

State Education Resource Center (SERC)

Request for Proposals (RFP) for Technology Infrastructure Assessment

SERC RFP Number: SERCTECH122022

State Education Resource Center (SERC)

Contact Person: Michelle Weaver

Proposal Schedule (All times are Eastern Time)

Release of RFP by electronic means on the SERC website at www.ctserc.org/SERCTechrfp2022 and CTsource	Monday, December 19, 2022 at 4:00 pm EDT
Receipt of questions	Friday, January 6, 2023 at 4:00 pm EDT
Answers to questions will be posted as an Addendum on the SERC website at www.ctserc.org/SERCTechrfp2022 and CTsource	Friday, January 13, 2023 at 4:00 pm EDT
Proposal due date	Friday, January 20, 2023 at 4:00 pm EDT
Presentations via Zoom by invitation to select respondents	Thursday, February 2 – Friday, February 3, 2023
Award announcement	Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 4:00 pm EDT

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:

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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

Currently, SERC employs approximately 45 staff members working in a hybrid environment, which includes at home, in the office, and in the field. In this context, information technology systems are the central hub to SERC operations. As the agency grows, so does the complexity of its technology needs. Ever present is the necessity to upgrade legacy systems and seamlessly integrate technology that assists in the daily operations of the agency. SERC is seeking competitive proposals from qualified technology firms to:

1. Perform a comprehensive assessment of the agency’s current technology infrastructure in order to improve the overall organizational systems network
2. Provide recommendations for improvement based upon these identified needs

Deliverables

This engagement will begin immediately following (or as soon as practicable after) the awarding of this contract. The selected technology firm will:

1. Perform a comprehensive systems analysis and assessment of the agency's present technology infrastructure comprised of:

- a. A discovery to determine the agency's current technology operations including, but not limited to the review of the following components:
 - i. Agency objectives
 - ii. Current business processes used and the purpose of each
 - iii. Benefits and challenges of current systems
 - iv. Key software and hardware requirements
 - v. Fiscal management
 - vi. Program proposals
 - vii. Staff time allocation/tracking
 - viii. Event registration and payment processing
 - ix. Project management
 - x. Human resource management and development
 - xi. Contract management
 - xii. Database management
 - xiii. Marketing and public relations
 - xiv. Reporting and program evaluation
 - xv. Help desk support (internal/external)
- b. An identification of existing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

2. Provide recommendations for improvement based upon identified needs with the following information:

- a. Current best practices in the use and integration of multiple technology systems (section 1a) with attention to:
 - i. Enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions
 - ii. Appropriate hardware and software needs
 - iii. Procedural optimization
 - iv. An assessment of the pros and cons of various options
- b. A thorough estimation of the cost of proposed options including:

- i. Hardware and software
- ii. Implementation and professional development
- iii. Ongoing technical support

Required Minimum Qualifications for Consideration

- Proposer should:
 - Demonstrate a minimum of five (5) years' experience in IT needs assessments, implementation planning, and professional development
 - Demonstrate a proficiency in ERP software solutions, SQL and relational databases
 - Provide examples of successful implementation for modernization.
 - Be located within the United States with preferential consideration given to Connecticut.

Proposal Requirements

- 1) Cover page including:
 - a. Organization/individual name and full address
 - b. Contact name, phone and email

- 2) Each respondent to the Request for Proposal must provide the following information referenced in the order listed below:
 - a. A list of industries served including municipal clients, state agencies, educational institutions, or Local Education Agencies for which your firm currently provides or has provided consultation services.
 - b. At least three references from clients that you have contracted with that you believe have similar operations to SERC. Provide a summary of the scope of services and include the size of the client.
 - c. A summary of the key strengths and qualifications of your organization to provide technology consultation services, specifically technology needs assessments. Additionally, list the most important reasons SERC should select your firm. (Response to item c not to exceed one page.)
 - d. A list of the professionals your firm employs for clients by title. Please also include their years at the firm, years of experience, and any professional designations that these employees currently hold. Indicate which staff will be assigned to SERC, their respective backgrounds in technology consultation, and what their roles will be.
 - e. Evidence of the firm's financial stability.

- f. A comprehensive, itemized fee schedule for the consultation services, including any additional work SERC may request from time to time.
 - g. A proposed timeline for fieldwork and final reporting that includes an estimation of both the number of days for virtual meetings with SERC and in-person site visits at the SERC office.
 - h. A description of your firm's presence in Connecticut including any services your firm performs for other Connecticut clients or any other connections or commitments it has in Connecticut.
 - i. 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.
 - j. 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.
- 3) Your firm may be requested to deliver a virtual presentation as part of this RFP's selection process.
- 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: 15, including cover page
 - Page Size: 8 ½ x 11, portrait
 - Font Type: Calibri
 - Font Size: 12
 - Double-spaced (except tables)
 - Margins: .5" 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, at rfp@ctserc.org.

II. General Instructions

- 1) Additional information about SERC may be found at www.ctserc.org.

- 2) Failure to comply with the requirements of this RFP may result in SERC's rejection of a Proposal.
- 3) SERC is under no obligation to select proposals as a result of this RFP and has the right to withdraw the RFP at any time.
- 4) SERC shall not be liable for any pre-contract costs incurred by any organization participating in the selection process.
- 5) 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.
- 6) 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, at rfp@ctserc.org, and must be received no later than **4:00 pm on Friday, January 6, 2023**. Questions and responses will be posted as an "Addendum to the SERCTech RFP" by **4:00 pm on Friday, January 13, 2023** at www.ctserc.org/SERCTechrfp2022 and CTsource. 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 rfp@ctserc.org no later than **4:00 pm on Friday, January 20, 2023**.

Selection Criteria

All proposals will be double-scored and averaged. A 0-3 point rating scale will be used (0=no credit; 1=poor; 2=adequate 3=outstanding). If the average score is equal to or within one point of another proposal, both proposals will be triple-scored and the average of the highest two scores will be used. Selections for each component will be based on highest-ranked proposals with scores above 50.

Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals	Percent of Score
<p>1. Demonstrated capacity and expertise.</p> <p>a. Proposer has provided a detailed description of the organization’s capacity for this project, including a clear summary of the key strengths and qualifications to provide technology consultation services.</p> <p>b. Proposer clearly demonstrates organization’s experience and alignment in performing the specified work through direct, relevant experience in providing consulting services to education, state, or governmental agencies.</p> <p>c. Proposer clearly demonstrates availability to conduct an on-site discovery and assessment.</p>	35%
<p>2. Understanding of project via specifications of bid.</p> <p>a. Proposer has submitted detailed description of the planned methodology, including a timeline for completing scope of work and deliverables.</p> <p>b. Proposer demonstrates a thorough understanding of expectations and proficiency in software solutions</p> <p>c. Proposer has articulated a purposeful and thoughtful plan, including examples of successful implementation for modernization.</p>	45%
<p>3. Reasonability of cost related to expected service.</p> <p>a. Cost is considered reasonable and competitive.</p> <p>b. Deliverables are itemized separately from total cost.</p>	20%
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 60 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.