (NDUS) have separate financial systems and vendor registration processes.

2. Section Two – Background

2.1 Background Information

North Dakota is experiencing persistent student outmigration among both high school and college graduates. As outlined in the Workforce Development Council's statewide recommendations, the State lacks a unified, data driven understanding of who is leaving, when they are leaving, where they are going, and why they choose to pursue pathways outside North Dakota. Alternatively, there is also a lack of data collected from the students that choose to stay in North Dakota after graduation and what factors drive those decisions as well. Without this evidence base, current retention strategies remain broad rather than targeted, and opportunities to intervene at key decision points are limited.

The mission of Commerce and the Workforce Division is to lead the efforts to attract, retain and expand wealth and talent in North Dakota by partnering with other state agencies and public sector industry to deliver specialized programs and services to assist in enhancing the workforce of North Dakota

Our agency is conducting this solicitation because existing information suggests that major decision points occur at moments such as high school graduation, the first year of college, and completion of academic or training programs. However, North Dakota does not yet have an integrated dataset that captures these transitions or the factors influencing student departure. Enhanced data sharing across education, workforce, and community systems, including end-to-end student outcomes tracking could illuminate retention gaps that are currently obscured.

Through this project, the State seeks to build a comprehensive evidence foundation to move from broad statewide initiatives to targeted, high impact retention strategies. The findings will support informed decision-making regarding program design, policy development, and public-private partnerships. Potential strategies identified in the Council's recommendations include:

- Strengthening senior year employer partnerships with high schools and colleges
- 1) Modifying existing programs such as ND Career Builders to reduce financial barriers and improve employer student matching
 - Creating new pathways to recruit and retain students into in-demand occupations
 - Supporting university- and community-designed engagement initiatives that embed students into local communities through internships, service learning, applied research, and related experiences

This study will also establish a methodology that can be repeated on a regular cadence, enabling the State to monitor progress, evaluate ROI, and refine interventions as labor market conditions and student needs evolve.

Partners engaged in implementing this recommendation include the North Dakota Department of Commerce, Greater North Dakota Chamber, Department of Career and Technical Education, Department of Public Instruction, North Dakota University System, State Apprenticeship Program, and industry partners.

2.2 Budget

The funds for payment of this contract are already appropriated and identified. The estimated budget for completion of this project is between \$0 and \$250,000. Proposals priced at more than \$ 250,000 will be rejected.

3. Section Three – Scope of Work

3.1 Scope of Work

The Department of Commerce Division of Workforce is soliciting proposals for the selected vendor to design and execute a statewide, mixed methods research study to understand patterns, drivers, and outcomes related to outmigration and retention of in-state, out-of-state, and international students. The scope includes, but is not limited to, the components below.

3.2 Requirements

A. Deliverables

The contractor will be required to provide the following to achieve the objective of this project:

The contractor will conduct a statewide mixed-methods study to understand student outmigration and retention across in-state, out-of-state, and international student groups. The work includes quantitative analysis, qualitative engagement, assessment of retention strategies, and development of a long-term research framework :

1. Review existing education, workforce, and community datasets to identify data availability, gaps, and integration needs.
2. Analyze statewide data to determine who is leaving and why, when departures occur, geographic trends, and correlations with academic pathways, financial factors, completion rates, and employment outcomes.
3. Identify opportunities for cross-agency data sharing to support long-term student outcomes tracking.
4. Deliver quantitative insights that highlight priority populations, high-risk transitions, and regions of concern.
5. Conduct focus groups, interviews, and surveys with students (including recent graduates and first-year college students), families, educators, employers, and other stakeholders.
6. Engage partners to refine research questions and validate findings.
7. Evaluate current programs supporting education, training, and student employment.
8. Identify opportunities to modify existing programs or develop new targeted interventions.
9. Identify themes related to belonging, financial constraints, career fit, quality of life, and perceptions of in-state opportunity.

10. Recommend strategies to strengthen employer partnerships, recruit students into in-demand occupations, expand community-embedded experiences, and reduce barriers to staying in North Dakota.
11. Provide actionable insights on populations and leverage points with the strongest potential ROI.
12. The vendor shall propose:
 - a. A repeatable methodology for regularly refreshing findings.
 - b. A data-sharing and governance model to support continuous evaluation.
 - c. Recommended dashboards, KPIs, and measurement tools aligned with workforce and retention goals.
13. The vendor shall produce:
 - a. A research plan detailing methods, data sources, sampling, and timelines.
 - b. Quantitative Data Landscape Assessment describing available datasets, integration gaps, and data quality.
 - i. Quantitative Analysis Report covering outmigration patterns, high-risk transition points, correlations, and priority populations.
 - c. Qualitative Research Plan & Engagement Materials detailing focus groups, interviews, surveys, and stakeholder engagement methods.
 - i. Qualitative findings summary synthesizing themes influencing student decisions to stay or leave.
 - d. Interim report of findings and early recommendations due in February as outlined in the reporting requirements.
 - e. Stakeholder validation sessions to review preliminary findings with education, workforce, and industry partners.
 - f. A final statewide report including an executive summary, detailed findings, priority population analyses, recommended strategies, and an implementation roadmap.
 - g. Strategy Options Report recommending targeted interventions and program improvements.
 - h. Prioritization Framework & Implementation Roadmap offering impact/ROI guidance and phased action steps.
 - i. Long-term Monitoring Framework including KPIs, performance metrics, and recommended dashboards/reporting templates.

- j. Final Deliverables Package including a final report, executive summary, technical appendix, briefing deck, and presentation for leadership and public audiences.

B. Location of Work/Travel

The contractor will be required to travel as follows: Up to two in-person presentations with stakeholders for an interim and final findings and recommendations. Option to complete these virtually may be considered. Contractor must identify any in-person focus group or research activities to occur in North Dakota during the assessment period. Cities may be identified in partnership with Commerce staff. The frequency and locations should be identified as part of the proposal.

The contractor should include in its price proposal: transportation, lodging, and per diem costs sufficient for at least two trip(s) to North Dakota. Travel to other locations will not be required.

C. State-Furnished Property/Services

The STATE will provide the following personnel to support the project: a project point of contact and an introduction to required partners

D. Risk Management

The contractor will take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of their employees, state employees, the public, and property. The contractor must identify any potential risks, issues and problems associated with the project and identify ways to mitigate those potential risks.

The contractor will be expected to use appropriate project management to ensure the work is accomplished on time, within budget, and meets quantity and quality standards.

1. The contractor will be required to collaborate with the STATE to agree upon the contract schedule, including a work breakdown, schedule of tasks and activities, and progress milestones.
2. The contractor will be required to coordinate with the STATE to develop a communication plan. Any problems or unforeseen events must be communicated timely to the STATE project manager and any changes must be agreed upon between the parties and set forth in a written amendment to the contract. If the STATE requires corrective action, the contractor will be notified in writing.

3. Contract Closeout Plan

When the contract is completed, the STATE and contractor will communicate regarding the contract closeout, including transition of any records. A contract closeout debrief may be performed at the discretion of the Procurement Officer or project manager designated by the STATE. The debriefing time and location will be negotiated between the STATE and contractor. The contractor must collaborate in the development of a Project Closeout Report to include feedback regarding the project implementation and any lessons learned.

E. Contract Term, Schedule, and Deliverables

1. Contract Term

This contract will be for approximately 9 month period, with options for two one-year renewal options, and an option to extend for a six month period. See the attached contract.

2. Schedule and Deliverables

The STATE has identified the following deliverables which are significant work products or milestones in the project. The STATE requires these deliverables to be addressed in the Contract Schedule, at a minimum. The contractor shall develop a schedule for accomplishing the Scope of Work, including these specific deliverables. The final schedule shall be agreed upon between the STATE and the successful Offeror and incorporated into the contract. The approximate schedule for this contract is as follows:

- a. Contract start approximately: 10/15/2026
- b. “Kick off” meeting/conference call: Within two weeks of contract signing
- c. Contractor submits Interim Report: February 12, 2027
- d. STATE provides contractor with comments for revision as needed: February 26, 2027
- e. Contractor submits to the STATE: Final deliverables by June 15, 2027
- f. Contract Closeout Plan: June 2027

3.3 Experience and Qualifications

A. Minimum Qualifications

Offerors must have the following minimum qualifications in order to be considered for contract award:

- A. Be a legally registered business entity and meet all North Dakota procurement requirements, including compliance with Secretary of State registration rules prior to award.
- B. Demonstrate at least Three (3) years of experience conducting largescale research, evaluation, or analytics projects for public sector, education, regional planning, or workforce entities.
- C. Show evidence of organizational stability and sufficient staffing to complete the work within the proposed timeline.
- D. Have experience designing and administering mixed methods studies that integrate quantitative data analysis with qualitative stakeholder engagement.

