

State Education Resource Center (SERC)

Request for Proposals (RFP) for Agency Auditor

SERC RFP Number: Audit092022

State Education Resource Center (SERC)

Contact Person: Michelle Weaver, General Counsel

Proposal Schedule (All times are Eastern Time)

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| Release of RFP by electronic means on the SERC website at www.ctserc.org/auditrfp2022 and CTsource by: | 4:00 pm on Tuesday, September 20, 2022 |
| Receipt of questions until: | 4:00 pm on Tuesday, September 27, 2022 |
| Answers to questions will be posted as an Addendum on the SERC website at www.ctserc.org/auditrfp2022 and CTsource by: | 4:00 pm on Friday, September 30, 2022 |
| Proposal due date: | 4:00 pm on Friday, October 14, 2022 |
| Oral Presentations by invitation: | Tuesday – Friday, October 25-28, 2022 |
| Award announcement: | 4:00 pm on Monday, October 31, 2022 |

The State Education Resource Center (SERC) is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. SERC does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. SERC does not unlawfully discriminate in employment against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction. Inquiries regarding SERC's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to:

Michelle Weaver
General Counsel, SERC
100 Roscommon Drive, Suite 110
Middletown, CT 06457
(860) 632-1485, ext. 364
weaver@ctserc.org

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About SERC

The State Education Resource Center (SERC) was established over 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 policymakers, 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 five decades in operation.

As we evolved, SERC was statutorily tasked to serve the CT 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 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, results-based, 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 organizations, and offers continued support to foster and sustain systemic change.

Through this work, SERC is committed to its vision of equity, excellence, and education.

Overview and Purpose

The State Education Resource Center (“SERC”) is seeking Proposals from qualified public accounting firms to perform audit functions for all of fiscal years 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Deliverables

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

- (1) Audit of annual financial statements prepared by SERC for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022

(2) Federal Single Audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022

(3) State Single Audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022

Required Minimum Qualifications for Consideration

- Licensed CPA firm performing audits for a minimum of seven years.

Proposal Requirements

- 1) Cover page including:
 - a. Organization/individual name
 - b. Contact name and email
- 2) 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. 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. 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. 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. Evidence of the firm's financial stability.
 - f. 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. A proposed timeline for fieldwork and final reporting.
 - h. Any services your firm performs for other Connecticut clients or any other connections or commitments it has in Connecticut.
 - i. A description of 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. 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. Whether 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. Whether you or your firm or a predecessor firm has 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.
- 3) Your firm may be requested to make an oral presentation as part of this RFP.
- 4) All proposals must follow the required format below. Failure to follow the required format will result in disqualification of the proposal from being read/scored:
- All pages must be numbered.
 - Page Limit: 30, including cover page
 - Page Size: 8 ½ x 11, portrait
 - Font Type: Calibri
 - Font Size: 12
 - Double-spaced (except tables)
 - Margins: .75" minimum on the top, bottom, and sides of all pages
 - Do not use material in proposals dependent on color distinctions, animation, hyperlinks, etc.
 - Do not include attachments other than those requested or required by this RFP.

Instructions for Proposers

I. Contact Limitation

During the period from the organization's/individual's receipt of this RFP until the Award Announcement is made and a contract is awarded, the organization/individual shall not contact any employee of SERC for additional information except in writing directed to Michelle Weaver, General Counsel, at weaver@ctserc.org.

II. General Instructions

- 1) Contained in this Request for Proposal is a copy of SERC's 2021 Financial Statement Audit Report. This document should provide a general overview of SERC's operations.

- 2) Additional information about SERC may be found at www.ctserc.org.
- 3) Failure to comply with the requirements of this RFP may result in SERC's rejection of a Proposal.
- 4) 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.
- 5) SERC shall not be liable for any pre-contract costs incurred by any organization participating in the selection process.
- 6) 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.
- 7) 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.
- 8) 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.

