

**STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**FOR EXTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES**

**July 19, 2019**

**I. Background**

The State Education Resource Center (“SERC”) was established 50 years ago as a “focal point of action and communication for special education personnel from throughout the state” of Connecticut (CT State Department of Education newsletter, October 1969). We have served local school districts, state-level policy makers, families, community agencies, and other stakeholders by facilitating professional learning, including technical assistance and training; providing resources, in part through a centralized library; and leading a range of other activities and supports over our nearly five decades in operation.

As we evolved, SERC was statutorily tasked to serve the Connecticut State Board of Education and led the ongoing effort to integrate special and general education, historically divided systems, into a unified approach to education that promotes equitable policies, culturally relevant practices, and accessible structures that develop successful learning communities within schools. We became a state quasi-public agency in 2014, recognizing our unique position to work closely with communities across Connecticut.

All of the agency’s efforts, including in the areas of early childhood education, family engagement, and support for English learners among many others, are designed to address educational equity and opportunity gaps. SERC’s consultants and staff, in collaboration with our partners, build the capacity of educators, service providers, and families to meet the diverse needs of our student population.

SERC recognizes that to be effective in facilitating change that is systemic, effective, and enduring, all stakeholders must be included in the change process. Through partnerships with us, education systems shape their own transformation while SERC facilitates the process and customizes application of research and new thinking. SERC maintains many ongoing, years-long relationships with local education agencies and offers continued support to foster and sustain systemic change.

Through this work, SERC is committed to our vision for and mission of equity, excellence, and education.

## **II. Proposed Scope of Services**

The State Education Resource Center (“SERC”) is seeking Proposals from qualified public accounting firms to perform certain audit functions for all or part of fiscal years 2019, 2020 and 2021. These functions shall include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Audit of annual financial statements prepared by SERC, beginning with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019
- (2) Federal Single Audit beginning with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019
- (3) State Single Audit beginning with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019

This engagement will begin immediately following (or as soon as practicable after) the awarding of this contract.

## **III. Requested Information**

Each respondent to the Request for Proposal must provide the following information:

- a) A list of municipal clients, including State Agencies, Educational Institutions, and Local Education Agencies, that your firm currently audits or has audited.
- b) Provide at least three references from clients that you have audited that you believe are similar in function to SERC. Provide a summary on the scope of services along with the size (for example, by total assets) of the municipal client.
- c) Provide a summary of the key strengths and qualifications of your firm to provide audit services. What do you think are the most important reasons SERC should select your firm? (Response not to exceed one page.)
- d) Provide a list of the number of professionals your firm employs for municipal clients by title. Please also include years at the firm, years of auditing experience, and any professional designations that these employees currently hold. Indicate which staff will be assigned to SERC, their respective backgrounds in public finance auditing, and what their roles will be.
- e) Furnish evidence of the firm’s financial stability.
- f) Please include a comprehensive fee schedule for the annual audit, including the federal and state single audits, and for any additional work SERC may request from time to time.
- g) Provide a proposed timeline for fieldwork and final reporting.
- h) Describe any services your firm performs for other Connecticut clients or any other connections or commitments it has in Connecticut.
- i) Describe your firm’s presence in Connecticut. Include in your discussion your firm’s participation in any civic or other nonprofit activities, including any

contributions that your firm made.

- j) Submit specific information regarding your firm's commitment to Affirmative Action. Please include, at a minimum, formal internal hiring practices and discussion of working relationships with firms owned by women and other minority groups. Please include your firm's most recent EEOC report.
- k) Indicate if your firm or predecessor firm is the subject of any investigation or proceedings by any governmental or regulatory agencies such as SEC, PCAOB, DOJ, etc., related to your auditing role. If so, describe the circumstances and provide assurance to SERC that these investigations or proceedings will not affect your ability to complete the proposed transaction.
- l) Have you or your firm or a predecessor firm ever been removed from an account prior to the expiration of its contract? If so, please explain.
- m) A copy of your firm's most recent peer review report, the related letter of comments, and the firm's response to the letter of comments.

