



Administered by University of Maine System
Office of Strategic Procurement
Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

External Evaluation Services for University of
Presque Isle

US Department of Education Title III
Strengthening Institutions Program Grant
RFQ #2023-022

Issued Date: September 16, 2022

Response Deadline Date/Time: September 26, 2022 on or
before 11:59 p.m. EST

Response Submission Information:

Submitted electronically to UMSResponses@maine.edu
Email Subject Line – RC: External Eval Services - RFQ#2023-022

Response Contact Information:

Strategic Sourcing Manager (SSM): Robin Cyr
Email: robin.cyr@maine.edu

Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION..... 3

1.1 Definitions, Background, Purpose and Specifications 3

1.2 General Information..... 8

1.3 General Submission Provisions 11

2.0 EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS..... 12

2.1 Evaluation Criteria 12

2.2 Award 12

2.3 Negotiations 12

2.4 Award Protest 13

3.0 RESPONSE FORMAT REQUIREMENTS..... 14

3.1 General Format Instructions 14

3.2 Response Format Instructions..... 14

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definitions, Background, Purpose and Specifications

1.1.1 Definitions

The University of Maine System will hereinafter be referred to as the "University." Respondents to the document shall be referred to as "Respondent(s)" or "Respondent".

The Respondent to whom the Agreement is awarded shall be referred to as the "Contractor."

The University of Maine System and other components of the University shall be referred to as "Multi-Institution".

1.1.2 Background

Overview

Established in 1968, the University of Maine System (UMS) unites six distinctive public universities, comprising 10 campuses and numerous centers, in the common purpose of providing quality higher education while delivering on its traditional tripartite mission of teaching, research, and public service.

A comprehensive public institution of higher education, UMS serves more than 30,000 students annually and is supported by the efforts of more than 2,000 full-time and part-time faculty, more than 3,000 regular full-time and part-time staff, and a complement of part-time temporary (adjunct) faculty.

Reaching more than 500,000 people annually through educational and cultural offerings, the University of Maine System also benefits from more than two-thirds of its alumni population residing within the state; more than 123,000 individuals.

The System consists of six universities: The University of Maine (UMaine), including its regional campus the University of Maine at Machias (UMM); the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA); the University of Maine at Farmington (UMF); the University of Maine at Fort Kent (UMFK), the University of Maine at Presque Isle (UMPI); and the University of Southern Maine (USM). The System also includes the University of Maine School of Law and the University of Maine Graduate and Professional Center.

University of Maine at Presque Isle

For more than a century, the University of Maine at Presque Isle has been helping students find their path to great professional careers, providing its 1,100 traditional and non-traditional students from all areas of the state, country, and world with life-changing opportunities in a caring, small-university environment. UMPI combines liberal arts and selected professional programs and serves as a cultural and educational resource for the entire region. The campus sits on 150 acres surrounded by the rolling hills and potato fields of northern Maine and strives to be the region's premier learning institution while helping to stimulate cultural and economic development in Aroostook County and the State of Maine. The University serves as an educational and cultural center for the area and its facilities are utilized for lectures, programs, concerts, dance performances, exhibits, and plays that benefit the entire region.

1.1.3 Purpose

The University of Maine System acting on behalf of University of Maine at Presque Isle is seeking responses for a third-party evaluator (external evaluator) to execute a rigorous evaluation of UMPI's Title III Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) grant (henceforth UMPI's Title III Grant) funded through the U.S. Department of Education Titled "Expanding Access, Increasing Success, and Improving Career Readiness". The RFQ is solely for Years 3-5 of the five-year project implementation. Please provide your cost estimate to complete the evaluation for Years 3-5 of the grant, covering the time period of October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2025.

All contractual arrangements will be on an annual basis dependent upon continued funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Contract may be canceled at any time based on funding availability and responder performance.

This document provides instructions for submitting responses, the procedure and criteria by which the Respondent(s) will be selected, and the Agreement terms which will govern the relationship between the University and the awarded Respondent(s).

Respondents should review **1.1.4 Specifications / Scope of Work** of this document to see the full Scope of Services/Products required.

The University is committed to providing increased access and opportunity to diverse businesses including and not limited to: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Business Enterprise (LGBTQ+BE); Minority Business Enterprise (MBE); Service-Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (SDVBE); Small Business Enterprise (SBE); veteran-owned; service-disabled veteran-owned; HUBZone; small disadvantaged business; women-owned; minority-owned; Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE); and Women's Business Enterprise (WBE).

