

**Connecticut Office of Higher Education
450 Columbus Blvd, Suite 707
Hartford, Connecticut, 06103**

Request for Proposal for Contracted Services

Subject: Request for Proposals

Issued: April 19, 2021

Due On: May 17, 2021

Re: Secretary of the State Regulations for Higher Education in Connecticut

The Connecticut Office of Higher Education, will receive **Request for Proposals** (RFP) for performing the services as outlined in the specifications below, in accordance with the following instructions, conditions and reservations:

I. CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION BACKGROUND

A. Statement of Purpose

The Connecticut Office of Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the OHE and/or the Office) is seeking a contractor who is a subject matter expert with regards to state statutes and regulations on postsecondary education. This contractor will be responsible for assisting in the updating of current private occupational school regulations as well as the regulations concerning higher education institutions and programs within Connecticut. These regulations are on file with the CT Secretary of the State and have not been updated for over 20 years.

The OHE seeks to procure the following:

1. Updated regulations that reflect the current landscape of policy in postsecondary education. As such, the contractor will need to review the current regulations, work with various stakeholders (including the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities and Board of Regents) to understand the current regulatory landscape, and provide updated language to the existing regulations taking into account feedback from various stakeholders as well as the current regulatory landscape across the nation. Current regulations can be found here:
 - a. For Private Occupational Schools:
https://eregulations.ct.gov/eRegsPortal/Browse/RCSA/Title_10aSubtitle_10a-22k/
 - b. For Institutions of Higher Education:
https://eregulations.ct.gov/eRegsPortal/Browse/RCSA/Title_10aSubtitle_10a-34/
2. As part of the work in updating the regulations, the contractor would need to conduct a scan of best practices in state approval processes and approval standards between postsecondary schools/institutions, regulatory agencies, institutional accreditation agencies approved by the U.S. Department of Education, and other professional accreditation organizations in states beyond Connecticut.

3. Review current Connecticut statutes and make recommendations for legislative changes based upon the review and updates of the Connecticut postsecondary regulations.
4. A document with proposed regulations for private occupational schools and another document with proposed regulations for institutions of higher education. These documents should also contain a crosswalk between the original regulations and the proposed regulations, as well as narratives, which provide justifications for any significant changes in the proposed regulations.
5. Assistance in amassing support among key stakeholders and moving the proposed regulations through the approval process with the Connecticut Secretary of the State. The regulatory approval process is outlined here:
<https://www.cga.ct.gov/rr/The%20Regulatory%20Process%209%2019%2016.pdf>

B. The OHE Overview

The OHE is a state agency under the Executive Branch of the State of Connecticut. The OHE seeks to advance the promise of postsecondary education for all state residents, and to advocate on behalf of students, taxpayers, and the postsecondary schools and colleges which fall under its purview. The OHE carries out its mission by assuring that students have access to postsecondary institutions which meet the highest standards of academic quality, by administering the State's student financial aid programs, and by serving as an information and consumer protection resource.

The OHE has regulatory oversight over the independent colleges and universities and their programs in the state of Connecticut. In addition, the OHE also has regulatory oversight over the private postsecondary occupational schools within the state. The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities has regulatory oversight over the public institutions of higher education, with the exception of the University of Connecticut.

The OHE serves as the state portal entity for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA). In addition, the OHE has regulatory oversight over other out-of-state institutions of higher education that teach Connecticut students, whether it is on-ground, hybrid, or online.

C. Statement of Work Process

The OHE will receive contractor responses and their respective **Proposals via email until 4:00 PM on May 17, 2021** to the Chief Academic Officer, Sean Seepersad, at the following email address:

sean.seepersad@ct.gov

The OHE can accept emails no larger than 35MB. If your file(s) is larger than that, please send multiple emails and confirm the number of emails sent.