III. Questions

Questions for the purposes of clarifying the RFP must be submitted in writing by email to Michelle Weaver, General Counsel, at weaver@ctserc.org, and must be received no later than 4:00 pm on Tuesday, September 27, 2022. Questions and responses will be posted as an "Addendum to the Auditor RFP" by 4:00 pm on Friday, September 30, 2022 at www.ctserc.org/auditrfp2022. Please note that submission of questions for response does not in any way enhance or guarantee the chances of receiving a contract through this proposal.

IV. Proposal Submission

All responses to this solicitation must be received in **single pdf format** at www.ctserc.org/auditrfp2022 no later than **4:00 pm on Friday, October 14, 2022**.

Selection Criteria

| Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals | Percent of Score |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 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% |
| | |
| Qualifications of personnel, including experience and availability of the parties to provide services. | 25% |
| | |
| Financial capability to provide the requested services and overall financial stability. | 10% |
| | |
| Competitiveness of proposed cost. | 15% |
| | |
| Connecticut presence, as evidenced by the number of offices the firm maintains in Connecticut and the number of Connecticut residents employed. | 10% |
| | |
| TOTAL | 100% |

General Information

I. Contract Period

The contract period shall begin on a mutually agreed upon date through completion. SERC reserves the right to extend this contract.

II. Contract Award

SERC reserves the right to award the contract in a manner deemed to be in the best interests of SERC to meet its legislative requirement.

III. Stability of Proposed Prices

Any price offerings from proposers must be valid for a period of 30 days from the due date of the proposals.

IV. Amendment or Cancellation of the RFP

SERC reserves the right to cancel, amend, modify, or otherwise change this RFP at any time if it deems it to be in the best interests of SERC to meet its legislative requirement.

V. Proposal Modifications

No additions or changes to any proposal will be allowed after the proposal due date, unless such modification is specifically requested by SERC. SERC, at its option, may seek proposer retraction and clarification of any discrepancy or contradiction found during its review of proposals.

VI. Proposer Presentation of Supporting Evidence

Proposers must be prepared to provide any evidence of expertise, experience, performance, ability, and/or financial surety that SERC deems to be necessary or appropriate to fully establish the qualifications represented in the proposal.

VII. Proposer Demonstration of Proposed Services and/or Products

Proposers must be able to confirm their ability to provide all proposed services.

VIII. Erroneous Awards

SERC reserves the right to correct inaccurate awards. This includes revoking the awarding of a contract to a proposer and subsequently awarding the contract to a different proposer. Such action shall not constitute a breach of contract on the part of SERC because the contract with the initial proposer will be deemed voided as if no contract were ever in place.

IX. Proposal Expenses

Proposers are responsible for all costs and expenses incurred in the preparation of proposals and for any subsequent work on the proposal that is required.

X. Ownership of Proposals

All proposals shall become the property of SERC.

XI. Ownership of Subsequent Products

Any product, whether acceptable or unacceptable, developed under a contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall be the sole property of SERC unless otherwise stated in the contract.

XII. Oral Agreement or Arrangements

Any alleged oral agreements or arrangements made by proposers with SERC will be disregarded in any proposal evaluation or associated award.

XIII. Not a Contract

This RFP is not a contract and, alone, shall not be interpreted as such. Rather, this RFP serves only as the instrument through which proposals are solicited. SERC will pursue negotiations with the highest-scoring proposal. If, for some reason, SERC and the selected proposer fail to reach consensus on the issues relative to a contract, then SERC may commence contract negotiations with other proposers. SERC may decide at any time to start the RFP process again.

The selected proposer will be required to sign a formal contract. The contract may include a liquidated damages clause at the discretion of SERC, in addition to other relevant clauses.

XIV. Subcontractors

SERC prohibits the use of any subcontractors by the successful proposer. Proposers acknowledge by the act of submitting a proposal that any work provided under the contract is work conducted by the proposer on behalf of SERC.

XV. Accounting Procedures

Generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) or another acceptable accounting method must be utilized.