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Solicitation Amendment / Modification

1.	Solicitation No.	07092026/ET
2.	Solicitation Name	Preferred Partners for Web Design/ Web Hosting Services
3.	Issue Date	July 9, 2026
4.	Closing Date	August 10, 2026
5.	Solicitation Amendment No.	01
6.	Solicitation Amendment Date	July 30, 2026

7. The above numbered solicitation is amended as set forth in Item 9 below.

8. The hour and dates specified for receipt of proposals/quotations: ☒ is not extended; ☐ is extended as described in Item 9 below.

9. Description of Amendment/Modification:

The purpose of this solicitation amendment is to inform prospective offerors/bidders that the above numbered solicitation is hereby amended to provide responses to questions as follows.

See attached full list of Questions and Answers.

END OF AMENDMENT

ID #	Topic	Question	Answer
Q #001	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Can companies, small businesses, authorized individual businesses, or independent contractors based outside the United States, including India-based entities, submit proposals and become IIE preferred vendors?	Yes, all are eligible to submit proposals and may be considered for selection as IIE preferred vendors.
Q #002	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Can all required web design, development, hosting support, maintenance, and training services be delivered remotely, and does IIE have any onshore U.S.-based delivery preference or offshore-resource restrictions?	Yes, Services may be delivered remotely, IIE does not currently impose specific onshore delivery requirements or offshore resource restrictions.
Q #003	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	If an international company, individual contractor, or newly formed business is selected, what legal, tax, vendor-registration, financial-evidence, client-reference, and security-documentation requirements must be provided at proposal submission, due diligence, contract signature, or selection?	TBD. Additional requirements, if any, will be communicated during the evaluation, due diligence, or contracting process.
Q #004	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Will vendors receive controlled remote access to development, staging, production, hosting, security, monitoring, deployment, configuration, troubleshooting, or IIE-network environments, and what access restrictions apply?	Yes, appropriate access will be provided as needed to perform necessary services
Q #005	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Are there any data-residency or geographic hosting requirements, including U.S.-only, EU, regional, or country-specific server-location requirements?	Our strong preference is to have sites hosted in the US, likely at one of our preferred hosting vendors which are Pantheon or WPEngine.
Q #006	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	How many public websites, microsites, portals, subdomains, web applications, public-facing sites, internal portals, and web properties are currently in scope or expected to be supported under this preferred-vendor arrangement?	IIE anticipates supporting approximately two to five website-related projects annually
Q #007	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Can IIE provide a representative website and application inventory, including URLs, approximate page counts, site/application types, platforms/CMS, hosting providers, traffic/content volume, authenticated-user base, integrations, accessibility status, and whether each property is likely to fall under this contract?	Representative websites include ex. www.borenawards.org , gilmanscholarship.org , and fulbrightscholars.org
Q #008	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	How are IIE websites organized today, including standalone sites, subsites, multisite or multidomain implementations, subsite architectures, centralized IT ownership, decentralized business-unit ownership, and other architectures?	As IIE works for many different entities most of our sites are independent. We do have cases when one sponsor may have interdependent sites, like with our Fulbright sites.
Q #009	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	What are the approximate usage and hosting-sizing metrics for current web properties, including monthly or annual page views, visits, unique visitors, concurrent sessions, document roots, data storage, average or peak traffic, seasonal spikes, page-load expectations, and traffic variations across sites?	Website traffic, usage metrics, and hosting requirements vary widely by project and cannot be generalized across all IIE web properties.