Any proposals may be withdrawn prior to the above scheduled time for receiving proposals, or any authorized postponement thereof. Any proposals received after the date and time specified will NOT be considered. All proposals shall remain firm for the period of not less than one hundred and eighty (180) days from the RFP due date, unless such period is extended,

in writing, by both parties. The OHE reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or parts thereof.

1. Request for Proposals Inquiries

Any questions regarding the Request for Proposals' content and intention will be answered and clarifications made by the Chief Academic Officer, Sean Seepersad. No questions or clarifications will be addressed unless received via email. All questions must be received no later than the due date identified under Key Project Dates. Responses to these questions will be posted on the OHE's website.

2. Instructions

Proposals must be emailed to the attention of Sean Seepersad, Chief Academic Officer at the above address. OHE can receive attachments up to 35MB; if the Statement of Work exceeds this file size please break up the file into separate documents and send in separate emails.

3. Key Project Dates

Item	Date
Request for Proposals Solicitation	April 19, 2021
Contractor Questions Due	April 30, 2021
Answers to Questions Due	May 7, 2021
Proposals Due	May 17, 2021
Selection of Finalists	May 21, 2021
Presentations	May 28, 2021
Reference Checks	May 28, 2021
Contractor Selection	June 4, 2021

4. Award Procedure

The OHE is soliciting sealed proposals from all contractors offering services. The proposals need to include cost information. The contractor's proposal will be evaluated based on previous experience performing similar work, completeness of the description of a plan for completing the objectives, and cost. After this evaluation, the OHE will develop a "short list" of up to 2-3 qualified contractors.

Based on this short list, the OHE will invite these contractors to participate in the next phase of the evaluation process, Presentations. The presentation will provide an opportunity for the OHE personnel and related stakeholders to review the overall plan and ask questions. The successful contractor(s) will receive written notice from the OHE and be provided with information for this presentation.

Selected contractors will be asked to provide a “Best and Final Offer (BAFO)” for their proposed plan to the OHE. OHE will select the preferred contractor and negotiate a contract include of final project costs. Ultimately, the OHE will ratify the final contract(s) inclusive of contract cost.

5. Conditions

- a. Taxes: Since OHE is exempt from all taxes, no charges for taxes of any kind should be included in the proposal or on any invoices to the OHE.
- b. Assignment of Contract: The contract may not be assigned, sublet, or transferred without prior written consent of the OHE.
- c. Prices: Prices quoted must be firm for acceptance by the OHE, for a period of one hundred and eighty (180) days. Prices shall include all applicable duties. Contractors shall be required to contract for awarded items at prices quoted in their original proposal.
- d. Federal, State, and Local Laws: All applicable Federal, State, and local laws, rules and regulations of all authorities having jurisdiction over the locality of the project shall apply to the contract and are deemed to be included herein.
- e. RFP Responses: The proposal documents and responses to this document will be part of the contract between the OHE and the selected contractor.

6. Response Guidelines

To assist contractors in successfully responding to this document, we have developed a proposal outline. Please format your responses as outlined below:

- a. Company Information:
 - i. Name, Address, Phone Number, Fax Number, E-Mail Address, and Website (if applicable).
 - ii. Name and title of the individual(s) authorized to make representations for the contractor.
- b. Provide a “Statement of Qualifications” that contains the following:
 - i. Briefly describe the most relevant projects of similar size and scope as what is proposed.
 - ii. All personnel that will manage the project, as well as their qualifications and experience in similar projects.
- c. Four (4) references from unrelated projects. Although references from similar client types like the Office of Higher Education are preferred, they are not required. All four references must be a client for whom work has been performed in the past five (5) years.
- d. A realistic sample plan for addressing the needs of the proposal including the following information:
 - i. Tasks, resources, and milestones for all items proposed in the RFP.

- ii. A number of days taken to complete the proposal.
 - iii. Identify the OHE's obligation for the implementation.
- e. Project deliverables, including a list of major tasks, resources, and milestones.