Request for Proposals (RFP)

To: Offerors  
From: Institute of International Education, Inc. (IIE)  
Subject: Selection of Preferred Vendor for Tax Software Services

RFP Issue Date: May 15, 2024  
RFP Closing Date: June 5, 2024  
RFP Closing Time: 5:00 pm EST  
Performance Period: October 1, 2024-September 30, 2025

Enclosed is a Request for Proposals (RFP). IIE invites qualified firms and organizations (“Offerors”) to submit a best-value proposal for the requested services. The Contract resulting from this award will be a USG Contractor Agreement Serving the below mentioned program.

Offerors are encouraged to read this RFP in its entirety (including any and all attachments), paying specific attention to the instructions and requirements included herein. Issuance of this solicitation does not, in any way, obligate the Institute of International Education (IIE) to award a contract, nor will IIE pay for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal. The agreement resulting from this RFP will be provided to the most responsive Offeror(s) whose Offer will be the most advantageous to IIE in terms of cost, functionality, and other factors as specified in this RFP.

The required services are described in the “Statement of Work” in Attachment A. IIE encourages your organization to indicate its interest in this RFP by submitting a proposal according to the instructions in “Proposal Preparation Instruction”. Proposals will be evaluated based on the “Evaluation Criteria”.

All proposals are due by the dates and times stated above. Any proposal received after the required time and date specified for receipt shall be considered late and non-responsive. Late proposals will not be evaluated.

Questions: Any questions are to be submitted in writing via email to the email address listed below no later than 5:00 pm EST, Friday May 24, 2024. No questions will be entertained if they are received by means other than the specified email address. No oral answers will be provided. Answers to questions IIE deems relevant to this RFP will be published by 5:00 pm EST, Friday May 31, 2024 on IIE’s website under Subawards and Procurement (https://www.iie.org/Work-With-Us/Subawards-Procurements).

Wendy Lau, Assistant Director of Participant Tax Services  
Institute of International Education, Inc.  
Email: wlau@iie.org

Proposal Submission: Proposals, including any attachments (limited to 6MB), should be sent electronically in PDF format to: wlau@iie.org. Be sure to include in the subject line: RFP for Tax Software Services IIE will not accept proposals received by fax.
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SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Background: Institute of International Education

The Institute of International Education ("IIE" or the "Institute") is a New York not-for-profit corporation that is among the world’s largest and most experienced international education and training organizations. Founded in 1919, IIE promotes educational exchange around the world through a wealth of programs and services including Fellowship and Scholarship Management, Higher Education Institutional Development, Emergency Student and Scholar Assistance, and Leadership Development.

For more than 100 years, IIE has promoted educational exchange around the world. The Institute currently implements more than 200 programs benefiting 40,000 participants from 183 countries. Foremost among these programs is the world-renowned Fulbright Program, which IIE has had the honor to administer on behalf of the U.S. Department of State since the program’s inception in 1946. In addition to the U.S. Department of State, program sponsors include: the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); major philanthropic foundations; private and public corporations; foreign governments; and individuals.

With IIE’s global headquarters in New York City, IIE has offices around the world, including offices in the United States (Washington D.C., Chicago, Houston and San Francisco) and staff in other countries (China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, Thailand and Ukraine).

Purpose of Request for Proposal

The purpose of this Request for Proposal ("RFP") is to invite qualified individuals and organizations to submit a proposal for the Selection of Preferred Vendors for Tax Software Services outlined more fully in Attachment A.

SECTION 2: RFP CONDITIONS

IIE reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all offers and discontinue this RFP process without obligation or liability to any potential Offeror or other party.
- Accept other than the lowest price offered.
- Award a contract on the basis of initial offers received, without discussions or requests for best and final offers.
- Award more than one contract.

Nothing in this RFP is, or should be relied on by Offeror as a promise or representation by IIE. IIE does not make any representation or warranty as to the completeness of this RFP or have any liability for any representations (express or implied) contained in, or omissions from, this RFP. This RFP and any replies to any written notifications are transmitted to the Offeror solely for the purposes of the Offeror preparing and submitting a Proposal. Each Offeror shall keep the RFP and its contents confidential and shall return the RFP (without keeping copies) to IIE if the Offeror elects not to submit a proposal, or upon being requested to do so by IIE.

Any information or materials submitted in response to this RFP and/or as a proposal (whether successful or unsuccessful) shall become the property of IIE and will not be returned.

In submitting a proposal, you must agree that your offer shall remain firm for a period of no less than 120 days from the RFP closing date.

Failure to follow the specifications and requirements provided in this RFP may result in disqualification.