B. Experience

The Offeror must meet the following experience requirements to be considered for contract award.

- A. Education, workforce, or population focused research, such as longitudinal analysis, student or graduate outcomes research, labor market studies, or migration/retention analysis.
- B. Quantitative analytics, including ability to integrate diverse datasets, assess data quality, and perform statistical and trend analysis.
- C. Qualitative research, including stakeholder interviews, focus groups, surveys, and thematic analysis.
- D. Policy or strategy development, including translating research findings into practical, targeted recommendations for state agencies or regional partners.

- E. A designated Project Manager experienced in managing complex statewide or multiagency/organization research projects.
- F. Staff with demonstrated expertise in data science, statistics, education/workforce research, or related fields.
- G. Staff experienced in qualitative data collection and facilitation across diverse stakeholder groups (students, educators, employers, families, community leaders).
- H. Prior experience producing publishable, professional reports for state level audiences.
- I. Resumes or bios must be provided for all key personnel.

The Offeror must meet the following experience requirements to be considered for contract award. A proposal from the Offeror that does not meet minimum experience requirements will be rejected. The Offeror must have a minimum of 3 years of experience, successful completion of at least 3 prior similar projects or studies.

C. Background Check

If STATE, including the state agency entering into this contract on behalf of the STATE, has the necessary authority under [N.D.C.C. §12-60-24](#), STATE may require personnel that contractor assigns to perform work under this contract, including employees, contracted staff, subcontractors, or other individuals, to submit to a criminal history record check. STATE shall have the right to reject any individual contractor assigns to perform work under this contract if, in STATE's sole discretion, it determines that the results of the criminal history record check make the individual unacceptable. Contractor agrees to be responsible for all costs associated with criminal history record checks carried out pursuant to this paragraph.

Forms and information regarding North Dakota Criminal History Record Checks are available on the following website: [North Dakota Criminal History Record Checks website](#)

4. Section Four – Proposal Instructions

4.1 Proposal Preparation

The STATE discourages overly lengthy and costly proposals. An Offeror must prepare their proposal using the prescribed proposal format and provide all the requested information; this will enable the proposal to be evaluated fairly and completely. If an Offeror submits more than one proposal, each proposal must be prepared in accordance with these instructions.

Each proposal will include a Technical Proposal and a Cost Proposal prepared in accordance with these instructions. The Technical Proposal and the Cost Proposal must be submitted as separate documents, clearly labeled with the name of the Offeror, and marked "Technical Proposal" and "Cost Proposal." Costs must not be revealed in the Technical Proposal. Options may be discussed in the technical proposal, but all cost information must be in the Cost Proposal only. DO NOT submit documents that are embedded into proposal documents or that contain links to documents on an external website.

4.2 Proposal Submission Instructions

Sealed proposals are required; therefore, proposals cannot be submitted by email to the Procurement Officer.

Upload Response Through the State Procurement Website (NDBuys):

Offerors must be registered in NDBuys in order to submit a response.

If you are not yet registered in NDBuys, complete the supplier registration. See NDBuys Quick Reference Guides at [NDBuys Quick Reference Guides Website](#) for how to register.

Once registered, locate the solicitation in NDBuys and select the "Participate in RFx" button. If you do not see the "Participate in RFx" button, contact the Procurement Officer to confirm you are already included in the list of offerors to receive notices for the solicitation.

Offeror [Insert may or must](#) electronically submit proposals through the State's procurement information system (NDBuys) by the Solicitation Closing deadline.

NDBuys Website

DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE "LAST MINUTE" TO SUBMIT A RESPONSE. We recommend uploading your response 24 hours prior to the Solicitation Closing deadline.

Offeror must begin the electronic submission process well in advance of the Solicitation Closing deadline to allow for transmission and resolution of any technical difficulties. Be advised that the STATE is not responsible for an Offeror's failure to timely submit a proposal due to any technical difficulties. If you experience any technical difficulties, contact the Procurement Officer or the State Procurement Office at ndbuys@nd.gov or 701-328-2740.

If documents are in the process of being uploaded when the Solicitation Closing deadline occurs, the upload process will stop. The attempted submission will not be uploaded successfully and is ineligible for consideration. The STATE takes no responsibility for electronic submissions that are captured, blocked, filtered, quarantined, or otherwise prevented from uploading by any anti-virus or other security software.

Visit [NDBuys Quick Reference Guides](#) for the NDBuys Quick Reference Guides which describe how to submit an electronic response.

Offeror must upload their Technical Proposal and Cost Proposal in separate files.

The maximum file size allowed is 56MB or 56,120 KB per file.

DO NOT submit documents that are embedded (zip files), movies, wmp, encrypted, or mp3 files.

Offeror will be able to confirm that a response has been submitted by reviewing the History tab of the solicitation and confirming that proposal status is submitted. If Offeror DOES NOT see that it has been submitted, the upload was NOT successful. Contact supplier support at +1 (701) 540 9648 or support-northdakota@ivalua.com.

4.3 Proposal Format

Prepare the Technical Proposal and Cost Proposal in accordance with these instructions.

Technical Proposal – Format the proposal with the following labeled sections:

Section 1 – Cover Letter

Section 2 – RFP Amendments

Section 3 – Scope of Work Strategy

Section 4 – Experience and Qualifications

Section 5 – Contract Provisions

Section 6 – Open Records and Confidentiality

Cost Proposal – The Cost Proposal must be a separate document. Format the Cost Proposal following the RFP instructions.

4.4 Technical Proposal

Section 1 – Cover Letter

Proposals shall include a cover letter that includes the following:

1. The name of the Offeror, name of the person to contact regarding the proposal, email address, telephone number, and mailing address.
2. Offerors are instructed to review the "Conflict of Interest" provisions in RFP Section 1 "Instructions." If the firm, its employees, or subcontractors working on the contract have an apparent or actual conflict of interest, provide a statement disclosing the circumstances of the apparent or actual conflict of interest. Otherwise, provide a statement that your firm, employees, and subcontractors do not have a conflict of interest.
3. The cover letter must be signed by an individual with authority to bind the Offeror. By signing the cover letter, an Offeror certifies that it complies with:
 - a. All the requirements, terms, and conditions as set forth in this RFP.

- b. The requirement that the Offeror's proposal accurately describes the goods and services being offered to the STATE, and the proposal will be held firm for the period specified.
- c. All local, state, and federal laws, rules, code laws, rules, code, regulation, and policies, including those relating to nondiscrimination, accessibility, civil rights, and equal employment.
- d. The requirement that this proposal was prepared independently without collusion.

Section 2 – RFP Amendments

Provide signed copies of all Solicitation Amendments issued by the STATE that were required to be acknowledged by Offerors.

Section 3 – Scope of Work Strategy

Offeror must review the requirements and deliverables provided in RFP Section 3, Scope of Work.

- 1. Strategy for Scope of Work Requirements.** The Offeror must provide narrative statements to demonstrate their understanding of the scope of work requirements. Explain the proposed strategy to accomplish the scope of work, meet all requirements, and provide the deliverables described in the scope of work within the STATE's project schedule.
- 2. Value-Added Options.** Offerors may include any optional services or goods that are not required by the STATE but are within the scope of work (e.g., an option for a higher level of service, equipment accessories, extended warranty options, etc.). Describe any value-added options being offered.
- 3. Location of Work.** The proposal must respond to the STATE's Location of Work instructions within the RFP Scope of Work. Describe where the work will be performed and any proposed travel.
- 4. State Furnished Property and Services.** Provide a detailed breakdown of the Offeror's expectations for STATE resources that will be needed for the project, including number of staff, qualifications, roles and responsibilities, and time requirements for the various phases of the project.
- 5. Risk Management.** Offerors must describe measures to be taken to ensure the safety of its employees, state employees, the public, and property. Offerors must also identify any pertinent issues and potential problems related to the project and describe how those potential issues and problems could be mitigated.
- 6. Project Management Plan.** The proposal must describe how the contractor intends to manage the project to ensure the work is accomplished on time, within budget, and meet quantity and quality standards. Offerors may provide a narrative or organizational chart to illustrate the lines of authority and accountability.
- 7. Proposed Schedule and Deliverables.** The proposal must provide a timeline for accomplishing the work, in consideration of the STATE's Contract Schedule within the RFP Scope of Work.

Section 4 – Experience And Qualifications

Mandatory Requirements. An Offeror must provide information to demonstrate meeting the Offeror Experience and Qualifications Requirement in RFP Section 3, Scope of Work, Experience and Qualifications.