Though this document is primarily for University of Maine, all campuses in the University of Maine System must be afforded the use of this solution, with all the same terms and conditions applicable to the various University locations.

1.1.4 Specifications / Scope of Work

Respondents must demonstrate they have experience with the following to be considered:

Project Overview

Our overall project seeks to expand access, increase success, and improve career readiness of college students through the following initiatives resulting in:

- Improved academic and career opportunities for UMPI's current and future student populations via creation of new Bachelor of Science degree programs in the high-demand fields of Computer Science and Health Administration. New curriculum will be developed incrementally with specific courses for each new degree program and corresponding concentration developed one project year and pilot tested, evaluated, analyzed and modified/further refined the year following development.

- Improved instructional resources and equipment including a Computer Science Lab and Health Administration Instructional Center to support the new academic programs.
- Enhanced career-readiness of UMPI students and graduates via creation of the University Experience and incorporation of career competencies identified by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) throughout the college student life cycle.
- Improved instruction via creation and implementation of experiential learning strategies, inclusive of internships, practicum, service learning, or other hands-on activities for UMPI's existing high-demand Humanities degree programs.
- Cadre of faculty trained in effective implementation of experiential learning strategies.
- Increased enrollment as a result of new program development, pilot testing, and implementation leading to improved long-term fiscal stability for the university.

The successful applicant for external evaluation will agree to work in cooperation with the UMPI Title III Project Director, Title III Project Staff, Registrar and Finance Office as well as other UMPI faculty and staff to execute the approved evaluation plan, including, but not limited to, data collection, analysis, assessment, and reporting. NOTE: a copy of the Year 1 Annual Performance Report submitted to the US Department of Education will be provided to the evaluator selected to perform these services.

This includes, but is not limited to, the **following scope of work**:

- Provide evaluation services for Year 3 of the UMPI Title III Grant for the period of performance October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022.
- Comply with regulations regarding EDGAR, FERPA and use of confidential information for data collection and evaluation, if applicable.
- Meet all funder requirements for the period of performance and approved timeline as it relates to project evaluation.
- Advise and report on implementation of grant activities.
- In coordination with UMPI Title III Project staff, monitor progress toward specific project objectives and also outcome measures to assess the impact of the proposed outcomes for the institution and project participants.
- Provide accurate and objective quantitative and qualitative formative/summative evaluation reports for the year on task completion, adherence to timelines, and effectiveness of implementation strategies, financial management and overall progress toward achievement of objectives and the program's continuous improvement efforts.
- Coordinate with the Title III Project Director to report on the following Year Three Activity Objectives and Performance Objectives:

OBJECTIVE 8: By Sept. 2022, a minimum of 75% of students enrolled in new B.S. **Computer Science (Software Development)** and B.S. **Health Administration (Community Health)** courses

successfully complete (grade of A, B, or C). *New programs, no baseline*

- 8a. By January 2022, at least 12 new students will have completed course pilot tests (Fall 2021) or be enrolled in course pilot tests (Spring 2022) for new **B.S. Computer Science courses (software development concentration)**.
- 8b. By January 2022, at least 12 new students will have completed course pilot tests (Fall 2021) or be enrolled in course pilot tests (Spring 2022) for new **B.S. Health Administration (community health concentration)**

OBJECTIVE 9: By September 2022, a minimum of 45 students will be enrolled in new UMPI B.S. degree programs (B.S. Computer Science **OR** B.S. Health Administration).

- 9a. By May 2022, new **Computer Science courses (information and data management concentration)** developed, approved by UMPI curriculum committee and ready for pilot testing.
- 9b. By May 2022, 5 new **Health Administration courses (health informatics concentration)** developed, approved by UMPI curriculum committee and ready for pilot testing.

OBJECTIVE 10: By Sept. 2022, minimum of 30 students in **History** degree program participating in experiential learning strategies, as verified by pre-post surveys.

- 10a. By Jan. 2022, min. of 3 **History faculty** will have participated in small group workshops for effective implementation and supervision of internships, practicum, service learning, and/or other experiential learning strategies.
- 10b. By Feb. 2022, following participation in training activities, a minimum of 85% of participating **History faculty** will exhibit increased knowledge of effective implementation of experiential learning strategies, as verified by pre-post surveys.
- 10c. By May 2022, minimum of 5 internship/practicum/ service-learning sites identified for students in **History** degree programs.