The successful Offeror will be obligated to enter into an agreement containing the same or substantially similar terms and conditions found at: https://www.iie.org/Work-With-Us/Subawards-Procurements/Solicitations-for-Goods-and-Services. The terms and conditions may be changed, added to, deleted or modified by IIE prior to awarding the agreement. Other terms and conditions may be negotiated between IIE and the successful Offeror, at IIE’s discretion. State Universities and Agencies should not expect or ask IIE to modify its Terms and Conditions to incorporate any State Regulations or Statutes.
SECTION 3: PROPOSAL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals are expected to be comprehensive and include the information set forth below. Offerors are also invited to send any additional information or supplemental material they believe will aid IIE in properly evaluating their service offerings. Please be sure to respond to each of the elements requested and frame your answers in direct response to the information being sought.

Include only your work and no text copied from sources outside your organization, unless those sources are adequately cited and credited. In order to be qualified for this RFP, all Offerors are requested to provide the following information, and format their proposal as follows:

1. **Letter of transmittal, one page**

2. **Basic information, one page**
   - Legal name, registered address, and “Remit to” mailing address, if different from registered address
   - Name of authorized representative for this RFP, with telephone number(s), and e-mail address
   - General information about your organization and the services it offers

3. **Qualifications and Capabilities**
   - Brief description of the organization/entity and experience in the field that illustrates overall services and capabilities to meet the terms of the RFP
   - Years of relevant experience
   - Any plans to outsource/subcontract the services or any part thereof

4. **Past Performance and Experience**

Document and summarize your proven track record of successfully implementing similar activities. Using the table format provided below, please list only the relevant projects you implemented within the past 3 years, a brief description of how each is relevant to the scope of the RFP, and the contact details for each previous client or donor. You may also include recommendation/appreciation letters and certificates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>(a) Name of Organization</th>
<th>(b) Activity Title</th>
<th>(c) Locations of activity</th>
<th>(d) Synopsis of the activity and relevance to this RFP</th>
<th>(e) Performance period (date and duration)</th>
<th>(f) Cost for the activity</th>
<th>(g) Name &amp; Contact Info (E-mail and phone)</th>
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5. **Implementation of the Statement of Work**

   - Detailed description of the services being offered and any information relevant to meeting the technical specifications stated in Attachment A
   - Methodology, and reasoning behind the methodology chosen
   - Quality control plan including:
     - A description of internal review procedures that facilitate high-quality standards
     - How quality control will be managed when completing multiple projects for multiple clients
   - Exceptions to the RFP, additional or different ideas, in the statement of work and other requirements should be expressly noted
6. Cost Proposal
   - Submit a detailed cost proposal, in U.S. dollars, in the recommended format shown in Attachment B
   - Include any additional cost items that the Offeror wishes to propose
   - Total cost proposed

SECTION 4: TERMS OF PAYMENT
Payment terms for the award shall be approximately net thirty (30) days after satisfactory completion of each deliverable or milestone agreed upon and established in the resulting agreement. Payment shall be made by the Institute of International Education (“IIE”) via check or electronic funds transfer/bank wire. The final payment terms in the contract will control, not this RFP. No advance payments will be provided.

SECTION 5: EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

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<th>Item</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Maximum Length</th>
<th>Points Available</th>
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<tr>
<td>Qualifications and Capabilities</td>
<td>Assessment of the Offeror’s qualifications and capacity to complete the scope of work. Higher scores will be awarded to methodologies that indicate a greater practical understanding of implementing the work, and more innovative but realistic ways of carrying out the work.</td>
<td>2 pages</td>
<td>35 points</td>
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<td>Implementation of the Scope of Work</td>
<td>Assessment of the proposed approach to completing the scope of work, including project timeline and proposed platform capabilities. Higher scores will be awarded to materials that are more detailed, more accessible, and/or professionally developed.</td>
<td>15 pages</td>
<td>35 points</td>
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<td>Past Experience</td>
<td>Experience should be consistent with the requirements outlined in the Statement of Work in Attachment A. In addition: a) No exceptions will be given for the provision of fewer than three references; b) Evaluation may involve the checking of the references provided; and c) Publicly available information may also be used to evaluate experience.</td>
<td>5 pages</td>
<td>15 points</td>
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<td>Cost Proposal</td>
<td>IIE’s review of the cost proposal shall determine if the overall costs proposed are realistic for the work to be performed, reflect a correct understanding of the project requirements, and are consistent with the Offeror’s technical proposal.</td>
<td>3 pages</td>
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<td>20 pages</td>
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SECTION 6: ANNUAL RENEWAL:
Annual Renewal: Selection(s) may be renewed annually, at IIE’s sole discretion, for up to five years before re-competition. IIE reserves the right to exercise any one of the following options:

- Accept the updated proposal if changes are reasonable and within the scope of the original selection;
- Negotiate any updates/changes; or,
- Decide not to renew.
ATTACHMENT A STATEMENT OF WORK

IIE is seeking a vendor to provide software and other related products that enable IIE’s international participants to comply with US income tax laws. IIE’s international participants typically visit the US on J-1 visas to participate in academic or professional exchanges. Participants must file federal and state tax returns as necessary.