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Q #010	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Which CMS platforms currently support IIE primary sites and web properties, how many sites are under each CMS, and is the CMS estate standardized or mixed?	IIE prefers WordPress for simpler sites, and Drupal if needed for a more complex site.
Q #011	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Does IIE plan to standardize on a single CMS, continue maintaining existing stacks, migrate/redesign sites to a common platform, or allow vendors to recommend alternative CMS or SaaS portal frameworks?	IIE is looking to be as consistent as feasible with our selection of CMS and hosting platform and architecture.
Q #012	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	What programming languages, frameworks, and technology stacks are predominantly used today for IIE websites and applications?	Wordpress and Drupal. We prefer WPEngine to host our WordPress sites and Pantheon to host our Drupal and larger sites.
Q #013	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Are there preferred technology standards, approved platforms, or technical standards that vendors should follow when proposing future solutions?	Please refer Q#12 for Answer
Q #014	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Can IIE describe the current data ecosystem behind its websites, including data sources, data-source types, estimated size and year-over-year growth, hosting location, manual hand-offs, and data re-entry points?	Please refer Q#12 for Answer
Q #015	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Which enterprise systems are commonly integrated with IIE websites, including CRM, ERP, finance, LMS, HR, payment, application, forms, portal, analytics, and systems of record?	Most of our sites do not link to our ERP systems. We do have some exceptions which link to our core MS Dynamics CRM system. When appropriate we want authentication to run through our centralized Okta identity management platform.
Q #016	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Which CRM platforms are currently in use and should vendors be prepared to support?	Most of our sites do not require or link to a CRM. But if they did it would likely be MS Dynamics.
Q #017	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Which identity provider and SSO standards are in use, including whether SAML is supported and whether vendors should anticipate SSO integration?	OKTA, which is SAML compliant.
Q #018	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Are APIs generally REST, GraphQL, or SOAP, and are there existing API governance standards vendors must follow?	IIE does not currently mandate specific API standards or governance requirements.
Q #019	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Can IIE describe the current hosting landscape, including whether hosting is shared, dedicated, cloud-based, on-premises, hybrid, enterprise-managed, program-specific, or subscription-specific?	Our strong preference is to have sites hosted in the US, likely at one of our preferred hosting vendors which are Pantheon or WPEngine.
Q #020	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Which hosting platforms, cloud providers, enterprise agreements, preferred hosting providers, approved providers, prohibited providers, or Section 889-related constraints should vendors consider?	Please refer Q#19 for Answer. As stated in the RFP, all services provided to IIE need to be compliant with Section 899 of the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act.

ID #	Topic	Question	Answer
Q #021	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	For future engagements, should vendors provide or resell managed hosting, manage and support IIE-owned hosting, coordinate with an IIE-designated/preferred provider, or be able to offer both models?	Please refer Q#19 for Answer
Q #022	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	May vendors propose Platform-as-a-Service, alternative hosting platforms, or alternative cloud architecture where they provide operational, security, or cost advantages?	Please refer Q#19 for Answer
Q #023	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	For lower-traffic or similar websites, can vendors assume shared hosting or a common codebase with logical isolation, and which sites require fully isolated environments due to security, compliance, or operational needs?	Please refer Q#19 for Answer
Q #024	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Are containerized deployments, infrastructure as code, DevOps automation, CI/CD, automated testing, visual regression testing, and standard Dev/QA/Staging/Production environments preferred or required?	Please refer Q#19 for Answer
Q #025	Technology Platform, Architecture & Infrastructure	Does IIE require or expect CDN, WAF, HTTPS/SSL, website-email sending, SSO, or connections from CMS/websites to internal systems behind firewalls?	This is dependent on the project. If we need SSO this will be through Okta. Most of our projects do not require integration with our systems behind our firewalls, but this is a possibility.
Q #026	Project Delivery, Support & Service Management	Are formal SLAs defined, and what response and resolution times should vendors assume?	SLA requirements will vary by project
Q #027	Project Delivery, Support & Service Management	Is 24x7 production support or after-hours support required, and what are the expectations and timeline for ongoing support and maintenance after implementation?	24 x 7 support is strongly preferred, may be dependent on the project.
Q #028	Project Delivery, Support & Service Management	For managed-support statements of work, what planning baseline should offerors use for support hours, incident severity levels, response/resolution targets, availability, backup retention, RTO, and RPO?	This is dependent on the complexity of the project and needs of the client.
Q #029	Project Delivery, Support & Service Management	How is maintenance work typically assigned and structured: fixed price, time and materials, milestone-based, monthly retainer, or another model?	Website security updates are usually contracted at a fixed monthly fee. Initial site builds prefer a set price with specific requirements. Ongoing support and enhancements are usually priced on an hourly basis for time used with a cap.
Q #030	Project Delivery, Support & Service Management	Will vendors be responsible for first-line content entry, editorial services, content updates, or only technical maintenance?	Generally, our internal Program teams need to be responsible for general content on the site. We anticipate a user-friendly CMS which will enable non-technical staff to update most of the general text based and make minimal updates to images and graphic content on the site.
Q #031	Project Delivery, Support & Service Management	What is IIE's current time-to-launch baseline for a new program website, what would success look like, and what bottlenecks exist across procurement, design iteration, infrastructure provisioning, staffing, or other steps?	Very dependent on the size of the project. Two months for a very simple site but could be up to a year for a very complex site or complete redesign. Bottlenecks are the common issues of approvals, legal and contracting issues.

