FLINT HILLS
REGION

Questions & Responses to

Regional Workforce Needs Software & Data

RFP No. 21-03

1. If the bid is open to an international technology consulting company headquartered in India? *Yes.*

2. Is there any domestic or international travel required for vendor team members for this project? *No.*

3. Would you like us to provide an estimation for annual maintenance & hosting along with the services stated in the RFP? *Yes, per Section 29.0, Item 29.3. Maintenance and Support -List maintenance and support cost for year-one and annual cost post the first-year and Section 30.0, Item 30.1.4. Cost Proposal - Detailed cost breakdown associated with each element*

4. Is there any pre-bid meeting or we can send our technical queries on this email? *Yes, per Section 7.3 Tentative Schedule of Events, a Pre-Proposal Conference will be held virtually on Monday, July 12, 2021, 1:00 PM (CST). Details regarding the Pre-Proposal Conference Zoom meeting, including the meeting link, can be found on Page 1 of the RFP.*

The following questions were received during the pre-proposal conference, held on July 12, 2021 at 1:00 PM CST. To view the questions and answers in the recording, follow this link and navigate to the time specified to the left of the question.

5. (7:06 – 8:17) Are international companies allowed for this type of participation? *Yes.*

6. (8:31 – 8:50) Are there any particular certificates like registration that are required to submit at part of the proposal? **Any business that has a U.S. issued minority and/or women-owned business certification must submit a copy of the certification in order to receive points towards this scoring component. No other certifications or proof of registration are required as part of the proposal. Any business submitting a proposal but be in good standing to operate within the United States and follow all local, state and federal laws, and may be requested prior to entering any agreement to provide additional verification of good standing.**

7. (15:15 – 16:30) Is there a certain user amount for external stakeholders aside from the two internal users? Is there an number of licenses that they would need to access the system? *We will not have a specified amount, as this will be open to the public and therefore unlimited access. (If any solution proposed requires a specific number of users, this would need to be clearly identified in the proposal with enough information for the evaluation committee to reasonably make a decision related to pricing options, and logistics explanation as to how the public-facing users obtain access.)*

8. (16:39 – 18:30) Are there any open-source technology restrictions or are you open for accommodation? *Our current website uses WordPress. We do not have any restrictions in regard to what platform or open-source technology you would need to use. In general, with the public-facing platform, if there is any kind of log-in, if there is any personal information, keeping that personal, but aside from that there are not any restrictions using open-source technology. We do not want to create a second website, we want everything integrated, whether that is a link to access it, if it is hosted elsewhere, however that needs to work, but from our website flinthillsregion.org.*

9. (18:45 – 19:28) Do you have any current plan, or do you want a suggested hosted plan for this new software? *We do not. Please provide recommendations for hosting such a platform.*

10. (19:40 – 21:08) Is there any membership registration forms or any kind of database required for this platform? *It could work one of two ways: They come to the site, they are using the site, and they run a query based on information they are entering in, and they get a report on the other end or whatever the advice may be or searches. Not necessarily where they are saving the information and are coming back. But, if that is providing a more valuable experience on the user-end, then we are not opposed to that, but we do not want to overcomplicate the system. We want to keep it as simple and straightforward as possible.*

11. (21:09 – 21:31) Will there need to be email integrations or other type of integrations for communication, such as sending newsletters, etc.? *No.*

12. (21:35 – 23:25) In terms of employers who are posting these job opportunities is there a preferred way of what kind of access they need? Would they need a specific access or where would these opportunities be hosted from? *If employers are using main systems (i.e., Indeed, etc.) and if there is a way to grab that information to pull it into one site, that is what we are aiming for; more so than individual companies going to our site to upload information. It could work both ways to give the flexibility to do that, but we are not sure we have the funding to get the marketing out there enough to be an independent, standalone site where people are all entering their information.*

13. (23:45 – 26:52) Is it FHRC staff that will post the job or other stakeholders throughout the region that will post the job? *The intent is the postings to feed in from other third-party entities such as Indeed.com, USAJOBS, Monster, LinkedIn, and have those feed into ours so ours almost serves as a hub as opposed to us posting the jobs. For us it is getting the word out to our regional potential employees that there are jobs in the region but that they may not be aware to go to the specific site the job is posted on. If we pull in from multiple third-party vendors, then it is all bringing it from a geographic standpoint and gives the region one additional source to go to that is more robust with local/regional jobs.*

14. (28:47 – 32:28) In regard to the third goal about the professional consulting services, can you please explain what kind of services? *The professional consulting services are the optional services listed in the scope, such as the economic impact analysis and skills gap analysis. A single vendor or a vendor with subcontractors is acceptable if needed to ensure the appropriate skills are applied to each component of the proposal.*

