



Petition for Relief from Competitive Sealed Bidding Requirements

Miss. Code Ann. § 31-7-403 and § 31-7-413

PPRB OPSCR Rules and Regulations Sections 3-201, 3-203.01(g)(2), and 7-103

Agency: Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

Requested Date for PPRB Approval: _____

Procurement Method Requested: RFQ

Intended Initial Contract Term: 1 year

Intended Renewal Terms Available: 4 optional one year renewals

Number of Contracts Intended to be Awarded: Multiple, depending on vender responses

Anticipated Contract Amount: \$500,000.00 to \$1,000,000.00

The Agency intends to solicit the following service(s) and/or scope of work:

(SEE ATTACHED FOR COMPLETE SCOPE OF SERVICES)

Pre-ETS Providers agree to provide services for students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible participants of Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services as outlined herein, which include the following five (5) required activities:

1. Job Exploration Counseling
2. Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Postsecondary Educational Programs at Institutions of Higher Learning
3. Workplace Readiness Training
4. Instruction in Self-Advocacy
5. Work-Based Learning Experiences

The intent of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) is to assist secondary education school students with disabilities to transition from school directly into employment, or into postsecondary education, or training that will lead to employment.

As explained below, use of an Invitation for Bids is:

- ☐ not practicable
☐ not advantageous
☒ both

MDRS believes that an RFQ would be the most appropriate method to procure these services. An RFQ allows the agency to be able to effectively evaluate each respondent's individualized plan and ability to provide these services beyond the minimum requirements. This procurement is designed to meet the demands of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), which requires that each state's public Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) system play a much larger role in addressing the transition from school to adult life. Under WIOA, MDRS, through its Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind (OVRB), is required to provide extensive Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students with disabilities. In order to meet these requirements, MDRS will be committing additional resources towards serving students with disabilities.

MDRS has successfully used the RFQ method in the past for these services. In previous procurements, selecting a vendor using the RFQ method allowed MDRS to evaluate the ability of a vendor to provide services based on our client's needs in certain areas of Mississippi. Furthermore, the agency desires to award these contracts based on more than price alone. The vendors plan and submitted curriculum are big factors when determining who will best provide these services to our clients. MDRS believes that expertise, quality and company resources are overriding factors in providing pre-employment transition services to our clients. Being able to score the technical factors gives an additional mechanism to evaluate the respondents with our evaluators that have relevant experience in this field.

Competitive bidding would be counterproductive to the business of the agency due to the scope of services requiring a certain degree of technical and professional expertise. The providers of Pre-ETS Services need to be experienced in pre-employment transition services, special education transition services, disability studies, or vocational rehabilitation counseling for no less than one year or need to be supervised with a minimum of six months teaching pre-employment transition services.

The Agency intends to use the following Evaluation Factors:

Price – 35 points (35%)*

*Each vendor will receive a 35/35.

Technical factors (Proposed methodology) – 30 points (30%)*

- Plan for performing the required services- 30 points (30%)*

Management factors (Factors that will require the identity of the offeror to be revealed must be submitted separately from other factors) – 35 points (35%)*

- Ability to perform the services as reflected by technical training and education, general experience, specific experience in providing the required services, and the qualifications and abilities of personnel proposed to be assigned to perform the services 15 points (15%)
- Personnel, equipment, and facilities to perform the services currently available or demonstrated to be made available at the time of contracting 10 points (10%)
- Record of past performance of similar work 10 points (10%)

Total Score = 100 points (100%)

Is the Agency requesting to score Cost openly? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, please provide an explanation:

Are these services currently being provided to the Agency? Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, who is currently providing the services?

Multiple vendors from a previous RFQ. We are rebidding these services to provide more options for our clients and to update the scope of services.

Agency Representative for PPRB Meeting: Lee Shirley

The Agency Representative will attend: In Person ☒ Remote ☐

*The option to attend remotely is not available to Agencies located in Hinds, Rankin, or Madison counties.

By signing below, I certify that all information provided herein is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Signed by:

Samandra Murphy

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6/30/2025

Chief Procurement Officer

Date

Chief Procurement Officer Name: Samandra Murphy

Telephone Number: 601-853-5420 Email Address: SMurphy@mdrs.ms.gov

The PPRB may modify or revoke its approval of the Petition for Relief at any time. The Board's approval must be "reviewed for current applicability from time to time." Miss. Code Ann. §31-7-403(4). Therefore, a solicitation cannot be issued from this Petition for Relief if the Board's approval occurred more than one year prior to the date the solicitation will be issued.