ID #	Topic	Question	Answer
Q #032	Project Delivery, Support & Service Management	For each future task order or statement of work, what minimum information will IIE provide, including objectives, scope, platform/current inventory, content volume, integrations, hosting responsibility, accessibility requirements, target service levels, budget range, schedule, and acceptance criteria?	This is dependent on the project, but IIE will always try to provide as much detail as possible to help the vendor be confident they are providing the best product.
Q #033	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	After vendors are selected, how will IIE allocate future work among preferred vendors, including direct assignment, rotation, task orders, mini-competitions, per-project interviews, or other methods?	Work will be assigned based on skill set of the vendors, availability and past experience.
Q #034	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Will selected preferred vendors compete for every opportunity, and is any minimum assignment volume or work commitment anticipated, or is future work entirely at IIE's discretion?	This is a new process to be developed, and we cannot assure any volume of work.
Q #035	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Will design, hosting, and maintenance be awarded to one vendor per engagement, or can work be split across different preferred vendors?	Yes, we plan to assign work to multiple vendors given the volume of work and assignments.
Q #036	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	What annual project volume, annual spend range, historical spend, typical project size/frequency, approved budget, or budget range should vendors use to calibrate pricing and rate cards?	IIE anticipates between 3 to 5 new projects each year to be split among 3 to 5 preferred vendors.
Q #037	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Can IIE share a representative example of the type and size of work expected in the first 12 months, and are there live or near-term projects a selected vendor would begin immediately after award?	We cannot confirm any specific new projects.
Q #038	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Are incumbent vendors currently providing web design, hosting, maintenance, or related digital services; is the RFP intended to replace or supplement them; and are incumbents eligible to participate?	Incumbent vendors are welcome to participate in this RFP.
Q #039	Project Delivery, Support & Service Management	Will vendors work only with IT or also with individual program/business teams, and who are the primary stakeholders and their roles?	Most of our projects have the vendors working directly with non-technical Program staff. IIE's technical team will play a role in all builds and major upgrades.
Q #040	Digital Experience, Accessibility & Innovation	Does IIE maintain a centralized design system, brand guidelines, approved component library, or expected design tools such as Figma?	IIE does have a set style guide, though often needs to also work with Sponsor specific requirements. IIE does not mandate the tools the vendors use for the work product.
Q #041	Digital Experience, Accessibility & Innovation	Given IIE's global footprint, are multilingual or localization capabilities required, and for which properties?	Many of IIE's sites need to have multi-lingual capabilities. IIE has been using Weglot and Polylang but does not require a specific tool.
Q #042	Digital Experience, Accessibility & Innovation	Which accessibility compliance standard is operative for this RFP, including whether WCAG 2.1 Level AA remains required or whether WCAG 2.2 or successor standards are expected?	IIE expects websites and digital experiences to comply with WCAG 2.2 Level AA standards. Offerors should refer to the RFP for project-specific accessibility requirements and compliance obligations.