Consulting services would provide data and recommendations in creating a more resilient workforce in our region. The economic impact analysis of understanding what impact COVID-19 has had on our regional workforce, since our region like many others, is struggling with finding enough employees right now for certain types of businesses and certain types of sectors, that how can we find the data and analyze that so we can make data-driven decisions as opposed to just off-the-cuff decisions. Also that skills gap analysis component, making sure that our region is producing the talent we need and what our employers need. If that isn't matching up, how we can work with our local educational institutions to see if there is any training we can offer, and programs they can offer to meet that future occupational demand. Another component is general trend data. When you are in the middle of a pandemic/emergency there isn't a trend, it is all over the place and you are waiting for it to settle down before you understand where everything lands. Moving forward we are putting together a resiliency plan that is part of our regional economic development plan. Any kind of trend data showing changes in where we were before the pandemic to current is going to help us, and we would love recommendations for what are key things we should be doing as a region to become more resilient and turn some of those trends around holistically. We want to incorporate that information into our plan that we will be submitting in our plan back to the Economic Development Administration. If we move forward with that component, even though we are listing that as options, that is the piece we would need the fastest.

15. How and where can we get the data for Analysis in section 29.4? *The data used for the analysis outlined in Section 29.4 of the RFP is at the discretion of the Vendor. The FHRC does not have current in-house data, so all data must be acquired and/or provided by the Vendor. At a minimum, the analysis would look at the economic modeling information outlined in Section 29.2, but would use any other sources of data (i.e. U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, etc.) that the Vendor deems necessary in fulfilling the goals outlined in the RFP. The goals are discussed in depth in Section 27.0.*

16. Do we need a user profile apart from below? *No. Regarding the profiles listed, please see the notes below (if applicable):*
    1. Admin with access to update and change data - **Yes**
    2. Admin with view access for Job seeker and job poster activities - **Yes**
    3. Job applicant
       This profile may not be necessary but is up to the discretion of the Vendor. We anticipate the site to work one of two ways: They come to the site, they are using the site, and they run a query based on information they are entering in, and they get a report on the other end or whatever the advice may be or searches. Not necessarily where they are saving the information and are coming back. But, if that is providing a more valuable experience on the user end then we are not opposed to that, but we do not want to overcomplicate the system. We want to keep it as simple and straightforward as possible.
    4. Job lister
       We do not currently need this profile. The intent is the postings to feed in from other third-party entities such as Indeed.com, USAJOBS, Monster, LinkedIn, and have those feed into ours so ours almost serves as a hub as opposed to us posting the jobs ourselves. However, having the possibility of integrating this profile in the future would be preferable if the extent of our services evolves over time.

17. Do we want to save Job seekers' profiles, until they want to take it out? (helps with notes and notification and follow up on previous posted jobs posting) *This functionality may not be necessary, but it is up to the discretion of the Vendor*. *We anticipate the site to work one of two ways: They come to the site, they are using the site, and they run a query based on information they are entering in, and they get a report on the other end or whatever the advice may be or searches. Not necessarily where they are saving the information and are coming back. But, if that is providing a more valuable experience on the user end then we are not opposed to that, but we do not want to overcomplicate the system. We want to keep it as simple and straightforward as possible.*

18. Do we want to filter job seekers as per their qualification? **The solution should be user-friendly, and efficient in the number of clicks and data entry requirements to run the query. Information on how the system will be user friendly (such as a filter system) may be helpful for the evaluation committee to better understand the system being proposed.**

19. Do we need to show proper jobs available in the county as per job seekers qualification? **A large portion of our region commutes from one county to another for employment, so the solution would need to have the option of selecting one or more counties from which to run the queries from.**

20. Search filter based on expertise and location (7 counties), what are those seven counties and zip?
    The seven counties in our service area in Kansas are as follows:
    1. *Chase*
    2. *Geary*
    3. *Lyon*
    4. *Morris*
    5. *Pottawatomie*

6. Riley
7. Wabaunsee
There may also be users looking at employment in two additional counties in Kansas:
1. Clay
2. Dickinson
Our region is also home to Fort Riley Army Installation, so the filter will need to account for that if for some reason it is not captured by purely county/ZIP. ZIP codes for these jurisdictions can be obtained via an online search through various resources (i.e., USPS, Kansas Secretary of State, etc.)

21. Do we need email compatibilities? (job seeker to send emails to employer or recruiter)
No, not currently. However, having the possibility of integrating that option in the future would be preferable if the extent of our services evolves over time.

22. Do we want to save the activities of both the parties? (who is posting what and how many job is applied by job seeker including log in and time out details) **Yes, if possible, as we must report activities and outcomes to our funding source.**

23. Do we want a profile to be maintained for both the parties with their details? **This is ideal, however FHRC is open to recommendations. If profiles are saved, it would need to have an established expiration date that the data would be deleted.**

24. Do we need payment option available for any types of services they are opting for?(for both job seeker and companies who post the jobs) *No, not currently. Regarding job seekers, this will be a public-facing platform that does not require registration or payment to access the services. Regarding companies, the intent is the postings to feed in from other third-party entities such as Indeed.com, USAJOBS, Monster, LinkedIn, and have those feed into ours so ours almost serves as a hub as opposed to us posting the jobs ourselves or them posting directly through our site. However, having the possibility of integrating that option in the future would be preferable if the extent of our services evolves over time.*

25. Do we want to publish any news or notification on the dashboard (home page) periodically?
Yes, we would like the functionality to be able to post a custom headline, alert, update, or featured job on the homepage periodically.

26. Do we have the last five years of employer's job posting data?
No. The FHRC does not currently have any job posting data.

27. Is there a timeline that you would like to start and complete the project? *Per our tentative schedule, outlined in Section 7.3, we anticipate contract execution to take place between August 20 and August 27, with services beginning as soon as possible following full execution of the agreement. There is no set timeline for completion; please provide what you think is reasonable to complete the components of the scope. Please note, although listed as optional services, if we proceed with the analysis components outlined in Section 29.4.1 and 29.4.2, we will need those the fastest, as we would like to incorporate those into our plan that we are submitting to the Economic Development Administration in September 2021. Per Section 16, the timeline will account for up to 10 point of the final RFP score.*

28. To confirm the "prescriptive consulting" - you have referenced the need for direction for economic and workforce development, beyond the system, can you provide an estimated amount of consulting you would need post go live? *The "prescriptive consulting" is optional and may be utilized to help conduct an economic impact analysis to inform workforce recommendations or to conduct a skills gap analysis in support of recommendations outlined in the CIAR and weaknesses highlighted in the CEDS. The estimated amount of consulting would be dependent upon the amount required by the Vendor to complete those tasks. Per Section 24.1, the contract for such services would not extend past June 15, 2022.*

29. In section 27.0, you referenced "workforce needs", "without duplication", can you provide a definition here? *There are other established workforce platforms, such as KANSASWORKS. Our intent with this project is to not duplicate their services, but to supplement them and create a regional hub.*

30. Should economic impact analysis be pulled from the system or other sources? *How the economic impact analysis is conducted is at the discretion of the Vendor. Ideally, it would be a comprehensive report independent of the system, but could utilize data provided in the system, if applicable.*

31. No reference in terms of importing and exporting, is this correct? *There is not an anticipated need to import. However, per Section 28.1.8, export functionality would be needed to be able to use the reports and graphics generated in the system.*

32. Pertaining to goal 2 - Are you looking for a written summary of the data needed? OR will the solution meet the requirement provided you receive reports and dashboards? *Regarding goal 2, the solution meets the requirement, provided we receive reports and dashboards. A written analysis/summary of the data and recommendations based on that data would be achieve through goal 3.*

33. Is there an existing system that will need to be replaced or supplemented? If yes, what are those systems? *No.*

34. Please confirm the staff of 2 is considered "Back-End" Users? Any other users to access the solution? *The staff of two are considered the "back-end" users. There are no other back-end users to access the solution.*

35. In terms of Front-End users, the job seekers, do you want employers to be engaged? If yes, how do you see the employers engaging with the job seekers? *No, not currently.*

36. Who are the other "internal and external stakeholders" that have not been identified? *Internal stakeholders may be the FHRC Board of Directors and leader of the communities within the seven-county Flint Hills Economic Development District. External stakeholders may be local economic development organizations, jobseekers, local educational institutions, and other community partners. The back-end users will still be limited to the two FHRC staff members, but the data, reports, graphics, etc. may be shared with these stakeholders and more. The main workforce component will be public facing so any variety of stakeholders, internal and external, could access it on the front-end.*

37. Respectfully, is there a budget threshold that we need to be aware of? *Regarding budget, we want each proposal to do its due diligence to explain to us what you think the budget would be. We are not releasing a number or range but want you to provide what you think is reasonable.*

38. Are you looking for an off-the-shelf solution or customized software designed and developed from scratch? Our process involves workshops on product strategy and design at an early stage, even before the platform is programmed, making the whole process much simpler and more transparent. *It is at the discretion of the Vendor to propose the best solution, be it off-the-shelf or customized, that fulfills the scope of work. We are open to either as long as the proposed solution meets our requirements.*

39. Are you looking for US-based vendors only? *No.*

40. Is it possible to get someone on your side on the quick call? We have a few additional business/technical questions. *We can respond to any questions in writing.*