Your firm may be requested to make an oral presentation as part of this RFP.

#### **IV. Submission Deadline**

Responses to this RFP must be received by SERC no later than **12:00 noon, August 30, 2019**.

#### **V. Evaluation Criteria**

Firms will be evaluated on the basis of their written response to this RFP; additional written information requested by SERC; oral interviews, if any; and reference checks against the following criteria:

1. Experience of the firm in performing the specified work as demonstrated through direct relevant experience, with preference given to firms with education auditing experience, state agency auditing experience, and other governmental auditing experience.	40%
2. Qualifications of personnel, including experience and availability of the parties to provide services.	25%
3. Financial capability to provide the requested services and overall financial stability.	10%
4. Competitiveness of proposed cost.	15%
5. Connecticut presence, as evidenced by the number of offices the firm maintains in Connecticut and the number of Connecticut residents employed.	10%

## **VI. Submission Requirements**

1. Please send an electronic copy of your proposal to Glen Hale, Chief Financial Officer, at [AuditRFP@ctserc.org](mailto:AuditRFP@ctserc.org).
2. Proposals received after the Submission Deadline date and time may result in SERC's rejection of the Proposal.
3. Proposal must include a cover letter signed by an individual authorized to enter into a contract with SERC on behalf of the organization, acknowledging that the firm agrees to be bound by all terms and conditions of the RFP and affirming that all information contained in the Proposal is true and accurately portrays all aspects of the services to be provided.

## **VII. General Instructions**

1. All questions or requests for further information should be directed to Holly King, Contracts Manager, by emailing [King@ctserc.org](mailto:King@ctserc.org). Any other ex parte communication regarding this RFP is NOT permitted and may be grounds for elimination from further consideration.
2. Contained in this Request for Proposal is a copy of SERC's 2018 Financial Statement Audit Report. This document should provide a general overview of SERC's operations.
3. Additional information about SERC may be found at [www.ctserc.org](http://www.ctserc.org).
4. Failure to comply with the requirements of this RFP may result in SERC's rejection of a Proposal.
5. SERC is under no obligation to select auditors as a result of this RFP and has the right to withdraw the RFP at any time.
6. SERC shall not be liable for any pre-contract costs incurred by any organization participating in the selection process.
7. All matters set forth in a Proposal shall become the property of SERC and may be disclosed by SERC after the awarding of the contract. The contents of each Proposal will be available for public inspection after the awarding of a contract.
8. SERC is exempt from the payment of excise and sales taxes imposed by the

Federal Government and/or the State. Proposers remain liable, however, for any other applicable taxes.

9. SERC is not obligated to: accept a Proposal based upon the lowest fee schedule; accept a Proposal based on considerations other than costs; and/or waive or modify any irregularities or informalities in Proposals received. SERC reserves the right to: reject any and all Proposals received in response to this request; negotiate the fees and charges contained in any Proposal; award contracts in any manner necessary to serve the best interest of SERC; and request additional information as determined necessary.
10. Respondents should also be aware of the following:
  - a) The agreement between SERC and the selected organization will be evidenced by a written contract (the "Contract"), which shall incorporate this RFP, the Proposal, and any related correspondence. In executing such Contract, the selected organization agrees to be bound by the terms and conditions of this RFP, and that all representations, warranties and commitments in the Proposal and related correspondence are contractual obligations. In the event of any conflict in the terms and conditions between the RFP, Proposal, and any related correspondence, the RFP shall control.
  - b) Any work product issued or produced for SERC, such as an audited financial statement, belongs to SERC. SERC is and shall not be required to seek approval(s) from the firm for the use of such work product (for the benefit of SERC and its business activities).

The State Education Resource Center is an Affirmative Action / Equal  
Opportunity Employer