Experience and Qualifications of the Firm

Provide a brief history and describe the organization of the firm. Describe the number of years the Offeror has provided the type of work requested in this RFP. Describe specific experience of their firm in completing similar projects. Provide a description of the project, approximate time frame of the project, and contact information for the customer. Offerors may provide letters of reference from customers.

Experience and Qualifications of the Project Team

Provide a narrative or organizational chart that describes the organization of the proposed project team. Provide information for key project team members, including:

1. Description of anticipated work they will perform and approximate estimated hours;
2. Resume or description of the relevant education, training, experience, skills, and qualifications;
3. Offeror must provide a designated executive level contact that will act as a point of contact for any issues that need escalation or to discuss the needs of the STATE. This point of contact will be required to participate in any requested demonstration or presentation requested during the RFP process. They will discuss how the contract will be supported and how the Offeror and STATE will work together to ensure a successful outcome;
4. If the Offeror has vacant positions, identify the job description and minimum qualifications for staff members to be recruited;
5. Subcontractors. If an Offeror intends to use subcontractors, the Offeror must identify in the proposal the names of the subcontractors and the portions of the work the subcontractors will perform. Provide a statement that the Offeror will ensure that the subcontractor has or will obtain any required licenses and registrations, including registration with the North Dakota Secretary of State; and
6. Joint Venture. If submitting a proposal as a joint venture, provide narrative statements that describe the roles and responsibilities of each party to the joint vendor. If available, submit a copy of the joint venture agreement that identifies the parties involved and their rights and responsibilities.

References

Provide three (3) reference letters from clients for whom similar work was completed. The reference letter must include the name of a contact person, address, email, and telephone number. The STATE may contact references provided for verification and to obtain additional information. Evaluation may be impacted if the STATE is unable to contact the reference or the reference does not provide the requested information in a timely fashion.

Section 5 – Contract Provisions

Offeror shall review the RFP Section 6 and the STATE's contract – Attachment Three.

The proposal must indicate whether the Offeror accepts the terms and conditions in the STATE's contract.

An Offeror may state that they accept the STATE's contract as written.

An Offeror may state any objections or propose changes or additions to the STATE's contract. Describe the changes to the contract being proposed or provide a red-line of the STATE's contract. Offeror is not to submit their own contract or standard terms and conditions with their proposals. Offeror should address the specific language in the attached contract and submit any proposed changes.

North Dakota procurement statutes, rules, and policies allow some negotiation of the terms and conditions. No changes to the terms and conditions will be permitted without prior written approval from the STATE.

Section 6 – Open Records and Confidentiality

All proposals and other material submitted become the property of the STATE and may be returned only at the STATE's discretion. The State of North Dakota has broad open records laws. Proposals received are exempt from open record requirements until an award is made, in accordance with [N.D.C.C. § 54-44.4-10\(2\)](#). After award, proposals are subject to the North Dakota open records laws. Proposals or portions of proposals may be confidential only if specifically stated in law.

Offerors are instructed not to mark their entire proposal as "confidential".

Offeror must provide one of the following in their proposal:

- Provide a statement indicating that their proposal does not contain any confidential information, OR
- Make a written request to hold confidential any trade secrets and other proprietary data contained in their proposal. Offeror must clearly identify the material considered confidential and explain why the material is confidential. See the North Dakota Office of the Attorney General website for additional information at [North Dakota Office of the Attorney General website](#) and [North Dakota Office of the Attorney General Open Records website](#)

If the STATE receives a request for public information, the Procurement Officer, in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General, shall determine whether the information is an exception to the North Dakota open records laws, and the information shall be processed accordingly.

4.5 Cost Proposal

Cost Proposal Format. Cost proposals must be prepared as a separate document from the technical proposal, clearly labeled, "Cost Proposal".

Offeror must complete the Cost Proposal Format - Attachment One or prepare a Cost Proposal following the same format.

Value-Added Options. Offeror may include pricing for any value-added options that are described in the Offeror's proposal as options, but not included in the total cost. Any options must be within the scope of work. (e.g., an option for a higher level of service, equipment accessories, extended warranty options, etc.). Provide details related to initial cost, reoccurring costs, and options. The STATE shall not consider these costs as part of cost evaluation scoring.

All costs must be stated in U.S. currency. Any commodities being imported must be identified, and the price must include any applicable shipping and handling, customs, brokerage agency fees, and duties.

Offeror should describe any discount terms for prompt payment. Discounts for prompt payment will not be considered in evaluating costs.

Value-Added Options. Offeror may include pricing for any value-added options that are described in the Offeror's proposal as options, but not included in the total cost. Any options must be within the scope of work (e.g., an option for a higher level of service, equipment accessories, extended warranty options, etc.). Provide details related to initial cost, reoccurring costs, and options. The STATE shall not consider these costs as part of cost evaluation scoring.

All costs must be stated in U.S. currency. Any commodities being imported must be identified, and the price must include any applicable shipping and handling, customs, brokerage agency fees, and duties.

Offeror should describe any discount terms for prompt payment. Discounts for prompt payment will not be considered in evaluating costs.

5. Section Five – Award and Proposal Evaluation

5.1 Award

The STATE intends to award a contract to the responsible Offeror whose proposal is determined to be responsive to the requirements of the solicitation and is determined to be the most advantageous in consideration of the RFP evaluation criteria.

5.2 Responsiveness

All proposals will be evaluated to determine if they are responsive to the requirements of the solicitation. The STATE reserves the right to waive minor informalities in accordance with [N.D.A.C. chapter 4-12-10](#). Minor informalities are insignificant omissions or nonjudgmental mistakes that are matters of form rather than substance, evident from RFP document, with a negligible effect on price, quantity, quality, delivery, or contractual conditions that can be waived or corrected without prejudice to other Offerors. Responsive proposals will be evaluated by the Procurement Officer or evaluation committee using the evaluation criteria stated within the RFP.

5.3 Responsibility – Supplementary Investigation

The STATE reserves the right to contact references, other customers, including state and local government agencies, regarding past experience with the Offeror. Prior experience of the state agency or institution with any prospective Offeror may also be taken into consideration during evaluation.

The STATE may, at any time, make a supplementary investigation as to the responsibility of any Offeror in accordance with [N.D.A.C. § 4-12-11-04](#). This investigation may include, but is not limited to, financial responsibility, capacity to produce, sources of supply, performance record, or other matters related to the Offeror's probable ability to deliver if a contract is awarded to the Offeror. If it is determined that an Offeror appears not to be sufficiently responsible, the proposal will be rejected.

5.4 Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using a 100 point scale. The evaluation committee will award points based on the questions in the Technical Proposal Evaluation Worksheet – [Attachment Insert number](#). The Technical Proposal evaluation score and Cost Proposal evaluation score will be added together to determine the total evaluation score. After the initial evaluation, the evaluation committee may determine which proposals are reasonably susceptible for award and continue the evaluation process with only those Offerors. Offerors whose proposals are not selected for further evaluation may request a debrief from the Procurement Officer after an award notice is issued. The final evaluation score will consider information received by the STATE, including but not limited to, discussions with Offerors, demonstrations, presentations, site visits, reference checks, and best and final offers.

The evaluation criteria and relative weight is as follows:

Technical Proposal Evaluation: 60 Points

- A. Scope of Work Strategy – 40 Points
- B. Experience and Qualifications – 20 Points

Cost Proposal Evaluation: 40 Points

Preference Laws: Any applicable preference laws will be applied. For more information, refer to the [Guidelines to Preference Laws](#).

5.5 Cost Proposal Evaluation

The STATE will calculate evaluation points awarded to Cost Proposals. Any prompt payment discount terms proposed by the Offeror will not be considered in evaluating cost.

The reciprocal preference law, N.D.C.C. § 44-08-01, was repealed effective August 1, 2023.

The cost amount used for evaluation may be affected by the application of other costs required to implement the proposed solution to determine the total cost of the solution (i.e. cost for ITD to host a STATE hosted solution).

The lowest Cost Proposal will receive the maximum number of points allocated to cost. Cost proposals will be evaluated using the following formula.

Price of Lowest Cost Proposal

Price of Proposal Being Rated X Total Points for Cost Available = Awarded Points

5.6 Clarifications of Proposals – Discussions

To determine if a proposal is reasonably susceptible for award, communications by the Procurement Officer or evaluation committee are permitted with an Offeror to clarify uncertainties or eliminate confusion concerning the contents of a proposal and determine responsiveness to the RFP requirements. Discussions will be limited to the specific section of the RFP or proposal indicated by the STATE. Discussions are generally conducted by telephone or internet-based conference.

In conducting discussions, there may be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing Offerors. Clarifications may not result in material or substantive change to the proposals. Evaluation scores may be adjusted based in consideration of information obtained through discussions.