ID #	Topic	Question	Answer
Q #043	Digital Experience, Accessibility & Innovation	Does IIE have an enterprise AI strategy, and are AI-enabled experiences such as intelligent search, chatbot, personalization, automation, and AI-enabled websites current active needs, future-state aspirations, or both?	IIE's enterprise AI strategy is currently under development.
Q #044	Digital Experience, Accessibility & Innovation	Which AI capabilities or use cases would have the highest mission impact, including program discovery, application completion, support deflection, personalization, or other use cases currently in use or planned?	IIE's enterprise AI strategy is currently under development.
Q #045	Digital Experience, Accessibility & Innovation	Are there preferred AI platforms, RAG expectations, private-enterprise environment requirements, internal-knowledge-repository integrations, or responsible-AI/governance policies vendors must follow?	Currently under development.
Q #046	Security, Compliance & Risk Governance	For transactional functionality such as applications, forms, payments, or portals, which systems of record and enterprise integrations should vendors expect to support?	Enterprise integrations are not required for most projects, but if so would likely involve Okta for authentication and integration with our Dynamics CRM platform. IIE also prefers to use Stripe for financial transactions.
Q #047	Security, Compliance & Risk Governance	Besides GDPR, what privacy frameworks, sponsor-driven compliance requirements, federal flowdowns, or Data Protection Addendum terms apply at preferred-vendor selection versus specific SOW or agreement stages?	This often depends on our sponsors and their requirements. As a U.S. based organization, compliance with the U.S. Privacy Act of 1974 is priority.
Q #048	Security, Compliance & Risk Governance	Is PII, proprietary data, or personal data commonly processed by IIE websites, and which data-handling, network-connection, or hosting scenarios trigger the IT Security Questionnaire or third-party risk review?	All vendors handling PII will be required to have a third party risk assessment performed via our One Trust platform.
Q #049	Security, Compliance & Risk Governance	Are there restrictions on subcontractors accessing production data or IIE systems, and what security obligations apply to subcontractors?	IIE will always try to provide the minimal level of access needed to confidential data necessary for vendors to do their work.
Q #050	Security, Compliance & Risk Governance	Which security certifications, standards, or attestations are required or preferred for selection and future engagements, including ISO 27001, SOC 2 Type 2, NIST CSF-mapped assessment, OneTrust, and any equivalent standards?	Offerors should refer to the RFP for detailed security, certification, and compliance requirements.
Q #051	Security, Compliance & Risk Governance	If an offeror lacks ISO 27001 or SOC 2 Type 2, can a NIST CSF-mapped assessment or OneTrust security review serve as an acceptable pathway, and can ISO/SOC completion occur on a defined roadmap before data-sensitive work?	Yes. Vendors that do not maintain ISO 27001 certification may provide a SOC 2 Type II attestation and complete a security assessment mapped to the NIST Cybersecurity Framework (CSF) as part of the vendor risk review process.
Q #052	Security, Compliance & Risk Governance	Will IIE accept security certifications, reports, or attestations held by a parent company or affiliated entity for an offeror, and what conditions would apply?	No

Q #053	Security, Compliance & Risk Governance	When must security evidence, ISO/SOC documentation, questionnaires, insurance certificates, third-party risk assessments, recommendation letters, and secure supporting materials be submitted: with proposal, before selection, before contract signing, or before a data-sensitive SOW?	Security documentation requirements and submission timing are defined within the RFP and associated security review processes. Additional documentation may be requested during vendor evaluation, contracting, or prior to engagements involving sensitive data.
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Q #054	Security, Compliance & Risk Governance	Will IIE provide assessment, audit, or third-party risk-review access requirements for vendors, including the secure method for submitting large or sensitive security artifacts?	Offerors should follow the guidance and instructions provided within the RFP regarding security assessments, third-party risk reviews, questionnaires, and compliance documentation. Secure submission methods will be communicated as part of the review process.
Q #055	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	What insurance policy types and minimum coverage limits are required for preferred-vendor selection?	Insurance requirements, minimum coverage limits, and certificate requirements will be addressed during the contract negotiation and award phase.
Q #056	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Should the financial proposal consist only of labor-category rate cards, or should vendors include role-based rates, blended rates, fixed-price service packages, retainers, representative service packages, assumptions, or other pricing units?	IIE does not prescribe a specific pricing format. Vendors should submit the rate structure and pricing model that best represents their services and delivery approach.
Q #057	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Should vendors provide separate onsite and offshore resource rate cards, and if onsite rates are needed, should they cover only key roles or all proposed labor categories?	IIE does not prescribe a specific pricing format. Vendors should submit the rate structure and pricing model that best represents their services and delivery approach.
Q #058	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Should hosting costs be presented separately from design and maintenance costs in the cost proposal?	Yes. Hosting costs should be presented separately from design, development, maintenance, and support costs. Vendors are encouraged to itemize expenses whenever possible.
Q #059	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	For ongoing maintenance and hosting, should vendors assume monthly retainer invoicing or continue to follow net-30 milestone-completion payment terms?	IIE generally prefers to maintain ownership of hosting arrangements. When hosting services are vendor-managed, billing is typically structured on a quarterly basis.
Q #060	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Must proposed rates remain fixed for the full five-year performance period, or may vendors propose annual adjustments at renewal, including any required index, cap, notice period, or format?	Reasonable rate adjustments are expected.
Q #061	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	How will cost competitiveness and pricing strategy be evaluated when there is no defined project scope, quantity, or total fixed price?	IIE follows standards project methodology to create appropriate pricing mechanisms. This could include an initial project phase to develop additional details and milestones before the formal project build begins.

Q #062	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Should proposals be organized according to Section 3, Section 4, or both, and how should offerors avoid redundancy while remaining responsive?	Offerors should structure responses in accordance with the RFP instructions. Proposal organization, technical submissions, and supporting materials will be evaluated as part of the overall proposal assessment.
Q #063	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Is there an overall page limit or formatting requirement for the technical proposal, commercial/cost proposal, or complete proposal, and are the cover page and table of contents excluded?	No additional formatting requirements apply beyond those specified in the RFP.
Q #064	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Are multiple attachments or file-size accommodation permitted for supplemental materials such as portfolio examples, security documents, recommendation letters, or supporting evidence beyond the 6 MB email attachment limit?	Proposal submissions should follow the instructions provided in the RFP regarding file structure, attachment requirements, and submission limits. Supplemental materials may be included in accordance with those requirements.

ID #	Topic	Question	Answer
Q #065	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	What is the required minimum or maximum number of past-performance projects and references, must the table contain exactly three projects, and may ongoing projects or owned-product websites with accessibility, security, QA, and build evidence be used?	Vendors should provide a minimum of three relevant project references. Additional projects may be included where they further demonstrate the vendor's capabilities and experience.
Q #066	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	What is the intended award term: a five-year performance period from award or a one-year term renewable annually at IIE's discretion for up to five years?	The preferred-vendor arrangement is expected to support engagements for a period of up to five years, subject to applicable contract terms and renewal provisions.
Q #067	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	Approximately how many vendors does IIE expect to select for the preferred vendor pool?	IIE anticipates selecting approximately three to five vendors for the preferred-vendor pool.
Q #068	Vendor Qualification, Contracting & Commercial Management	If a proposed resource becomes unavailable at award or project start, may the vendor substitute another resource with similar experience and skill set?	Yes. Vendors may propose substitute resources, provided the replacement personnel possess qualifications, experience, and skill sets comparable to those originally proposed.
Q #069	Project Delivery, Support & Service Management	For future SOWs, what roles, job titles, qualifications, certifications, experience levels, role descriptions, staffing assumptions, and future staffing expectations should vendors include in proposals and rate cards?	Offerors are requested to provide as much detail as possible regarding the discrete roles commonly utilized in the delivery of similar services.