OBJECTIVE 11: By September 2022, following participation in training, a min. of 85% of participating faculty will exhibit increased knowledge of effective implementation of **NACE career readiness competencies** into curriculum, verified by pre/posts tests.

- 11a. By May 2022, minimum of two campus-wide faculty development sessions conducted, focused on best practices in implementation NACE career competencies into course work
- 11b. By August 2022, a minimum of 90% of UMPI faculty will have participated in NACE career readiness training.

- Gather evidence and report on the activities/intervention(s) that align with evidence-based practices and grant priorities.
- Produce a final report at the end of the evaluation period. This report should include: executive summary, evaluation methodology, summary of program (including case studies as useful), presentation of formative and summative results, conclusions and implications, USDE GPRA performance measures, and how the grant activity was integrated into regular College operations (as appropriate).
- Work in cooperation with the Title III Project Director, Project Staff and Implementation Team to review and assess existing data collection systems, making appropriate recommendations to achieve program data collection goals.
- Provide assistance with preparation for project site visits and/or audits that may occur during or after the project period.
- Provide unlimited telephone, email, video-conferencing and at least one (1) onsite consultation (pending COVID travel restrictions and discussions with the Title III Project Director) for evaluation of Year 3 project activities.
- Provide consultation regarding the status of the project, including addressing barriers to progress toward objectives.

1.2 General Information

1.2.1 Communication with the University

It is the responsibility of the Respondent to inquire about any requirement of this document that is not understood. Responses to inquiries, if they change or clarify the document in a substantial manner, will be forwarded by addenda to all parties that have received a copy of the document. Addenda will also be posted on our web site, www.maine.edu/strategic/upcoming_bids.php

It is the responsibility of all Respondents to check the web site before submitting a response to ensure that they have all pertinent documents. The University will not be bound by oral responses to inquiries or written responses other than addenda.

Inquiries must be made using the **Response Contact Information** provided on the cover sheet of this document. Refer to table in **Section 1.3.1 Timeline of Key Events** for deadline requirements.

1.2.2 Confidentiality

The University must adhere to the provisions of the Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA), 1 MRSA §401 et seq. As a condition of submitting a response under this section, a respondent must accept that, to the extent required by the Maine FOAA, responses to this solicitation, and any ensuing Agreement documents, are considered public records and therefore are subject to freedom of access requests.

The information contained in responses submitted for the University's consideration will be held in confidence until all evaluations are concluded and a Respondent selected (the successful Respondent). At that time the University will issue award notice letters to all participating Respondents and all Respondents' responses may be made available to participating Respondents upon request. Such request must be made by submitting a written request to the individual noted in the Response Contact Information shown on the cover sheet of this document, with a copy of the request provided to the other Respondents. Such requests are public records.

After the protest period has passed and the Agreement is fully executed, responses will be available for public inspection upon request.

Pricing and other information that is an integral part of the offer cannot be considered confidential after an award has been made. The University will honor requests for confidentiality for information that meets the definition of "trade secret" under Maine law. Clearly mark any portion of your submitted materials which are entitled to "trade secret" exemption from disclosure under Maine's Freedom of Access Act. Failure to so identify as trade secret will authorize the University to conclude that no portions are so exempt; and that your entity will defend, indemnify and hold harmless the University in any and all legal actions that seek to compel the University to disclose under Maine's Freedom of Access Act some or all of your submitted materials and/or Agreement, if any, executed between the University and your entity.

1.2.3 Costs of Preparation

Respondent assumes all costs of preparation of the response and any presentations necessary to the response process.

1.2.4 Authorization

Any Agreement for services that will, or may, result in the expenditure by the University of \$50,000 or more must be approved in writing by the Office of Strategic Procurement, Chief Procurement Officer and it is not approved, valid or effective until such written approval is granted.

1.2.5 Multi-Institutional

The University of Maine System, Office of Strategic Procurement reserves the right to authorize other University Institutions to use the Agreement(s) resulting from this document, if it is deemed to be beneficial for the University to do so.