5.7 Right of Rejection

The STATE reserves the right to reject any proposals, in whole or in part. Proposals received from suspended or debarred vendors will be rejected. Proposals determined to be nonresponsive to the requirements of the RFP will be rejected. The STATE reserves the right to reject the proposal of an Offeror determined to be not responsible. The STATE reserves the right to refrain from making an award if determined to be in its best interest.

5.8 Best and Final Offers

The STATE is not obligated to request best and final offers; therefore, Offerors should submit their best terms (technical and cost) in response to this RFP.

If the STATE determines there is a need for additional information, substantial clarification or changes to the RFP or proposals, the STATE may request for best and final offers from Offerors that have submitted proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible for award. The best and final offer request will describe the additional information, clarification, or change being requested.

A date and time will be established for receipt of revised proposals. If an Offeror does not submit a best and final offer, the STATE shall consider its original proposal its best and final offer. Best and final offers will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria stated in the RFP. The STATE may request more than one best and final offer.

5.9 Tie Proposals

In the event that two or more proposals contain identical pricing or receive identical evaluation scores, [N.D.C.C. § 54-44.4-05.1](#) requires preference must be given to a resident North Dakota bidder, seller, vendor, offeror, or contractor as defined in [N.D.C.C. § 44-08-02](#). In the event the tie is not resolved by application of this law, [N.D.A.C. § 4-12-11-05](#) will be applied.

5.10 Negotiations

Contract negotiations will be conducted in accordance with [N.D.A.C. § 4-12-12](#). The STATE may enter negotiations with one or more Offeror whose proposals received the highest scores and are reasonably susceptible for award. During negotiations, the STATE and Offeror may agree to alter or otherwise change the terms and conditions and price of the proposed contract. Negotiation, if held, will be within the scope of the RFP and limited to those items that would not have an effect on the ranking of proposals.

Each Offeror will be responsible for all costs it incurs as a result of negotiations, including any travel and per diem expenses. Contract negotiations will be conducted primarily by email, conference calls, or internet-based conference. Any on-site negotiation, if needed, will be held in [Insert City](#), North Dakota.

The STATE may terminate negotiations, reject a proposal as nonresponsive, and continue or commence negotiations with other Offerors reasonably susceptible for award, if the Offeror:

- Fails to provide necessary information for negotiations in a timely manner
- Fails to negotiate in good faith
- Is unable to successfully negotiate contract terms that are acceptable to the STATE
- Indicates that it cannot perform the contract within the budgeted funds

In accordance with [N.D.C.C. § 54-44.4-13.1](#), the STATE and contractor may negotiate payment terms for all commodities and services procured. If a date for payment is not specified in this contract, payment must be made pursuant to section [N.D.A.C § 13-01.1-01](#).

5.11 Notice of Intent to Award

After proposals have been evaluated and the successful Offeror selected, a notice of intent to award will be promptly issued to all Offerors that submitted proposals. Upon issuance of this notice, the procurement file becomes an open record. The successful Offeror named in the notice of intent to Award is advised not to begin work, purchase materials, or enter into subcontracts until the successful Offeror and the STATE sign the contract.

5.12 Contract Approval

This RFP does not, by itself, obligate the STATE. The STATE's obligation shall commence when the STATE signs the contract. Upon written notice to the contractor, the STATE may set a different starting

date for the contract. The STATE shall not be responsible for any work done by the contractor, even work done in good faith, if it occurs prior to the contract start date set by the STATE.

5.13 Evaluation Debriefing

After the notice of intent to award is issued, Offerors may contact the Procurement Officer to schedule an evaluation debrief. The debrief will provide information about the evaluation process and proposal scores.

6. Section Six – Contract Information

6.1 North Dakota Contractual Requirements – Background

As a public institution and government entity of the State of North Dakota (the STATE), there are a number of statutes, rules, and policies (Requirements) that may restrict or prevent the STATE from entering into certain types of contracts or certain contractual terms and conditions, some of these Requirements are non-negotiable.

While these Requirements occasionally make the process of negotiating a contract with the STATE more challenging than negotiating with a private industry business, these are not unique to any one agency of the State of North Dakota. These Requirements apply to all public institutions and government entities of the State of North Dakota. Although some are unique to North Dakota, the majority of these Requirements are common to public institutions and government entities throughout the United States.

6.2 State Contract Terms and Conditions – Offeror's Proposed Changes

The STATE intends to execute a contract substantially similar to the contract – Attachment Three. The Offeror will be required to sign the contract attached to this RFP and must comply with the terms and conditions. The STATE may deem any failure to object to a contract provision as the Offeror's acceptance of that provision.

North Dakota procurement statutes, rules, and policies allow some negotiation of the terms and conditions. No changes to the terms and conditions will be permitted without prior written approval from the STATE.

Pursuant to [N.D.A.C. § 4-12-11-06](#), proposals subject to conditions imposed by the Offeror may be rejected as nonresponsive, as determined by the STATE. Proposed terms and conditions that conflict with those contained in the attached contract or that diminish the STATE's rights under the contract shall be considered null and void. The terms and conditions in the attached contract shall prevail in the event a conflict arises between a term or condition in the proposal and a term or condition in the attached contract.

Part or all of this RFP and Offeror's proposal may be incorporated into the attached contract. The STATE may deem any failure to object to a contract provision as the Offeror's acceptance of that provision.

6.3 Contract Provisions

A. Contract Type

The contract type will be as follows:

Firm Fixed Price with Adjustment. The contractor will be required to hold the price firm during the first year, except as otherwise provided in the contract. During this period, no price increases will be allowed, and the contractor must notify the STATE immediately of any price decreases. After the completion of the firm fixed period, the contractor may make a written request to the STATE for a price increase. The request must include the basis for the cost increase, such as evidence that the price increase applies to all customers. The STATE must approve, deny, or

negotiate the requested price increase within 30 days. Any price changes will be set forth in a written amendment to the contract.

B. Payment Procedures

Compensation and payment terms will be set forth in the contract based upon the successful Offeror's proposal. The STATE will not make any advanced payments before performance by the contractor under this contract.

C. The STATE will pay the entire contract amount in monthly payments. The final payment will not be made until the entire contract, is completed and approved by the project manager.

D. Inspection & Modification

The contractor is responsible for the completion of all work set out in the contract. All work is subject to inspection, evaluation, and approval by the STATE. The STATE may employ all reasonable means to ensure that the work is progressing and being performed in compliance with the contract.

Should the STATE determine that corrections or modifications are necessary to accomplish its intent, the STATE may direct the contractor to make changes. The contractor will not unreasonably withhold changes.

Substantial failure of the contractor to perform the contract may cause the STATE to terminate the contract. In this event, the STATE may require the contractor to reimburse monies paid (based on the identified portion of unacceptable work received) and may seek associated damages.

E. Contract Changes – Unanticipated Amendments

During the course of the contract entered as a result of this solicitation, the contractor may be required to perform additional work due to a legitimate unforeseen circumstance. That work will be within the general scope of the initial contract. When additional work is required, the STATE shall provide the contractor with a written description of the additional work and request that the contractor submit proposal for accomplishing the scope of work. Contractor will not commence additional work until all parties agree in writing.

F. Purchasing Card

The STATE may make payments under this contract using a state purchasing card. See the contract related to payments using the STATE purchasing card.

6.4 Contractual Terms and Conditions – No Material Changes

A. Indemnification and Insurance

[N.D.C.C. § 32-12.2-17](#) requires that the OMB establish guidelines for indemnification and insurance provisions in state contracts. The indemnification and insurance requirements contained in the attached contract are pursuant to those guidelines. The STATE shall not be deemed to have accepted any alteration of these provisions without prior written approval to Offeror from the STATE acting in consultation with the North Dakota Risk Management Division.

B. Indemnification

Indemnification is a contractual clause by which one party to a contract asks the other party to defend it against any claims of third parties who might be injured as a result of something that occurs while the parties are performing their duties and obligations under the contract. Without specific authority to do so, the STATE agencies cannot enter into agreements indemnifying contractors, or any other entity, against third party claims.

Any clause that has the intent of seeking indemnification from the STATE, whether the clause contains the words "indemnity" or "indemnify," are not clauses to which the STATE may agree.

The STATE will also not agree to clauses to indemnify a contractor "to the extent permitted by law". This is because the STATE knows that the extent to which the law permits it to indemnify contractors is no extent whatsoever, and as a result would be disingenuous for the STATE to imply in a contract that there might be some set of circumstances under which the STATE would defend the contractor against a third party claim(s). Simply put, the STATE is not going to agree to something it knows it cannot do. In this circumstance an "extent" clause is merely an invitation to litigate the matter in the event a third party claim(s) arises, and the STATE does not enter into agreements that invite litigation. Do not ask the STATE to indemnify you against third party claims because it is a contractual obligation to which the STATE cannot agree.