IIE’s requirements are divided into two categories: products and services in support of IIE and products and services in support of IIE’s international participants.

1. Products and services in support of IIE:

   • Online system for participants to generate federal and state tax returns that is geared towards participants who are J-1 visa holders, including, but not limited to, students, scholars, teachers, and, in some cases, their dependents. The online system should accommodate international participants in other visa categories as well. The exact number of participants may vary and is subject to change but on average is at least 4,000 annually.

   • Instant access to data to verify important information such as residency for tax purposes, tax rates, and applicable tax treaties. IIE is not requesting access to information or documentation that would require IIE to obtain a Power of Attorney from the grantee.

   • Report that tracks participants’ progress in completing tax returns.

   • Report that identifies participants who owe IIE refunds from IIE taxable income and tracks if the IRS has processed tax returns.

   • Ability for IIE to upload users into the online tax system.

   • Ability to generate 1042-S forms and provide guidance to IIE on tax withholding.

   • Training IIE team members regarding the use of the dashboards and reports and any other features geared to IIE

   • Ability to create ITIN applications (W-7 form) on behalf of participants and provide information on how to apply for an ITIN.

2. Products and services in support of IIE’s participant users:

   • Simple interface suitable for non-native English speakers

   • Embedded guidance that breaks down complicated tax regulations into plain English without abbreviations or jargon

   • On-demand Q&A / live chat support from tax experts
• System that is accessible with low-band internet connectivity

• System-produced forms provided upon completion of questions by individuals, for participants to print and submit by mail AND the capability to e-file when eligible

• Online system that has a mechanism to upload tax documents required by the selected vendor so grantees can complete tax returns including, but not limited to, passports, 1042-S forms, and any other required income documents.

• System notification for participants if a state tax return is required. If required, the system must walk the grantee through the filing process.

• System ability to send notifications and reminders to participants who have created a profile in the system

• Participants should not have to download any software from the selected vendor

• In advance of the tax season, training and guidance in the format of a webinar and training documents on the completion of tax returns, is available to IIE and participant users remotely

The following are not requirements but would be potentially helpful additions:

• Some level of integration with IIE’s Participant portal (Microsoft Dynamics CRM) so participants do not have to upload documents (such as passports, SSNs) in multiple places
Submit a detailed budget for the services described in the technical proposal. IIE’s review of the cost proposal shall determine if the overall costs proposed are realistic for the work to be performed, reflect a correct understanding of the project requirements, and are consistent with the Offeror’s Technical Proposal.

The following format may be used as a guide to assist you in preparing the cost proposal. You may submit the cost proposal using this form or in the format of your choice (plain sheets, your own form, or a variation of this form). The Offeror may list any cost line items, but it is recommended that the Offeror follow the major categories listed below, breaking down all “lump sum” items as much as reasonably possible.

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ATTACHMENT C - ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Third-Party IT Risk Management Process (TPRM)

An IT Security Questionnaire is required prior to signing a contract if the vendor will process IIE proprietary data or Personal Data according to GDPR’s definition on behalf of IIE or connect to IIE’s network.

- Vendors who can furnish evidence of an ISO 27001 Certification are asked to attach such documentation and to provide their up-to-date System and Organization Controls (SOC) 2 Type 2 Attestation.

- Vendors who cannot furnish IIE with ISO 27001 Certification evidence will be asked to provide a SOC 2 Type 2 attestation and complete a security assessment that is mapped to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cyber Security Framework (CSF). NIST is a guidance, based on existing standards, guidelines, and practices for organizations to better manage and reduce cybersecurity risk. The NIST CSF consists of five concurrent and continuous Functions—Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond, Recover. When considered together, these Functions provide a high-level, strategic view of the lifecycle of an organization's cybersecurity risk management.

- If your organization does not wish to complete this request using the automated OneTrust platform, please visit the “Welcome” screen of the IT Security Questionnaire (using the emailed link from OneTrust) and click “Complete Offline Using Excel” to download the Excel version of the NIST CSF assessment. Please make sure to upload the completed file to OneTrust using the same path and Submit.

Prohibition on certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment

IIE cannot enter into a contract to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems that uses covered telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part of any system. As described in Public Law 115-232, section 889, covered telecommunications equipment is telecommunications equipment produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities).

Covered equipment and services must not be part of your offer to IIE.