1.2.6 Cost Response Form Quantities

The quantities shown on the cost response form are approximate only. The Contractor shall cover the actual needs of the University throughout the term of the Agreement regardless of whether they are more or less than the quantities shown.

1.2.7 Employees

The Contractor shall employ only competent and satisfactory personnel and shall provide a sufficient number of employees to perform the required services efficiently and in a manner satisfactory to the University. If the Agreement Administrator or designee, notifies the Contractor in writing that any person employed on this Agreement is incompetent, disorderly, or otherwise unsatisfactory, such person shall not again be employed in the execution of this Agreement without the prior written consent of the Agreement Administrator.

1.2.8 Specification Protest Process and Remedies:

If a Respondent feels that the specifications are written in a way that limits competition, a specification protest may be sent to the Office of Strategic Procurement to the email address provided on the cover page of this document. Specification Protests will be responded to within five (5) business days of receipt. Determination of protest validity is at the sole discretion of the University. The due date of the proposal may be changed if necessary to allow consideration of the protest and issuance of any necessary addenda. Specification protests shall be presented to the University in writing as soon as identified, but no less than five (5) business days prior to the Deadline for Proposal Submission noted in Section 1.3.1. No protest against the award due to the specifications shall be considered after this deadline. Protests shall include the reason for the protest and any proposed changes to the specifications.

1.2.9 Pricing

All prices provided using **Appendix C** for specific bid instructions/requirements.

1.2.10 Evaluation Criteria

Award will be made to the low respondent provided that all other requirements are satisfactorily met as defined in RFQ Section 1.1.3 and 1.1.4, including receipt of bid as outlined in **Appendix C**.

The University will NOT seek a best and final offer (BAFO) from any Respondent in this procurement process. All Respondents are expected to provide their best value pricing with the submission of their response. Respondents will NOT be given another opportunity to modify pricing once submitted.

1.3 General Submission Provisions

1.3.1 Eligibility to Submit Responses

Public entities, private for-profit companies, and non-profit companies and institutions are invited to submit a response to this document.

1.3.2 Debarment

Respondents must complete and submit the “Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification Form provided in Appendix B. Failure to provide this certification may result in the disqualification of the Respondent’s proposal, at the University’s discretion.

Submission of a signed response in response to this solicitation is certification that your firm (or any subcontractor) is not currently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any State or Federal department or agency. Submission is also agreement that the University will be notified of any change in this status.

1.3.3 Response Understanding

By submitting a response, the Respondent agrees and assures that the specifications are adequate, and the Respondent accepts the terms and conditions herein. Any exceptions should be noted in your response.

1.3.4 Response Validity

Unless specified otherwise, all responses shall be valid for ninety (90) days from the due date of the response.

1.3.5 Non-Response Submission

The University will not consider non-responsive submissions, i.e., those with material deficiencies, omissions, errors or inconsistencies or that otherwise do not follow instructions. The University in its sole discretion will determine what is Non-Responsive.

2.0 EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS

2.1 Evaluation Criteria

2.1.1 Scoring Weights

Award will be made to the low bidder provided that all other requirements are satisfactorily met, as outlined in Sections 1.1.3 and 1.1.4 of this document.

The University will NOT seek a best and final offer (BAFO) from any Respondent in this procurement process. All Respondents are expected to provide their best value pricing with the submission of their response. Respondents will NOT be given another opportunity to modify pricing once submitted.

The score will be based on a 100-point scale and will measure the degree to which each response meets the following criteria:

Established Criteria	Total Points
Address criteria aligned with evidence-based practices and grant priorities on evaluation recommendations	20
Process and Interim/Annual/Final report requirements	20
Professional Submission	5
Educational Background	5
American Evaluation Association Membership	5
Number of years' experience conducting Title III/V project evaluations	10
3 references provided	5
Bid within approved federal budget	30
Total Points	100

2.2 Award

When the University prefers a single solution that is scalable to meet the needs of both large and small institutions, it reserves the right to award Agreement(s) to one or multiple Respondents, which may include awards to Respondents for a geographical area, if such award is in the best interest of the University.

The University reserves the right to waive minor irregularities, which may include contacting the Respondent to resolve the irregularity. Scholarships, donations, or gifts to the University, will not be considered in the evaluation of responses. The University reserves the right to reject any or all responses, in whole or in part, and is not necessarily bound to accept the lowest cost response if that response is contrary to the best interests of the University. The University may cancel this request or reject any or all responses in whole or in part. Should the University determine in its sole discretion that only one Respondent is fully qualified, or that one Respondent is clearly more qualified than any other under consideration, an Agreement may be awarded to that Respondent without further action.

2.3 Negotiations

The University reserves the right to negotiate with the successful Respondent to finalize a Agreement. Such negotiations may not significantly vary the content, nature or requirements of the proposal or the University's Request for Proposals to an extent that

may affect the price of goods or services requested. The University reserves the right to terminate Agreement negotiations with a selected respondent who submits a proposed Agreement significantly different from the response they submitted in response to the advertised RFQ. In the event that an acceptable Agreement cannot be negotiated with the highest ranked Respondent, the University may withdraw its award and negotiate with the next-highest ranked Respondent, and so on, until an acceptable Agreement has been finalized. Alternatively, the University may cancel the RFQ, at its sole discretion.

2.4 Award Protest

Respondents may appeal the award decision by submitting a written protest to the University of Maine System's Chief General Services Officer within five (5) business days of the date of the award notice, with a copy of the protest to the successful Respondent. The protest must contain a statement of the basis for the challenge. The protest must contain a statement of the basis for the challenge. Further information regarding the appeal process can be found at

http://staticweb.maine.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/APL_VII-A_20150630-FINAL.pdf?565a1d

If this RFQ results in the creation of a pre-qualified or pre-approved list of vendors, then the appeal procedures mentioned above are available upon the original determination of that vendor list, but not during subsequent competitive procedures involving only the pre-qualified or pre-approved list participants.

3.0 RESPONSE FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

3.1 General Format Instructions

3.1.1 Electronic Submissions

Documents submitted as part of the electronic response are to be prepared on standard electronic formats of 8-1/2" x 11" and of PDF file type. Submissions requiring additional supporting information, such as, foldouts containing charts, spreadsheets, and oversize exhibits are permissible and must be submitted as Appendices, clearly numbered and referencing the Section in which they provide supporting information.

For clarity, the Respondent's name should appear on every document page, including Appendices. Each Appendix must reference the section or subsection number to which it corresponds.

3.1.2 Respondents Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Respondent to provide all information requested in the document package at the time of submission. Failure to provide information requested in this document may, at the discretion of the University's evaluation review team, result in a lower rating for the incomplete sections and may result in the response being disqualified for consideration. Include any forms provided in the application package or reproduce those forms as closely as possible. All information should be presented in the same order and format as described in this document.

3.1.3 Brief Response

Respondents are asked to be brief and to respond to each question listed in the "Response to Questions" section of this document. Number each response in the response to correspond to the relevant question in this document.

3.1.4 Additional Attachments Prohibited

The Respondent may not provide additional attachments beyond those specified in the document for the purpose of extending their response. Any material exceeding the response limit will not be considered in rating the response and will not be returned. Respondents shall not include brochures or other promotional material with their response. Additional materials will not be considered part of the response and will not be evaluated.

3.2 Response Format Instructions

This section contains instructions for Respondents to use in preparing their response. The Respondent's submission must follow the outline used below, including the numbering of section and sub-section headings. Failure to use the outline specified in this section or to respond to all questions and instructions throughout this document may result in the response being disqualified as non-responsive or receiving a reduced score.

The University and its evaluation team for this document have sole discretion to determine whether a variance from the document specifications should result in either disqualification or reduction in scoring of a response.

Re-phrasing of the content provided in this document will, at best, be considered minimally responsive. The University seeks detailed yet succinct responses that demonstrate the Respondent's experience and ability to perform the requirements specified throughout this document.

3.2.1 Response Submission

A SIGNED copy of this bid document must be submitted to the Office of Strategic Procurement as follows:

1. Completion of **Appendix A** – University of Maine System Response Cover Page. **Appendix A** must be SIGNED as part of the submission.
2. Completion of **Appendix B** – Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification. **Appendix B** must be SIGNED as part of the submission.
3. Bid submission will be submitted electronically to the Email provided in the Contact section of the cover page of this document.
4. Electronic submission must be received by the required Response Deadline/Time reflected on the cover page of this document.
The **BID SUBMISSION PACKAGE** provided may be used by the Respondent to satisfy the Bid Submission requirement.