While the STATE may limit the liability of a contractor in claims between the STATE and the contractor, the STATE does not have authority to limit a contractor's liability for claims brought by a third party. In the event a contract contains a limitation of liability clause, the contract's Indemnification clause and obligation of the contractor cannot be subject to that limitation of liability clause. See 6.4(D) for Limitation of Liability.

C. Insurance

Upon receipt of the notice of intent to award, the successful Offeror must obtain the required insurance coverage and provide the Procurement Officer with proof of coverage prior to contract approval. The coverage must be satisfactory to the STATE, in consultation with the North Dakota Risk Management Division. The successful Offeror's failure to provide evidence of insurance coverage is a material breach and grounds for withdrawal of the award or termination of the contract.

D. Limitation of Liability

The STATE may negotiate Limitation of Liability pursuant to [N.D.C.C. § 32-12.2-15](#) "Contracts limiting liability to the STATE."

Notwithstanding any provision in [N.D.C.C. ch. 32-12.2](#) to the contrary, an agency may agree to limit the liability of a contractor to the STATE if:

1. the agency determines such services or products cannot be effectively obtained without such limitation; and
2. the limitation does not pose any significant risk of loss to the STATE; and
3. the limitation is in the best interests of the STATE.

The agency, in consultation with OMB and the Attorney General's Office, shall prepare written documentation before agreeing to any liability limitation.

An agency's authority to agree to a limitation of liability is limited to contracts for the purchase or lease of, or services related to, software, communication, electronic equipment, and economic forecasting.

1. An agency may limit its ability to recover indirect consequential damages.
2. If the extent of potential direct loss is unknown, an agency may agree to limit direct damages to a reasonably estimated amount commensurate with the foreseeable risk of loss to the STATE. The amount must be equal to twice the total value of the contract unless all parties to the contract agree to an alternative amount. Any agreed upon amount that is less than twice the value of the contract must be approved by the director of OMB. The liquidated damages and retainage provisions for delay, missed deadlines, and other breaches are not subject to a general limitation on direct or indirect damages authorized under [N.D.C.C. § 32-12.2-15](#).
3. A contract under [N.D.C.C. § 32-12.2-15](#) may not limit any loss to the STATE resulting from fraud or other intentional or willful misconduct, breach of confidentiality obligations, or loss resulting from tangible property damage or personal injury.

E. Waivers of Jurisdiction and Venue; Alternative Dispute Resolution

The North Dakota Attorney General is the STATE's attorney for all purposes, including management of litigation and claims against the STATE. The STATE may not usurp the Attorney General's authority by agreeing in advance to control the way litigation may be managed in the event of a dispute. The STATE cannot, without specific authority, agree to the jurisdiction or the laws of another state or federal courts, nor can it contractually agree to participate in any form of alternative dispute resolution.

Although the STATE cannot contractually agree to such terms, this does not mean that in the event of a dispute, the STATE would not agree to participate in alternative dispute resolution. It simply means that this is a decision that must be made by the Attorney General and is a decision that is made at the time a dispute arises.

F. Confidentiality

All state agencies of North Dakota are subject to North Dakota public records laws. The STATE cannot agree to contractual terms that attempt to prevent it from having to disclose records that are declared public records under applicable statutes. Although some confidentiality and exemptions are allowed under the public records laws, the STATE may not agree to more restrictive obligations concerning its records. Under North Dakota public records laws, contracts are records that are open to the public and may be reviewed at the request of the public.

G. Unliquidated Expenses (i.e., attorney's fees, add-ons, cost increases)

Because the STATE may only obligate those funds that have been appropriated to it by the Legislative Assembly and may only obligate those funds for the purposes for which the funds were appropriated, the STATE may not agree to clauses which may obligate it to pay for claims

that might exceed its current funding appropriation. Certainly, this is one of numerous reasons why the STATE cannot indemnify a contractor against third party claims, but it may also be said for clauses that purport to obligate the STATE to pay a contractor's attorneys' fees, unknown cost increases during the life of the contract, add-ons that were not contemplated or priced in the contract.

6.5 Scope of Work

The Scope of Work agreed upon by the parties will be incorporated into the attached contract.

6.6 Contract Term

The contract term will be set forth in the contract, including any options for extension, renewal, and renegotiation.

6.7 Right to Inspect Place of Business

At reasonable times, the STATE may inspect those areas of the contractor's place of business that are related to the performance of a contract. If the STATE performs an inspection, the contractor must provide reasonable assistance.

Attachment One
COST PROPOSAL FORM

The State intends to award a firm fixed price with adjustment contract. Cost proposals must provide the total proposed annual cost for completing the RFP requirements along with detailed itemization of any direct or indirect costs, commissions, or fees for service. Offerors must disclose personnel costs and any restrictions.

Offerors submitting proposals which exceed the \$250,000 limit will be deemed non-responsive to the solicitation and their RFP response will be rejected.

Maximum cost points will be awarded to the firm who provides the lowest monthly retainer.

Monthly Retainer	\$
Total Contract Price	\$

Attachment Two

Technical Proposal Evaluation Worksheet

Proposals that are determined to be responsive to the requirements of the RFP will be evaluated by the Evaluation Committee using the evaluation criteria stated in the RFP. For assistance with RFP evaluations, contact the State Procurement Office at infospo@nd.gov or 701-328-2740.

- If a group evaluation is conducted, the Evaluation Committee will produce one worksheet that summarizes the comments and scores. If individual scores are being compiled, each member of the Evaluation Committee will prepare an evaluation worksheet with their comments and scores.
- Evaluation Committee members must read the Request for Proposal and have a clear understanding of the requirements and evaluation criteria before attempting to evaluate proposals.
- Evaluators should read all proposals twice. First, read all proposals for a general understanding without scoring. Next, read proposals with the intent to complete the evaluation worksheet which includes taking notes and documenting any questions/clarification needed.
- Each evaluation criterion is assigned a specific number of points. The questions under each evaluation criterion help Evaluators measure the quality of the Offeror's response. Do not assign points to individual questions, instead, award a total score for each evaluation criterion.
- Evaluators will assign an initial score for each evaluation criterion and provide comments which explain their scores.
- Evaluation documents become an open record upon award.

Rating Scale for Technical Proposal Scoring

The rating scale provided is intended to help Evaluators perform evaluations. Evaluators are exercising independent judgement so variation in scoring is normal. However, the Procurement Officer may question scoring that appears to be unsupported. Evaluators may assign any value for a given evaluation area from 0 to the maximum number of points allowed per evaluation criterion. A zero value typically constitutes no response or an inability of the Offeror to meet the criteria. In contrast, the maximum value should constitute a high standard of meeting the criteria. For example: "Experience and Qualifications" is an evaluation area weighted at 25% of the total possible points on a 100 Point Scale, so any value between 0 and 25 points can be awarded. An example of the rating scale is below:

Experience and Qualifications Rating Scale for 25 Point Maximum

Point Value	Explanation
0-5	Poor: Not addressed or response of no value

6-10	Fair: Limited applicability
11-15	Good: Some applicability
16-20	Very Good: Substantial applicability
21-25	Excellent: Total applicability

Cost Proposal

Cost proposals are normally scored by the Procurement Officer or selected evaluators, and cost proposals are given to the Evaluation Committee after technical proposals have been evaluated. Prompt payment discounts are not considered in evaluating cost.

Adjustment Of Initial Evaluation Scores

After the initial scoring, the Evaluation Committee should meet to discuss proposals and identify areas where clarification or more information is needed. Evaluation scores may be adjusted as a result of discussions with offerors, clarifications, demonstrations, presentations, reference check results, Best and Final Offers, and further due diligence within the evaluation process.

Technical Proposal Evaluation Worksheet

Offeror Name _____

RFP Title/Number _____

Evaluator Name _____

Evaluator Certification: I have reviewed the Request for Proposal Evaluators Guide, and I certify that neither I nor my immediate family members have a conflict of interest with regard to this offeror, in accordance with [N.D.A.C. § 4-12-04-04.](#)

Evaluator Signature _____ Date _____

The Total Number of Points Used to Score This Proposal Is 100

Scope Of Work Strategy Rating Scale for a 40 Point Maximum

Point Value	Explanation
0 – 8	None: Not addressed or response of no value
9 – 16	Fair: Limited applicability

17 – 24	Good: Some applicability
25 – 32	Very Good: Substantial applicability
33 – 40	Excellent: Total applicability

How well has the Offeror followed the proposal preparation instructions? Does the proposal contain all the requested information?

Evaluator Notes:

How well has the Offeror described their strategy for accomplishing the scope of work requirements? What are the strengths of the proposed strategy?

Evaluator Notes:

Are there aspects of the proposed Scope of Work strategy of concern or that requires clarification or further information?

Evaluator Notes:

How well does the proposed timeline demonstrate the offeror's ability to meet the contract schedule and deliverables?

Evaluator Notes:

How well does the proposal address where the work will be performed and any travel?

Evaluator Notes:

How well has offeror described any expectations for State resources?

Evaluator Notes:

How well has the offeror addressed risk management? Did they identify any potential risks, issues or problems?

Evaluator Notes:

Has the offeror described their project management to accomplish the work on time, within budget, and meet quantity and quality standards?

Evaluator Notes

Initial Evaluation Score for Scope of Work Strategy: _____

Additional/overall comments related to the offeror's proposed strategy for accomplishing the work.

Evaluator Notes

Experience And Qualifications Rating Scale for 20 Point Maximum

Point Value	Explanation
0-4	None. Not addressed or response of no value
5-8	Fair. Limited applicability
9-12	Good. Some applicability
13-16	Very Good. Substantial applicability
17-20	Excellent. Total applicability

Minimum Experience or Qualifications

If the RFP required a minimum amount of experience or qualifications, has the offeror provided information to demonstrate meeting this requirements? Does the offeror exceed the minimum experience or qualifications?

Evaluator Notes

Experience And Qualifications of the Firm

Has the offeror provided historical information to demonstrate the firm is well established in this field?

Evaluator Notes

How extensive is the firm's experience in this type of work? How well does the information about similar projects demonstrate the firm's experience work related to this RFP?

Evaluator Notes

If the offeror provided letters of reference or the Evaluation Committee contacted the customer contacts, what information did the offeror's customers provide related to the offeror's past performance?

Evaluator Notes

Reference Check Results

If references were required, did the references provide information to verify the satisfactory performance of the vendor?

Evaluator Notes

Did references identify any areas of concern?

Evaluator Notes

Did references identify any particular strengths of the vendor?

Evaluator Notes

Initial Evaluation Score for Experience and Qualifications: _____

Additional/overall comments related to the offeror's experience and qualifications.

Evaluator Notes

Attachment Three

Contract

OFFEROR INSTRUCTIONS

Offeror shall review the STATE's Contract.

The proposal must include indicate whether or not the offeror accepts the terms and conditions in the STATE's Contract.

An offeror may state that they accept the STATE's Contract as written.

An offeror may state any objections or propose changes or additions to the STATE's Contract. Describe the changes to the Contract being proposed or provide a red-line of the STATE's Contract. Offerors are not to submit their own contract or standard terms and conditions with their proposals. Offeror should address the specific language in the attached contract and submit any proposed changes.

North Dakota procurement statutes, rules, and policies allow some negotiation of the terms and conditions. No changes to the terms and conditions will be permitted without prior written approval from the STATE.

CONTRACT

1. PARTIES

The parties to this contract (Contract) are the State of North Dakota, acting through its ***Department of Commerce*** (STATE), and ***Name of Business a type of business (e.g. Delaware corporation or privately held company)*** having its principal place of business at ***principal business address*** (CONTRACTOR);

2. SCOPE OF WORK

CONTRACTOR, in exchange for the compensation paid by STATE under this Contract, shall provide the following:

The Department of Commerce Division of Workforce is soliciting proposals for the selected vendor to design and execute a statewide, mixed methods research study to understand patterns, drivers, and outcomes related to outmigration and retention of in-state, out-of-state, and international students. The scope includes, but is not limited to, the components below.

Deliverables:

The contractor will be required to provide the following to achieve the objective of this project:

The contractor will conduct a statewide mixed methods study to understand student outmigration and retention across in state, out of state, and international student groups. The work includes quantitative analysis, qualitative engagement, assessment of retention strategies, and development of a long term research framework:

1. Review existing education, workforce, and community datasets to identify data availability, gaps, and integration needs.

2. Analyze statewide data to determine who is leaving and why, when departures occur, geographic trends, and correlations with academic pathways, financial factors, completion rates, and employment outcomes.
3. Identify opportunities for cross agency data sharing to support long term student outcomes tracking.
4. Deliver quantitative insights that highlight priority populations, high risk transitions, and regions of concern.
5. Conduct focus groups, interviews, and surveys with students (including recent graduates and first year college students), families, educators, employers, and other stakeholders.
6. Engage partners to refine research questions and validate findings.
7. Evaluate current programs supporting education, training, and student employment.
8. Identify opportunities to modify existing programs or develop new targeted interventions.
9. Identify themes related to belonging, financial constraints, career fit, quality of life, and perceptions of in-state opportunity.
10. Recommend strategies to strengthen employer partnerships, recruit students into in demand occupations, expand community embedded experiences, and reduce barriers to staying in North Dakota.
11. Provide actionable insights on populations and leverage points with the strongest potential ROI.
12. The vendor shall propose:
 - a. A repeatable methodology for regularly refreshing findings.
 - b. A data sharing and governance model to support continuous evaluation.
 - c. Recommended dashboards, KPIs, and measurement tools aligned with workforce and retention goals.
13. The vendor shall produce:
 - a. A research plan detailing methods, data sources, sampling, and timelines.
 - b. Quantitative Data Landscape Assessment describing available datasets, integration gaps, and data quality.
 - i. Quantitative Analysis Report covering outmigration patterns, high risk transition points, correlations, and priority populations.
 - c. Qualitative Research Plan & Engagement Materials detailing focus groups, interviews, surveys, and stakeholder engagement methods.
 - i. Qualitative findings summary synthesizing themes influencing student decisions to stay or leave.

- d. Interim report of findings and early recommendations due in February as outlined in the reporting requirements.
- e. Stakeholder validation sessions to review preliminary findings with education, workforce, and industry partners.
- f. A final statewide report including an executive summary, detailed findings, priority population analyses, recommended strategies, and an implementation roadmap.
- g. Strategy Options Report recommending targeted interventions and program improvements.
- h. Prioritization Framework & Implementation Roadmap offering impact/ROI guidance and phased action steps.
- i. Long term Monitoring Framework including KPIs, performance metrics, and recommended dashboards/reporting templates.
- j. Final Deliverables Package including a final report, executive summary, technical appendix, briefing deck, and presentation for leadership and public audiences.

3. COMPENSATION-PAYMENTS

a. Contractual Amount

STATE shall pay for the accepted services provided by CONTRACTOR under this Contract an amount not to exceed **[Amount]** (Contractual Amount).

The Contractual Amount is firm for the duration of this Contract and constitutes the entire compensation due CONTRACTOR for performance of its obligations under this Contract regardless of the difficulty, materials or equipment required, including fees, licenses, overhead, profit and all other direct and indirect costs incurred by CONTRACTOR, except as provided by an amendment to this Contract.

b. Invoicing

The final cost set forth on each invoice must be equivalent to the cost for each service or goods as specified in the Scope of Work. CONTRACTOR may not submit an invoice for any service or goods specified in the Scope of Work that STATE has not fully accepted.

STATE may only expend public funds for any service or goods accepted within the Fiscal Year for which the funds are appropriated. STATE's Fiscal Year is July 1 through June 30. An invoice for any service or goods accepted within the Fiscal Year must be dated prior to July 1 and received by STATE no later than July 7 of each Fiscal Year.

c. Payment

- 1) Payment made in accordance with this Compensation section shall constitute payment in full for the services and work performed and the deliverables and work(s) provided under this Contract and CONTRACTOR shall not receive any additional compensation hereunder.

2) STATE shall make payment under this Contract within forty-five (45) calendar days after receipt of a correct invoice.

3) Payment of an invoice by STATE will not prejudice STATE's right to object to or question that or any other invoice or matter in relation thereto. CONTRACTOR's invoice will be subject to reduction for amounts included in any invoice or payment made which are determined by STATE, on the basis of audits conducted in accordance with the terms of this Contract, not to constitute allowable costs. At STATE's sole discretion, all payments shall be subject to reduction for amounts equal to prior overpayments to CONTRACTOR.

4) For any amounts that are or will become due and payable to STATE by CONTRACTOR, STATE reserves the right to deduct the amount owed from payments that are or will become due and payable to CONTRACTOR under this Contract.

d. Travel

CONTRACTOR acknowledges travel costs are covered by the Contractual Amount and shall not invoice STATE for travel costs.

e. Prepayment

STATE will not make any advance payments before performance or delivery by CONTRACTOR under this Contract.

f. Payment of Taxes by STATE

STATE is not responsible for and will not pay local, state, or federal taxes. STATE sales tax exemption number is E-2001. STATE will furnish certificates of exemption upon request by the CONTRACTOR.

g. Taxpayer ID

CONTRACTOR'S federal employer ID number is: *[Insert FEIN]*.

h. Payment Methods

- 1) STATE may make payment using a government credit card. CONTRACTOR shall accept a government credit card without passing the processing fees for the government credit card back to STATE.
- 2) STATE may make payment using an ACH transfer, wire transfer, or by issuing a check to CONTRACTOR.

4. TERM OF CONTRACT

This Contract term (Term or Initial Term) begins on *its Effective Date*, and ends on **June 30, 2027**.

a. No Automatic Renewal

This Contract will not automatically renew.

b. Renewal Option

STATE may renew this Contract upon satisfactory completion of the Initial Term. STATE reserves the right to execute up to **two** options to renew this Contract under the same terms and conditions for a period of **12** months each (Renewal Term).

c. Extension Option

STATE reserves the right to extend this Contract for an additional period, not to exceed **6** months, beyond the current termination date of this Contract.

5. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

Time is of the essence for performance under this Contract unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Parties.

6. TERMINATION

a. Termination for Convenience or by Agreement

STATE may terminate this Contract upon thirty (30) days' written notice to CONTRACTOR. This Contract may be terminated by consent of both Parties executed in writing.

b. Early Termination in the Public Interest

STATE is entering this Contract for the purpose of carrying out the public policy of the State of North Dakota, as determined by its Governor, Legislative Assembly, Agencies and Courts. If this Contract ceases to further the public policy of the State of North Dakota, STATE, in its sole discretion, by written notice to CONTRACTOR, may terminate this Contract in whole or in part.

c. Termination for Lack of Funding or Authority

STATE by written notice to CONTRACTOR, may terminate the whole or any part of this Contract under any of the following conditions:

- 1) If funding from federal, state, or other sources is not obtained or continued at levels sufficient to allow for purchase of the services or goods under this Contract in the indicated quantities or term.
- 2) If federal or state laws or rules are modified or interpreted in a way that the services or goods are no longer allowable or appropriate for purchase under this

Contract or are no longer eligible for the funding proposed for payments authorized by this Contract.

- 3) If any CONTRACTOR license, permit, or certificate required by law or rule, or by the terms of this Contract, is for any reason denied, revoked, suspended, or not renewed.

Termination of this Contract under this subsection is without prejudice to any obligations or liabilities of either Party already accrued prior to termination.

d. Termination for Cause

STATE may terminate this Contract effective upon delivery of written notice to CONTRACTOR, or any later date stated in the notice:

- 1) If CONTRACTOR fails to provide services or goods required by this Contract within the time specified or any extension agreed to in writing by STATE; or
- 2) If CONTRACTOR fails to perform any provisions of this Contract or so fails to pursue the work as to endanger performance of this Contract in accordance with its terms.

The rights and remedies of STATE provided in this subsection are not exclusive and are in addition to any other rights and remedies provided by law or under this Contract.

7. FORCE MAJEURE

Neither Party will be held responsible for delay or default caused by fire, riot, terrorism, pandemic, acts of God, executive orders issued by the governor or U.S. President, or war if the event was not foreseeable through the exercise of reasonable diligence by the affected Party, the event is beyond the Party's reasonable control, and the affected Party gives notice to the other Party promptly upon occurrence of the event causing the delay or default or that is reasonably expected to cause a delay or default. If CONTRACTOR is the affected Party and does not resume performance within fifteen (15) days or another period agreed between the Parties, STATE may seek all available remedies, up to and including termination of this Contract pursuant to its Termination Section, and STATE is entitled to a pro-rata refund of any amounts paid for which the full value has not been realized, including amounts paid toward software subscriptions, maintenance, or licenses.

8. RIGHT TO REMEDIES AND CUMULATION OF RIGHTS

No remedy conferred by any of the specific provisions of this Contract is intended to be exclusive of any other remedy, and each and every remedy shall be cumulative and shall be in addition to every other remedy given under this Contract, now or in the future existing at law or in equity or by statute or otherwise.

9. NON-WAIVER

Either party's failure to exercise any of its rights under this Contract, its delay in enforcing any right, or its waiver of its rights on any occasion, shall not constitute a waiver of such rights on any other occasion. No course of dealing by either party in exercising any of its rights shall constitute a waiver thereof. No waiver of any provision of this Contract shall be effective unless it is in writing and signed by the party against whom the waiver is sought to be enforced.

10. INDEMNIFICATION

Contractor agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the state of North Dakota, its agencies, officers and employees (State), from and against claims based on the vicarious liability of the State or its agents, but not against claims based on the State's contributory negligence, comparative and/or contributory negligence or fault, sole negligence, or intentional misconduct. The legal defense provided by Contractor to the State under this provision must be free of any conflicts of interest, even if retention of separate legal counsel for the State is necessary. Any attorney appointed to represent the State must first qualify as and be appointed by the North Dakota Attorney General as a Special Assistant Attorney General as required under N.D.C.C. § 54-12-08. Contractor also agrees to reimburse the State for all costs, expenses and attorneys' fees incurred if the State prevails in an action against Contractor in establishing and litigating the indemnification coverage provided herein. This obligation shall continue after the termination of this agreement.

11. INSURANCE

Contractor shall secure and keep in force during the term of this agreement and Contractor shall require all subcontractors, prior to commencement of an agreement between Contractor and the subcontractor, to secure and keep in force during the term of this agreement, from insurance companies, government self-insurance pools or government self-retention funds, authorized to do business in North Dakota, the following insurance coverages:

- 1) Commercial general liability insurance, including operations, contractual, products and completed operations coverage, including coverage for intellectual property infringement with minimum liability limits of \$1,000,000.
- 2) Workers compensation coverage meeting all statutory requirements. The policy shall provide coverage for all states of operation that apply to the performance of this contract.
- 3) Employer's liability or "stop gap" insurance of not less than \$1,000,000 as an endorsement on the workers compensation or commercial general liability insurance.

The insurance coverages listed above must meet the following additional requirements:

- 1) Any deductible or self-insured retention amount or other similar obligation under the policies shall be the sole responsibility of the Contractor.
- 2) This insurance may be in policy or policies of insurance, primary and excess, including the so-called umbrella or catastrophe form and must be placed with insurers rated "A-" or better by A.M. Best Company, Inc., provided any excess policy follows form

for coverage. Less than an "A-" rating must be approved by the State. The policies shall be in form and terms approved by the State.

- 3) The duty to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the State under this agreement shall not be limited by the insurance required in this agreement.
- 4) The state of North Dakota and its agencies, officers, and employees (State) shall be endorsed on the commercial general liability policy on a primary and noncontributory basis, including any excess policies (to the extent applicable), as additional insured. The State shall have all the benefits, rights and coverages of an additional insured under these policies that shall not be limited to the minimum limits of insurance required by this agreement or by the contractual indemnity obligations of the Contractor.
- 5) A "Waiver of Subrogation" waiving any right to recovery the insurance company may have against the State.
- 6) The Contractor shall furnish a certificate of insurance to the undersigned State representative prior to commencement of this agreement. All endorsements shall be provided as soon as practicable.
- 7) Failure to provide insurance as required in this agreement is a material breach of contract entitling the State to terminate this agreement immediately.
- 8) Contractor shall provide at least 30 day notice of any cancellation or material change to the policies or endorsements. Contractor shall provide on an ongoing basis, current certificates of insurance during the term of the contract. A renewal certificate will be provided 10 days prior to coverage expiration.

CONTRACTOR shall provide certificate of insurance and any endorsements to STATE electronically to:

Name: Laura Nessa

Email Address: lnessa@nd.gov

Email Subject Line: Certificate of Insurance – 25-27.033

12. WORKS FOR HIRE

All work(s) under this Contract is "work(s) for hire" within the meaning of the United States Copyright Act (Title 17 United States Code) and CONTRACTOR assigns to STATE all rights and interests CONTRACTOR may have in the work(s) it prepares under this Contract, including any right to derivative use of the work(s). All software and related materials developed by CONTRACTOR in performance of this Contract exclusively for STATE are the sole property of STATE, and CONTRACTOR assigns and transfers all its right, title, and interest in the software and related materials to STATE. CONTRACTOR shall execute all necessary documents to enable STATE to protect STATE's intellectual property rights under this section.

13. WORK PRODUCT

All work product, equipment or materials created exclusively for STATE or purchased by STATE under this Contract belong to STATE and must be immediately delivered to STATE at STATE's request upon termination of this Contract.

14. NOTICE

All notices or other communications required under this Contract must be given by email, registered or certified mail and are complete on the date postmarked when addressed to the Parties at the following addresses, or by email complete on the date sent:

STATE	CONTRACTOR
<i>Name</i>	<i>Name</i>
<i>Title</i>	<i>Title</i>
<i>Address</i>	<i>Address</i>
<i>City, State, Zip</i>	<i>City, State, Zip</i>
<i>Email</i>	<i>Email</i>

Notice provided under this provision does not meet the notice requirements for monetary claims against the State found at N.D.C.C. § 32-12.2-04.

15. CONFIDENTIALITY

CONTRACTOR shall not use or disclose any information it receives from STATE under this Contract that STATE has previously identified as confidential or exempt from mandatory public disclosure except as necessary to carry out the purposes of this Contract or that STATE has authorized in advance. STATE shall not disclose any information it receives from CONTRACTOR that CONTRACTOR has previously identified as confidential and that STATE determines in its sole discretion is protected from mandatory public disclosure under a specific exception to the North Dakota public records law, [N.D.C.C. CH. 44-04](#). The duty of STATE and CONTRACTOR to maintain confidentiality of information under this section continues beyond the Term of this Contract.

16. COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC RECORDS LAWS

Under the North Dakota public records law and subject to the Confidentiality clause of this Contract, certain records may be open to the public upon request.

Public records may include:

- records STATE receives from CONTRACTOR under this Contract,
- records obtained by either Party under this Contract, and
- records generated by either Party under this Contract.

CONTRACTOR shall contact STATE immediately upon receiving a request for information under the public records law and shall comply with STATE's instructions on how to respond to that request.

17. INDEPENDENT ENTITY

CONTRACTOR is an independent entity under this Contract and is not a STATE employee for any purpose, including the application of the Social Security Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Federal Insurance Contribution Act, the North Dakota Unemployment Compensation Law and the North Dakota Workforce Safety and Insurance Act. CONTRACTOR retains sole and absolute discretion in the manner and means of carrying out CONTRACTOR's activities and responsibilities under this Contract, except to the extent specified in this Contract.

18. ASSIGNMENT AND SUBCONTRACTS

CONTRACTOR may not assign or otherwise transfer or delegate any right or duty without STATE's express written consent, provided, however, that CONTRACTOR may assign its rights and obligations hereunder in the event of a change of control or sale of all or substantially all of CONTRACTOR's assets related to this Contract, whether by merger, reorganization, operation of law, or otherwise. If Assignee is a business or entity with whom STATE is prohibited from conducting business, STATE shall have the right to terminate in accordance with the Termination for Cause section of this Contract.

CONTRACTOR may enter subcontracts provided that any subcontract acknowledges the binding nature of this Contract and incorporates this Contract, including any attachments. CONTRACTOR is solely responsible for the performance of any subcontractor with whom CONTRACTOR contracts. CONTRACTOR does not have authority to contract for or incur obligations on behalf of STATE.

19. SPOILIATION – PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

CONTRACTOR shall promptly notify STATE of all potential claims that arise or result from this Contract. CONTRACTOR shall also take all reasonable steps to preserve all physical evidence and information that may be relevant to the circumstances surrounding a potential claim, while maintaining public safety, and grants to STATE the opportunity to review and inspect such evidence, including the scene of an accident.

20. MERGER AND MODIFICATION, CONFLICT IN DOCUMENTS

This Contract, including the following documents, constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties. There are no understandings, agreements, or representations, oral or written, not specified within this Contract. This Contract may not be modified, supplemented or amended, in any manner, except by written agreement signed by both Parties.

Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, in the event of any inconsistency or conflict among the documents making up this Contract, the documents must control in this order of precedence:

- a. The terms of this Contract as may be amended;
- b. STATE's Solicitation Amendment(s) to Request for Proposal ("RFP") number **[X]**;
- c. STATE's Request for Proposal ("RFP") number **[X]**, dated **[X]**;
- d. CONTRACTOR's proposal dated **[X]** in response to RFP number **[X]**.

Unless negotiated between the Parties and incorporated into this Contract by reference, all automated end-user agreements (e.g., click through, shrink-wrap, or browse-wrap) are specifically excluded and null and void. Clicking shall not represent acknowledgement or agreement to any terms or conditions contained in those agreements.

21. UNANTICIPATED AMENDMENTS

If additional work is required within the scope of this contract due to a legitimate unforeseen circumstance, STATE shall provide contractor a written description of the additional work and request CONTRACTOR to submit a proposal for accomplishing the scope of work. CONTRACTOR will not commence additional work until all parties agree in writing.

22. SEVERABILITY

If any term of this Contract is declared to be illegal or unenforceable by a court having competent jurisdiction, the validity of the remaining terms is unaffected and, if possible, the rights and obligations of the Parties are to be construed and enforced as if this Contract did not contain the illegal or unenforceable term.

23. APPLICABLE LAW AND VENUE

This Contract is governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of North Dakota. Any action to enforce this Contract must be adjudicated exclusively in the state District Court of Burleigh County, North Dakota. Each Party consents to the exclusive jurisdiction of such court and waives any claim of lack of jurisdiction or *forum non conveniens*.

24. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION – JURY TRIAL

By entering this Contract, STATE does not agree to binding arbitration, mediation, or any other form of mandatory Alternative Dispute Resolution. The Parties may enforce the rights and remedies in judicial proceedings. STATE does not waive any right to a jury trial.

25. ATTORNEY FEES

If a lawsuit is initiated by STATE to obtain performance due under this Contract, and STATE is the prevailing Party, CONTRACTOR shall pay STATE's reasonable attorney fees and costs in connection with the lawsuit, unless prohibited by N.D.C.C. § 28-26-04.

26. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) - NONDISCRIMINATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

- a. CONTRACTOR agrees to comply with all applicable federal and state laws, rules, and policies, including those relating to nondiscrimination, accessibility and civil rights. (See N.D.C.C. Title 34 – Labor and Employment, specifically N.D.C.C. ch. 34-06.1 Equal Pay for Men and Women.)
- b. **ADA Compliance** –CONTRACTOR shall ensure that all user-facing components of the solution comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and at a minimum, conform to 28 CFR § 35.200 federal Requirements for Web and Mobile Accessibility; available at: 28 CFR § 35.200. CONTRACTOR shall verify accessibility compliance through automated and manual testing prior to delivery and shall

provide reports to STATE quarterly or as mutually agreed by STATE and CONTRACTOR.

CONTRACTOR is responsible for maintaining accessibility compliance of the solution throughout the Term of the Contract, including all renewals and extensions. If a compliance issue is discovered, CONTRACTOR shall provide a remediation plan, including timelines and impacts, to STATE. CONTRACTOR shall indemnify STATE for any and all claims, including penalties, costs, and expenses, related to accessibility claims under the ADA related to the solution.

- c. CONTRACTOR shall file all required reports timely, make required payroll deductions, and pay all taxes and premiums owed timely, including sales and use taxes, and unemployment compensation and workers' compensation premiums.
- d. CONTRACTOR shall have and keep current all licenses and permits required by law during the Term of this Contract.

CONTRACTOR is prohibited from boycotting Israel for the duration of this Contract. (See N.D.C.C § 54-44.4-15.) CONTRACTOR represents that it does not and will not engage in a boycotting Israel during the term of this Contract. If STATE receives evidence that CONTRACTOR boycotts Israel, STATE shall determine whether the company boycotts Israel. The foregoing does not apply to contracts with a total value of less than \$100,000 or if CONTRACTOR has fewer than ten (10) full-time employees.

CONTRACTOR's failure to comply with this section may be deemed a material breach by CONTRACTOR entitling STATE to terminate in accordance with the Termination for Cause section of this Contract.

27. STATE AUDIT

Pursuant to N.D.C.C. § 54-10-19, all records, regardless of physical form, and the accounting practices and procedures of CONTRACTOR relevant to this Contract are subject to examination by the North Dakota State Auditor, the Auditor's designee, or Federal auditors, if required. CONTRACTOR shall maintain these records for at least three (3) years following completion of this Contract and be able to provide them upon reasonable notice. STATE, State Auditor, or Auditor's designee shall provide reasonable notice to CONTRACTOR prior to conducting examination.

28. COUNTERPARTS

This Contract may be executed in multiple, identical counterparts, each of which is be deemed an original, and all of which taken together shall constitute one and the same contract.

29. EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTRACT

This Contract is not effective until fully executed by both Parties. If no start date is specified in the Term of Contract, the most recent date of the signatures of the Parties shall be deemed the Effective Date.

CONTRACTOR	STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
<insert business>	Acting through its <insert agency>
BY: <Signature>	BY: <Signature>
<Printed Name>	<Printed Name>
<Title>	<Title>
Date:	Date: