

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA Guilford Technical Community College	REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL NO.: 99-MP25036	
	Contract Name: Student Loan Default Prevention & Management Services	
	Bid Opening Date: Wednesday, May 6, 2026 @ 3:00 PM ET	
Refer <u>ALL</u> inquiries regarding this RFP to: Name: Michael Perry, Assistant Director of Purchasing & Contract Administration Email: mdperry2@gtcc.edu Phone Number: 336-334-4822 x 50203	Issue Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2026	
	Commodity Code: 801015	
	Purchasing Agency: Guilford Technical Community College	
	Requisition No.: PR12991725	

OFFER

The Purchasing Agency solicits offers for Services and/or goods described in this solicitation. All offers and responses received shall be treated as Offers to contract as defined in 9 NCAC 06A.0102(12).

EXECUTION

In compliance with this Request for Proposal (RFP), and subject to all the conditions herein, the undersigned offers and agrees to furnish any or all Services or goods upon which prices are offered, at the price(s) offered herein, within the time specified herein.

Failure to execute/sign offer prior to submittal shall render offer invalid. Late offers are not acceptable.

OFFEROR:		
STREET ADDRESS:	P.O. BOX:	ZIP:
CITY, STATE & ZIP:	TELEPHONE NUMBER:	TOLL FREE TEL. NO
NAME & TITLE OF PERSON SIGNING:	FAX NUMBER:	
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:	DATE:	E-MAIL:

Offer valid for one hundred twenty (120) days from date of offer opening unless otherwise stated here: _____ days

ACCEPTANCE OF OFFER

If any or all parts of this offer are accepted, an authorized representative of Guilford Technical Community College shall affix its signature hereto and any subsequent Request for Best and Final Offer, if issued. Acceptance shall create a contract having an order of precedence as follows: Best and Final Offers, if any, Special terms and conditions specific to this RFP, Specifications of the RFP, the Department of Information Technology Terms and Conditions, and the agreed portion of the awarded Vendor's Offer. A copy of this acceptance will be forwarded to the awarded Vendor(s).

FOR PURCHASING AGENCY USE ONLY	
Offer accepted and contract awarded this date _____,	as indicated on attached certification,
by _____	(Authorized representative of Guilford Technical Community College).

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1.0 ANTICIPATED PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE

The Agency Procurement Agent will make every effort to adhere to the following schedule:

Action	Responsibility	Date
RFP Issued	Agency	4/15/2026
Written Questions Deadline	Potential Vendors	4/22/2026
Agency's Response to Written Questions/ RFP Addendum Issued	Agency	On or before 4/29/2026
Offer Opening Deadline	Vendor(s)	5/6/2026
Offer Evaluation	Agency	5/7/2026
Selection of Finalists	Agency	TBD
Oral Presentations and/or Product Demonstrations by Finalists (Optional)	Selected Vendors	TBD
Negotiations with Finalists	Agency designees and selected Vendor(s)	TBD
Best and Final Offers Deadline from Finalists	Selected Vendors	TBD
Contract Award	Agency	TBD
Protest Deadline	Responding Vendors	15 days after award

2.0 PURPOSE OF RFP

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to solicit Offers for Student Loan Default Prevention and Management Services. Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) seeks proposals to provide its Financial Aid Office with default prevention and borrower management services. The Vendor must be able to provide comprehensive data management and default prevention services for GTCC's federal student loan borrowers. These services are intended to support the College's efforts to reduce its Cohort Default Rate and to assist students in achieving long-term financial success.

The intent of this solicitation is to award an Agency Contract for Guilford Technical Community College.

2.2 AGENCY BACKGROUND

Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) is a public, state-supported community college and a member of the North Carolina Community College System. The College is authorized and governed pursuant to Chapter 115D of the North Carolina General Statutes and serves students throughout Guilford County and surrounding areas.

GTCC provides a wide range of curriculum, continuing education, and workforce development programs designed to support student success, workforce readiness, and lifelong learning. The College administers federal and state student financial aid programs in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, including Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

The Financial Aid Office is responsible for the administration of student aid programs and related compliance activities and supports institutional initiatives associated with responsible borrowing and student financial education.

2.3 SUMMARY OF PROBLEM STATEMENT

Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) administers federal student loan programs as part of its broader student financial aid operations and is responsible for compliance with applicable U.S. Department of Education requirements related to cohort default rates. Managing borrower delinquency and default risk requires proactive outreach, timely borrower engagement, and effective coordination with loan servicers using accurate and secure borrower data.

GTCC seeks external support to assist in identifying borrowers at risk of delinquency or default and to provide structured outreach, counseling, and repayment guidance to federal student loan borrowers. Without specialized default prevention and management services, borrowers may lack the information and assistance necessary to successfully navigate repayment options, increasing the risk of delinquency and default.

This RFP is issued to obtain professional Student Loan Default Prevention and Management Services that support responsible borrowing, promote successful loan repayment outcomes, and assist the College in meeting its federal compliance obligations while supporting the financial well-being of its students.

2.4 CONTRACT TERM

A contract awarded pursuant to this RFP shall have an effective date as provided in the Notice of Award. The term shall be (1) one year, and will expire upon the anniversary date of the effective date unless otherwise stated in the Notice of Award, or unless terminated earlier. The State retains the option to extend the Agreement for (4) four additional one-year periods at its sole discretion.

2.5 EFFECTIVE DATE

This solicitation, including any Exhibits, or any resulting contract or amendment shall not become effective nor bind the State until the appropriate State purchasing authority/official or Agency official has signed the document(s), contract or amendment; the effective award date has been completed on the document(s), by the State purchasing official, and that date has arrived or passed. The State shall not be responsible for reimbursing the Vendor for goods provided nor Services rendered prior to the appropriate signatures and the arrival of the effective date of the Agreement. No contract shall be binding on the State until an encumbrance of funds has been made for payment of the sums due under the Agreement.

2.6 CONTRACT TYPE

Indefinite Quantity Agency Specific Contract – Pursuant to 9 NCAC 6B.0701, this solicitation will establish an indefinite quantity agency specific contract between a Vendor and the State. The quantity of Goods or Services that may be used by the State is undetermined. An estimated quantity based on history or other means may be used as a guide but shall not be a representation by the State of any anticipated purchase volume under any contract made pursuant to this solicitation.

The State reserves the right to make partial, progressive or multiple awards where it is advantageous to award separately by items; where more than one supplier is needed to provide the contemplated specifications as to quantity, quality, delivery, service, geographical areas; or where other factors are deemed to be necessary or proper to the purchase in question.

3.0 RFP REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS

3.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS

3.1.1 REQUIREMENTS

Requirement means, as used herein, a function, feature, or performance that the System must provide. If the offer can not meet the requirements, they will not be evaluated.

3.1.2 SPECIFICATIONS

Specification means, as used herein, a detailed description that documents the function and performance of a system or system component.

The apparent silence of the specifications as to any detail, or the apparent omission of detailed description concerning any point, shall be regarded as meaning that only the best commercial practice is to prevail and that only processes, configurations, materials and workmanship of the first quality may be used. Upon any notice of noncompliance provided by the State, Vendor shall supply proof of compliance with the specifications. Vendor must provide written notice of its intent to deliver alternate or substitute Services, products, goods or other Deliverables. Alternate or substitute Services, products, goods or Deliverables may be accepted or rejected in the sole discretion of the State; and any such alternates or substitutes must be accompanied by Vendor's certification and evidence satisfactory to the State that the function, characteristics, performance and endurance will be equal or superior to the original Deliverables specified.

3.1.3 SITE AND SYSTEM PREPARATION

Vendors shall provide the Purchasing State Agency complete site requirement specifications for the Deliverables, if any. These specifications shall ensure that the Deliverables to be installed or implemented shall operate properly and efficiently within the site and system environment. Any alterations or modification in site preparation, which are directly attributable to incomplete or erroneous specifications provided by the Vendor and which would involve additional expenses to the State, shall be made at the expense of the Vendor.

3.1.4 EQUIVALENT ITEMS - RESERVED

3.1.5 ENTERPRISE LICENSING - RESERVED

3.2 SECURITY SPECIFICATIONS

3.2.1 SOLUTIONS HOSTED ON STATE INFRASTRUCTURE - RESERVED

3.2.2 SOLUTIONS NOT HOSTED ON STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Student Loan Default Prevention and Management Services solution will be required to receive and securely manage data that is classified as High Risk, Agency Critical. Refer to the North Carolina Statewide Data Classification and Handling policy for more information regarding data classification. The policy is located at the following website: <https://it.nc.gov/document/statewide-data-classification-and-handling-policy>.

To comply with the State's Security Standards and Policies, State agencies are required to perform annual security/risk assessments on their information systems using NIST 800-53 controls. This requirement additionally applies to all Vendor-provided, agency-managed Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), and Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions which will handle data classified as Medium Risk (Restricted) or High Risk (Highly Restricted) data.

(a) Vendors shall provide a completed Vendor Readiness Assessment Report Non-State Hosted Solutions ("VRAR") at offer submission. This report is located at the following website: <https://it.nc.gov/documents/vendor-readiness-assessment-report>

(b) Upon request, Vendors shall provide a current independent 3rd party assessment report in accordance with the following subparagraphs (i)-(iii) prior to contract award. However, Vendors are encouraged to provide a current independent 3rd party assessment report in accordance with subparagraphs (i)-(iii) at the time of offer submission.

(i) Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) certification, SOC 2 Type 2, ISO 27001, or HITRUST are the preferred assessment reports for any Vendor solutions which will handle data classified as Medium Risk (Restricted) or High Risk (Highly Restricted).

(ii) A Vendor that cannot provide a preferred independent 3rd party assessment report as described above may submit an alternative assessment, such as a SOC 2 Type 1 assessment report.

The Vendor shall provide an explanation for submitting the alternative assessment report. If awarded this contract, a Vendor who submits an alternative assessment report shall submit one of the preferred assessment reports no later than 365 days of the Effective Date of the contract. Timely submission of this preferred assessment report shall be a material requirement of the contract.

(iii) An IaaS vendor cannot provide a certification or assessment report for a SaaS provider UNLESS permitted by the terms of a written agreement between the two vendors and the scope of the IaaS certification or assessment report clearly includes the SaaS solution.

(c) Additional Security Documentation. Prior to contract award, the State may in its discretion require the Vendor to provide additional security documentation, including but not limited to vulnerability assessment reports and penetration test reports. The awarded Vendor shall provide such additional security documentation upon request by the State during the term of the contract.

3.3 ENTERPRISE SPECIFICATIONS

3.3.1 ARCHITECTURE DIAGRAMS - RESERVED

3.3.2 SOLUTION ROADMAP

A Solution Roadmap defines the vision and strategic elements of the solution. The Solution Roadmap is a plan of action for how a Solution will evolve over time. The minimum content should include:

- Vision for the solution
- High-level functionality expected for each solution release into production environment
- High-level timeline
- Description of how customer feedback is collected and incorporated into solution enhancements

Describe the solution roadmap for your product. Include content on release strategies for functionality, roadmap for technical architecture, how scalability of solution is planned.

3.3.3 IDENTITY AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT - RESERVED

3.3.4 INTEGRATION APPROACH - RESERVED

3.3.5 DISASTER RECOVERY AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Describe the proposed solution capabilities related to the following areas:

Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) – describe how proposed solution supports Recovery Point Objectives (RPO) and Recovery Time Objectives (RTO) metrics.

System Backup – describe backup plan capabilities.

Disaster Recovery Testing – describe the frequency and test procedures for end-to-end disaster recovery testing. Business Continuity Plan (BCP) – describe capabilities proposed solution can provide in support of agency's continuity of operations and incident responses.

3.3.6 DATA MIGRATION - RESERVED

3.3.7 APPLICATION MANAGEMENT

Describe how the proposed solution monitors and reports the metrics on system performance.

Describe how the proposed solution manages user administration.

Describe the audit capabilities of proposed solution related to management of the application.

3.3.8 ACCESSIBILITY

Describe how the proposed solution complies with industry accessibility standards.

Provide product documentation that demonstrates how the proposed solution is digitally accessible or if not fully accessible, provide the roadmap with timeline for remediation.

Standards include:

- W3C Web Accessibility Initiative - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1: <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>
- Section 508: <https://www.section508.gov/>
- Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT®): <https://www.itic.org/policy/accessibility/vpat>

3.3.9 HIGHER EDUCATION COMMUNITY VENDOR ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

The Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) Information Technology Services (ITS) Department requires Vendors proposing Software as a Service (SaaS) or other vendor-hosted solutions that store, process, or transmit student information to complete a Higher Education Community Vendor Assessment Toolkit (HECVAT).

Based on the scope of services, data sensitivity, and risk level of the proposed solution, GTCC's ITS Department will determine the appropriate HECVAT scope and required question set. The HECVAT shall be completed and executed by the Vendor, and all information provided shall be current and accurate.

The required HECVAT shall be submitted upon request by the Agency and must be provided prior to contract award. Failure to submit the required HECVAT in a timely manner may render the Vendor ineligible for award.

ENTERPRISE, SERVICES, AND STANDARDS

Vendors should refer to the Vendor Resources Page for information on North Carolina Department of Information Technology regarding architecture, security, strategy, data, digital, identity and access management and other general information on doing business with state IT process.

The Vendor Resources Page found at the following link: <https://it.nc.gov/vendor-engagement-resources>. This site provides vendors with statewide information and links referenced throughout the RFP document. Agencies may request additional information.

3.4 BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Vendors must meet all requirements in this section. Failure to satisfy any requirement may result in the Vendor's Offer being deemed non-responsive and excluded from further evaluation.

3.4.1 GENERAL SERVICE CAPABILITY

Vendors must meet all requirements in this section. Failure to satisfy any requirement may result in the Vendor's Offer being deemed non-responsive and excluded from further evaluation.

3.4.2 REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

The Vendor must demonstrate the ability to perform all services in compliance with:

- Federal student financial aid regulations, including Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Applicable U.S. Department of Education guidance related to default prevention and third-party servicers
- Applicable North Carolina laws, policies, and procurement requirements

3.4.3 DATA ACCESS AND SECURITY

The Vendor must be capable of:

- Accessing borrower data through the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) and other authorized federal sources
- Securely managing student data classified as High Risk (Highly Restricted) under the North Carolina Statewide Data Classification and Handling Policy
- Limiting data use solely to purposes related to default prevention, loan counseling, reporting, and contract performance

3.4.4 BORROWER OUTREACH AND COUNSELING

The Vendor must provide:

- Proactive borrower outreach using multiple communication channels, including telephone and email
- Outreach during prime-time hours, including early weekday evenings
- Individualized borrower counseling regarding repayment plans, income-driven repayment options, deferment, and forbearance
- Assistance facilitating borrower communication with federal loan servicers

3.4.5 REPORTING AND TRANSPARENCY

The Vendor must provide:

- Regular operational and performance reporting related to borrower outreach, delinquency, resolution outcomes, and trends
- Secure access for designated College personnel to view reports and service activity
- Reports sufficient to support internal monitoring and federal compliance efforts

3.4.6 CONTRACTUAL AND OPERATIONAL READINESS

The Vendor must:

- Be capable of performing services under an indefinite quantity, agency-specific contract
- Provide required security documentation, including a completed VRAR for non-State hosted solutions
- Agree to comply with all terms and conditions of this RFP, including NCDIT Terms and Conditions

3.5 BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

In this section, Vendors are requested to describe how their proposed solution meets the specifications below. These specifications represent GTCC's needs and expectations. Vendors should provide clear, concise, and relevant descriptions and avoid generic marketing language.

3.5.1 BORROWER IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION

Describe how the proposed solution:

- Identifies borrowers who are delinquent, approaching delinquency, or otherwise at risk of default

- Prioritizes borrowers for outreach based on risk indicators, delinquency status, or federal timelines
- Utilizes NSLDS and other authorized data sources in borrower identification

3.5.2 OUTREACH METHODOLOGY

Describe:

- Outreach strategies employed to contact borrowers
- Frequency and sequencing of contact attempts
- How outreach methods are adjusted based on borrower response or lack of response
- Availability of bilingual or multilingual borrower support, if applicable

3.5.3 COUNSELING AND DEFAULT AVERSION SERVICES

Describe how the proposed solution provides:

- Individualized counseling on repayment plan options and financial hardship alternatives
- Education to borrowers regarding the consequences of delinquency and default
- Support in connecting borrowers directly with loan servicers to resolve delinquent loans

3.5.4 SERVICER COORDINATION

Describe:

- Processes used to coordinate with federal loan servicers and guaranty agencies
- How borrower demographic updates are handled and transmitted, as permitted by law
- How resolution outcomes are verified and documented

3.5.5 DATA MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY PRACTICES

Describe:

- Data protection controls implemented to safeguard student information
- Data retention and destruction practices upon contract termination or expiration
- Incident response and notification procedures related to unauthorized data access

3.5.6 REPORTING AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Describe:

- Standard reports provided to the College, including sample metrics
- How outreach activity, borrower engagement, and resolution outcomes are reported
- How data accuracy and reporting integrity are ensured

3.5.7 APPLICATION MANAGEMENT AND AVAILABILITY

Describe:

- System availability and uptime expectations
- User access controls for College staff
- Audit logging or monitoring capabilities related to system access and activity

3.5.8 DISASTER RECOVER AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Describe:

- Disaster recovery capabilities, including recovery time objectives (RTOs) and recovery point objectives (RPOs)

- Backup processes and testing frequency
- Business continuity practices supporting uninterrupted service delivery

3.5.9 ACCESSIBILITY

Describe:

- How web-based components of the solution address digital accessibility standards, including WCAG 2.1 and Section 508
- Any known accessibility limitations and planned remediation efforts, if applicable

4.0 COST OF VENDOR'S OFFER

4.1 OFFER COSTS

Vendors shall submit a complete and itemized cost proposal using **ATTACHMENT D: COST FORM**. All costs associated with the performance of the services described in this RFP shall be clearly identified.

The cost proposal shall include, as applicable:

- One-time or implementation costs
- Recurring or ongoing service fees
- Per-borrower or per-account fees
- Outcome-based or performance-based fees

Any other costs necessary to fully perform the services described in this RFP

All pricing shall represent the total cost to the Agency for complete performance of the services offered. Costs not specifically identified in the Vendor's cost proposal shall be deemed included in the proposed prices and will not be paid separately.

4.2 PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Vendors shall describe their proposed payment and invoicing structure based on the services offered. Payment will be made only for services that have been performed and accepted in accordance with the terms and conditions of the resulting contract.

This solicitation will result in an indefinite quantity, agency-specific contract. The Agency makes no guarantee of minimum or maximum service volumes. Payment shall be based on actual services performed during the contract term, subject to the availability of funds.

5.0 EVALUATION

All offers received in response to this Request for Proposals (RFP) shall be evaluated to determine the offer that is most advantageous to the State, in accordance with N.C.G.S. §§ 143B-1350(h) and 143-135.9(a)(1). Evaluation shall consider best value, substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications of this RFP, compliance with applicable information technology security standards and policies, and other conditions set forth herein.

5.1 SOURCE SELECTION

A trade-off / ranking method of source selection shall be utilized for this procurement in accordance with 9 NCAC 06B .0302. This method allows the State to award the contract to the Vendor whose offer provides the Best Value, recognizing that the award may not necessarily be made to the lowest-priced or highest-scoring technical offer.

EVALUATION PROCESS

a) Responsiveness Review:

All offers shall be initially reviewed to determine whether they are responsive. Offers found to be non-responsive may be excluded from further evaluation.

b) Substantial Conformity:

Responsive offers shall be evaluated to determine substantial conformity with the requirements and specifications of this RFP. An offer that fails to meet the intent of one or more material requirements may be deemed deficient. A serious deficiency in any one evaluation factor may result in rejection of the offer regardless of overall score.

c) Clarifications, Presentations, and Interviews:

The evaluation committee may request written clarifications, oral presentations, or interviews from one or more Vendors as permitted under 9 NCAC 06B .0307. The State may accept or reject clarification responses, in whole or in part, at its discretion. Vendors are advised that clarifications are not guaranteed and should submit complete and accurate offers. Vendors may be required to provide qualified personnel to participate in evaluation activities at a location designated by the State.

d) Completeness of Offers:

The State is not obligated to request, nor to accept after the proposal submission deadline, information required for a complete evaluation. Vendors bear full responsibility for ensuring their offers contain all required information.

5.2 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Offers shall be evaluated based on the criteria below, listed in order of importance. The State reserves the right to determine the relative strengths and weaknesses of each offer in accordance with this RFP.

1) Substantial Conformity with Requirements and Specifications:

The extent to which the Vendor's offer complies with and demonstrates an understanding of the business and technical requirements and specifications set forth in this RFP, including Section 3.4 and Section 3.5.

2) Quality and Effectiveness of the Proposed Solutions:

The overall quality of the proposed Student Loan Default Prevention and Management Services, including borrower outreach methodologies, counseling approach, reporting capabilities, and alignment with GTCC's operational needs.

3) Total Cost of Ownership:

The total cost to the Agency for the proposed services, including all one-time, recurring, per-unit, and outcome-based costs, evaluated in accordance with Section 4 and ATTACHMENT D: Cost Form.

4) Security and Data Protection Compliance:

The Vendor's adherence to the Security Specifications in Section 3.2, including the completeness and quality of the Vendor Readiness Assessment Report (VRAR) and any supporting security documentation.

5) Service Reliability and Continuity:

The Vendor's demonstrated approach to application management, system availability, disaster recovery, and business continuity as described in Section 3.3 and related specifications.

6) Vendor Experience, Past Performance, and References:

The Vendor's experience providing similar services to public higher education institutions or comparable entities, including the quality of references, documented performance outcomes, and demonstrated expertise in default prevention and borrower management. The State reserves the right to consider prior performance with the State of North Carolina.

7) Risks and Exceptions:

Risks associated with the Vendor's offer, including financial stability, reliance on third parties, proposed exceptions or deviations from the RFP requirements, and any contractual, operational, or technical risks identified during evaluation.

5.3 BEST AND FINAL OFFERS (BAFO)

The State may establish a competitive range based upon evaluations of offers, and request BAFOs from the Vendor(s) within this range; e.g. "Finalist Vendor(s)". If negotiations or subsequent offers are solicited, the Vendor(s) shall provide BAFO(s) in response. Failure to deliver a BAFO when requested shall disqualify the non-responsive Vendor from further consideration. The State will evaluate BAFO(s), oral presentations, and product demonstrations as part of the Vendors' respective offers to determine the final rankings.

5.4 POSSESSION AND REVIEW

During the evaluation period and prior to award, possession of the bids and accompanying information is limited to personnel of the issuing agency, and to the committee responsible for participating in the evaluation. Vendors who attempt to gain this privileged information, or to influence the evaluation process (i.e. assist in evaluation) will be in violation of purchasing rules and their offer will not be further evaluated or considered.

After award of contract the complete bid file will be available to any interested persons with the exception of trade secrets, test information or similar proprietary information as provided by statute and rule. Any proprietary or confidential information, which conforms to exclusions from public records as provided by N.C.G.S. §132-1.2 must be clearly marked as such in the offer when submitted.

6.0 VENDOR INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

6.1 GENERAL CONDITIONS OF OFFER

6.1.1 VENDOR RESPONSIBILITY

It shall be the Vendor's responsibility to read this entire document, review all enclosures and attachments, and comply with all specifications, requirements and the State's intent as specified herein. If a Vendor discovers an inconsistency, error or omission in this solicitation, the Vendor should request a clarification from the State's contact person.

The Vendor will be responsible for investigating and recommending the most effective and efficient solution. Consideration shall be given to the stability of the proposed configuration and the future direction of technology, confirming to the best of its ability that the recommended approach is not short lived. Several approaches may exist for hardware configurations, other products and any software. The Vendor must provide a justification for their proposed hardware, product and software solution(s) along with costs thereof. Vendors are encouraged to present explanations of benefits and merits of their proposed solutions together with any accompanying Services, maintenance, warranties, value added Services or other criteria identified herein.

6.1.2 RIGHTS RESERVED

While the State has every intention to award a contract as a result of this RFP, issuance of the RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by the State of North Carolina, or the procuring Agency, to award a contract. Upon determining that any of the following would be in its best interests, the State may:

- a) waive any formality;
- b) amend the solicitation;
- c) cancel or terminate this RFP;
- d) reject any or all offers received in response to this RFP;
- e) waive any undesirable, inconsequential, or inconsistent provisions of this RFP;
- f) if the response to this solicitation demonstrate a lack of competition, negotiate directly with one or more Vendors;
- g) not award, or if awarded, terminate any contract if the State determines adequate State funds are not available; or
- h) if all offers are found non-responsive, determine whether Waiver of Competition criteria may be satisfied, and if so, negotiate with one or more known sources of supply.

6.1.3 SOLICITATION AMENDMENTS OR REVISIONS

Any and all amendments or revisions to this document shall be made by written addendum from the Agency Procurement Office. If either a unit price or extended price is obviously in error and the other is obviously correct, the incorrect price will be disregarded.

6.1.4 ORAL EXPLANATIONS

The State will not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the bidding process or after award. Vendor contact regarding this RFP with anyone other than the State's contact person may be grounds for rejection of said Vendor's offer. Agency contact regarding this RFP with any Vendor may be grounds for cancellation of this RFP.

6.1.5 E-PROCUREMENT

This is an E-Procurement solicitation. See ATTACHMENT B, paragraph #33 of the attached North Carolina Department of Information Technology Terms and Conditions.

The Terms and Conditions made part of this solicitation contain language necessary for the implementation of North Carolina's statewide E-Procurement initiative. It is the Vendor's responsibility to read these terms and conditions carefully and to consider them in preparing the offer. By signature, the Vendor acknowledges acceptance of all terms and conditions including those related to E-Procurement.

- a) General information on the E-Procurement service can be found at <http://eprocurement.nc.gov/>
- b) Within two days after notification of award of a contract, the Vendor must register in NC E-Procurement @ Your Service at the following website: <http://eprocurement.nc.gov/Vendor.html>
- c) As of the RFP submittal date, the Vendor must be current on all E-Procurement fees. If the Vendor is not current on all E-Procurement fees, the State may disqualify the Vendor from participation in this RFP.

6.1.6 ELECTRONIC VENDOR PORTAL (EVP)

The State has implemented the electronic Vendor Portal (eVP) that allow the public to retrieve award notices and information on the Internet at <https://evp.nc.gov>. <https://www.ips.state.nc.us/ips/> Results may be found by searching by Solicitation Number or agency name. This information may not be available for several weeks dependent upon the complexity of the acquisition and the length of time to complete the evaluation process.

6.1.7 PROTEST PROCEDURES

Protests of awards exceeding \$25,000 in value must be submitted to the issuing Agency at the address given on the first page of this document. Protests must be received in the purchasing agency's office within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of this RFP award and provide specific reasons and any supporting documentation for the protest. **All protests are governed by Title 9, Department of Information Technology (formerly Office of Information Technology Services), Subchapter 06B Sections .1101 - .1121.**

6.2 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR VENDOR

6.2.1 SITE VISIT OR PRE-OFFER CONFERENCE - RESERVED

6.2.2 QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RFP

Written questions concerning this Solicitation will be received until Wednesday, April 22, 2026 at 5:00 PM ET.

They must be submitted to the contact person listed on Page One of this Solicitation via mdperry2@gtcc.edu. Please enter "Questions Solicitation 99-MP25036" as the subject for the message. Questions should be submitted in the following format:

REFERENCE	VENDOR QUESTION
RFP Section, Page Number	

6.2.3 ADDENDUM TO RFP

If a pre-offer conference is held or written questions are received prior to the submission date, an addendum comprising questions submitted and responses to such questions, or any additional terms deemed necessary by the State shall become an Addendum to this RFP and provided via the State's Ariba Sourcing Tool. Vendors' questions posed orally at any pre-offer conference must be reduced to writing by the Vendor and provided to the Purchasing Officer as directed by said Officer. Oral answers are not binding on the State.

Critical updated information may be included in these Addenda. It is important that all Vendors bidding on this RFP periodically check the State's Sourcing Tool for all Addenda that may be issued prior to the offer opening date.

6.2.4 COSTS RELATED TO OFFER SUBMISSION

Costs for developing and delivering responses to this RFP and any subsequent presentations of the offer as requested by the State are entirely the responsibility of the Vendor. The State is not liable for any expense incurred by the Vendors in the preparation and presentation of their offers.

All materials submitted in response to this RFP become the property of the State and are to be appended to any formal documentation, which would further define or expand any contractual relationship between the State and the Vendor resulting from this RFP process.

6.2.5 VENDOR ERRATA AND EXCEPTIONS

Any errata or exceptions to the State's requirements and specifications may be presented on a separate page labeled "Exceptions to Requirements and Specifications". Include references to the corresponding requirements and specifications of the Solicitation. Any deviations shall be explained in detail. **The Vendor shall not construe this paragraph as inviting deviation or implying that any deviation will be acceptable.**

Offers of alternative or non-equivalent goods or services may be rejected if not found substantially conforming; and if offered, must be supported by independent documentary verification that the offer substantially conforms to the specified goods or services specification. If a vendor materially deviates from RFP requirements or specifications, its offer may be determined to be non-responsive by the State.

Offers conditioned upon acceptance of Vendor Errata or Exceptions may be determined to be non-responsive by the State.

6.2.6 ALTERNATE OFFERS

The Vendor may submit alternate offers for various levels of service(s) or products meeting specifications. Alternate offers must specifically identify the RFP specifications and advantage(s) addressed by the alternate offer. Any alternate offers must be clearly marked with the legend as shown herein. Each offer must be for a specific set of Services or products and offer at specific pricing. If a Vendor chooses to respond with various service or product offerings, each must be an offer with a different price and a separate RFP offer. Vendors may also provide multiple offers for software or systems coupled with support and maintenance options, provided, however, all offers must satisfy the specifications.

Alternate offers must be submitted in a separate document and clearly marked "Alternate Offer for 'name of Vendor'" and numbered sequentially with the first offer if separate offers are submitted.

6.2.7 MODIFICATIONS TO OFFER

An offer may not be unilaterally modified by the Vendor.

6.2.8 BASIS FOR REJECTION

Pursuant to 9 NCAC 06B.0401, the State reserves the right to reject any and all offers, in whole or in part; by deeming the offer unsatisfactory as to quality or quantity, delivery, price or service offered; non-compliance with the specifications or intent of this solicitation; lack of competitiveness; error(s) in specifications or indications that revision would be advantageous to the State; cancellation or other changes in the intended project, or other determination that the proposed specification is no longer needed; limitation or lack of available funds; circumstances that prevent determination of the best offer; or any other determination that rejection would be in the best interest of the State.

6.2.9 NON-RESPONSIVE OFFERS

Vendor offers will be deemed non-responsive by the State and will be rejected without further consideration or evaluation if statements such as the following are included:

- "This offer does not constitute a binding offer",
- "This offer will be valid only if this offer is selected as a finalist or in the competitive range",
- "The Vendor does not commit or bind itself to any terms and conditions by this submission",
- "This document and all associated documents are non-binding and shall be used for discussion purposes only",
- "This offer will not be binding on either party until incorporated in a definitive agreement signed by authorized representatives of both parties", or
- A statement of similar intent

6.2.10 VENDOR REGISTRATION WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Vendors do not have to be registered with the NC Secretary of State to submit an offer; however, in order to receive an award/contract with the State, they must be registered. Registration can be completed at the following website: https://www.sosnc.gov/Guides/launching_a_business

6.2.11 VENDOR REGISTRATION AND SOLICITATION NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

The NC electronic Vendor Portal (eVP) allows Vendors to electronically register with the State to receive electronic notification of current procurement opportunities for goods and Services available at the following website: <https://evp.nc.gov>.

This RFP is available electronically on the electronic Vendor Portal (eVP) at the following website: <https://evp.nc.gov>.

6.3 INSTRUCTIONS FOR OFFER SUBMISSION

6.3.1 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR OFFER

Vendors are strongly encouraged to adhere to the following general instructions in order to bring clarity and order to the offer and subsequent evaluation process:

- a) Organize the offer in the exact order in which the specifications are presented in the RFP. The Execution page of this RFP must be placed at the front of the Proposal. Each page should be numbered. The offer should contain a table of contents, which cross-references the RFP specification and the specific page of the response in the Vendor's offer.
- b) Provide complete and comprehensive responses with a corresponding emphasis on being concise and clear. Elaborate offers in the form of brochures or other presentations beyond that necessary to present a complete and effective offer are not desired.
- c) Clearly state your understanding of the problem(s) presented by this RFP including your proposed solution's ability to meet the specifications, including capabilities, features, and limitations, as described herein, and provide a cost offer.
- d) Supply all relevant and material information relating to the Vendor's organization, personnel, and experience that substantiates its qualifications and capabilities to perform the Services and/or provide the goods described in this RFP. If relevant and material information is not provided, the offer may be rejected from consideration and evaluation.
- e) Furnish all information requested; and if response spaces are provided in this document, the Vendor shall furnish said information in the spaces provided. Further, if required elsewhere in this RFP, each Vendor must submit with its offer sketches, descriptive literature and/or complete specifications covering the products offered. References to literature submitted with a previous offer will not satisfy this provision. Proposals that do not comply with these instructions may be rejected.
- f) Any offer that does not adhere to these instructions may be deemed non-responsive and rejected on that basis.
- g) **Only information that is received in response to this RFP will be evaluated.** Reference to information previously submitted or Internet Website Addresses (URLs) will not suffice as a response to this solicitation.

6.3.2 OFFER ORGANIZATION

To ensure clarity and consistency in evaluation, Vendors shall organize their response in the same order and number structure used in this RFP. Each section of the Vendor's Offer should directly correspond to the applicable RFP section.

All required forms, attachments, and exhibits must be completed and included in the appropriate sections of the response. Any discussion of costs, rates, or expenses shall be confined to Section 4.0 – Cost of Vendor's Offer and the completed Attachment D – Cost Form.

At a minimum, the Offer shall be clearly indexed and organized in the following format:

- a) Signed Execution Page AND all pages of this solicitation document in ONE (1) PDF. This includes:
- Attachments A and B
 - Completed Description of Vendor Submitting Offer Form (Attachment C)
 - Completed Cost Form of Vendor's Offer (Attachment D)
 - Completed and Signed Vendor Certification Form (Attachment E)
 - Completed Location of Workers Utilized by Vendor Form (Attachment F)
 - Completed References (Attachment G)
 - Completed Financial Statements (Attachment H)
- b) Vendor Response to Business and Technical Requirements and Specifications
- c) Security Vendor Readiness Assessment Report (VRAR)
- d) Errata and Exceptions, if any
- e) Vendor License, Support, or Maintenance Agreements, if applicable
- f) Optional Supporting Materials, if any, presented in a clearly labeled appendix

Vendors are advised that failure to follow the required organization and submission format may result in the Offer being deemed non-responsive.

6.3.3 OFFER SUBMITTAL

Due Date: Wednesday, May 6, 2026
 Time: 3:00 PM ET

IMPORTANT NOTE: Vendor shall bear the risk for late submission due to unintended or unanticipated delay. **Vendor shall include all required forms, attachments, and executed pages of this solicitation in their response.** It is the Vendor's sole responsibility to ensure its offer has been submitted by the specified time and date of opening. Any proposal submitted after the proposal deadline will be rejected.

Offer Submission Details: Electronic Submittals

All proposal responses shall be submitted electronically via the electronic Vendor Portal (eVP).

Additional information can be found at the eVP updates for Vendors link:

<https://eprocurement.nc.gov/news-events/evp-updates-vendors>.

Offers, subject to the conditions made a part hereof, will be received until Wednesday, May 6, 2026 at 3:00 PM ET on the day of opening and then opened, for furnishing and delivering the commodity as described herein. Offers must be submitted with the Execution page signed and dated by an official authorized to bind the Vendor's firm. Failure to return a signed offer shall result in disqualification.

Attempts to submit a proposal via facsimile (FAX) machine, telephone or email in response to this RFP shall NOT be accepted.

- a) All File names should start with the vendor's name first, in order to easily determine all the files to be included as part of the vendor's response. For example, files should be named as follows: Vendor Name-your file name.
- b) File contents **SHALL NOT** be password protected, the file formats must be in .PDF, .jpeg, or png format, and shall be capable of being copied to other sources.

c) If the vendor's proposal contains any confidential information (as defined in Attachment B, Paragraph #18), then the vendor must provide one (1) signed, original electronic offer and one (1) redacted electronic copy.

7.0 OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIAL TERMS

7.1 VENDOR UTILIZATION OF WORKERS OUTSIDE OF U.S.

In accordance with N.C.G.S. §143B-1361(b), the Vendor must detail the manner in which it intends to utilize resources or workers in the RFP response. The State of North Carolina will evaluate the additional risks, costs, and other factors associated with such utilization prior to making an award for any such Vendor's offer.

Complete ATTACHMENT F - Location of Workers Utilized by Vendor and submit with your offer.

7.2 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Vendor shall provide evidence of financial stability by returning with its offer 1) completed Financial Review Form (Attachment I), and 2) copies of Financial Statements as further described hereinbelow. As used herein, Financial Statements shall exclude tax returns and compiled statements.

- a) For a publicly traded company, Financial Statements for the past three (3) fiscal years, including at a minimum, income statements, balance sheets, and statement of changes in financial position or cash flows. If three (3) years of financial statements are not available, this information shall be provided to the fullest extent possible, but not less than one year. If less than 3 years, the Vendor must explain the reason why they are not available.
- b) For a privately held company, when certified audited financial statements are not prepared: a written statement from the company's certified public accountant stating the financial condition, debt-to-asset ratio for the past three (3) years and any pending actions that may affect the company's financial condition.
- c) The State may, in its sole discretion, accept evidence of financial stability other than Financial Statements for the purpose of evaluating Vendors' responses to this RFP. The State reserves the right to determine whether the substitute information meets the requirements for Financial Information sufficiently to allow the State to evaluate the sufficiency of financial resources and the ability of the business to sustain performance of this RFP award. Scope Statements issued may require the submission of Financial Statements and specify the number of years to be provided, the information to be provided, and the most recent date required.

7.3 FINANCIAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT, QUALITY ASSURANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RELIABILITY - RESERVED

7.4 VENDOR'S LICENSE OR SUPPORT AGREEMENTS

Vendor should present its license or support agreements for review and evaluation. Terms offered for licensing and support of Vendors' proprietary assets will be considered.

The terms and conditions of the Vendor's standard services, license, maintenance or other agreement(s) applicable to Services, Software and other Products acquired under this RFP may apply to the extent such terms and conditions do not materially change the terms and conditions of this RFP. In the event of any conflict between the terms and conditions of this RFP and the Vendor's standard agreement(s), the terms and conditions of this RFP relating to audit and records, jurisdiction, choice of law, the State's electronic procurement application of law or administrative rules, the remedy for intellectual property infringement and the exclusive remedies and limitation of liability in the DIT Terms and Conditions herein shall apply in all cases and supersede any provisions contained in the Vendor's relevant standard agreement or any other agreement.

The State shall not be obligated under any standard license and/or maintenance or other Vendor agreement(s) to indemnify or hold harmless the Vendor, its licensors, successors or assigns, nor arbitrate any dispute, nor pay late fees, penalties, legal fees or other similar costs.

7.5 RESELLERS - RESERVED

7.6 DISCLOSURE OF LITIGATION

The Vendor's failure to fully and timely comply with the terms of this section, including providing reasonable assurances satisfactory to the State, may constitute a material breach of the Agreement.

- a) The Vendor shall notify the State in its offer, if it, or any of its subcontractors, or their officers, directors, or key personnel who may provide Services under any contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation, have ever been convicted of a felony, or any crime involving moral turpitude, including, but not limited to fraud, misappropriation or deception. The Vendor shall promptly notify the State of any criminal litigation, investigations or proceeding involving the Vendor or any subcontractor, or any of the foregoing entities' then current officers or directors during the term of the Agreement or any Scope Statement awarded to the Vendor.
- b) The Vendor shall notify the State in its offer, and promptly thereafter as otherwise applicable, of any civil litigation, arbitration, proceeding, or judgments against it or its subcontractors during the three (3) years preceding its offer, or which may occur during the term of any awarded to the Vendor pursuant to this solicitation, that involve (1) Services or related goods similar to those provided pursuant to any contract and that involve a claim that may affect the viability or financial stability of the Vendor, or (2) a claim or written allegation of fraud by the Vendor or any subcontractor hereunder, arising out of their business activities, or (3) a claim or written allegation that the Vendor or any subcontractor hereunder violated any federal, state or local statute, regulation or ordinance. Multiple lawsuits and or judgments against the Vendor or subcontractor shall be disclosed to the State to the extent they affect the financial solvency and integrity of the Vendor or subcontractor.
- c) All notices under subsection A and B herein shall be provided in writing to the State within thirty (30) calendar days after the Vendor learns about any such criminal or civil matters; unless such matters are governed by the DIT Terms and Conditions annexed to the solicitation. Details of settlements which are prevented from disclosure by the terms of the settlement shall be annotated as such. Vendor may rely on good faith certifications of its subcontractors addressing the foregoing, which certifications shall be available for inspection at the option of the State.

7.7 CRIMINAL CONVICTION

In the event the Vendor, an officer of the Vendor, or an owner of a 25% or greater share of the Vendor, is convicted of a criminal offense incident to the application for or performance of a State, public or private Contract or subcontract; or convicted of a criminal offense including but not limited to any of the following: embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, receiving stolen property, attempting to influence a public employee to breach the ethical conduct standards for State of North Carolina employees; convicted under State or federal antitrust statutes; or convicted of any other criminal offense which in the sole discretion of the State, reflects upon the Vendor's business integrity and such vendor shall be prohibited from entering into a contract for goods or Services with any department, institution or agency of the State.

7.8 SECURITY AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

The Agency reserves the right to conduct a security background check or otherwise approve any employee or agent provided by the Vendor, and to refuse access to or require replacement of any such personnel for cause, including, but not limited to, technical or training qualifications, quality of work or change in security status or non-compliance with the Agency's security or other similar requirements.

All State and Vendor personnel that have access to data restricted by the State Security Manual and Policies must have a security background check performed. The Vendors are responsible for performing all background checks of their workforce and subcontractors. The State reserves the right to check for non-compliance.

7.9 ASSURANCES - RESERVED

7.10 CONFIDENTIALITY OF OFFERS

All offers and any other RFP responses shall be made public as required by the NC Public Records Act and GS 143B-1350. Vendors may mark portions of offers as confidential or proprietary, after determining that such information is excepted from the NC Public Records Act, provided that such marking is clear and unambiguous and preferably at the top and bottom of each page containing confidential information. Standard restrictive legends appearing on every page of an offer are not sufficient and shall not be binding upon the State.

Certain State information is not public under the NC Public Records Act and other laws. Any such information which the State designates as confidential and makes available to the Vendor in order to respond to the RFP or carry out the Agreement, or which becomes available to the Vendor in carrying out the Agreement, shall be protected by the Vendor from unauthorized use and disclosure. The Vendor shall not be required under the provisions of this section to keep confidential, (1) information generally available to the public, (2) information released by the State generally, or to the Vendor without restriction, (3) information independently developed or acquired by the Vendor or its personnel without reliance in any way on otherwise protected information of the State. Notwithstanding the foregoing restrictions, the Vendor and its personnel may use and disclose any information which it is otherwise required by law to disclose, but in each case only after the State has been so notified, and has had the opportunity, if possible, to obtain reasonable protection for such information in connection with such disclosure.

7.11 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The Agency shall designate a primary point of contact who will be responsible for contract administration and coordination on behalf of Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC). The Vendor shall designate a primary point of contact who will be responsible for managing and coordinating the Vendor's performance under the Agreement.

All communications, coordination, and issue resolution related to the services provided under this Agreement shall occur through the designated points of contact. The Vendor's designated representative shall have sufficient authority to address operational, reporting, and contractual matters and to coordinate responses to Agency requests.

7.12 MEETINGS

The Vendor shall meet with Agency personnel, or designated representatives, as reasonably requested by the Agency to address contract administration matters, performance issues, reporting, or other matters related to the services provided under the Agreement.

Meetings shall be scheduled as needed and coordinated by the Agency. The Vendor shall be given reasonable advance notice of meeting dates, times, and agendas. Meetings may be conducted in person or via teleconference or video conference, as determined by the Agency.

7.13 RECYCLING AND SOURCE REDUCTION

It is the policy of this State to encourage and promote the purchase of products with recycled content to the extent economically practicable, and to purchase items which are reusable, refillable, repairable, more durable, and less toxic to the extent that the purchase or use is practicable and cost-effective. We also encourage and promote using minimal packaging and the use of recycled/recyclable products in the packaging of goods purchased. However, no sacrifice in quality of packaging will be acceptable.

The Vendor remains responsible for providing packaging that will protect the commodity and contain it for its intended use. Vendors are strongly urged to bring to the attention of the purchasers at the NCDIT Statewide IT Procurement Office those products or packaging they offer which have recycled content and that are recyclable.

7.14 SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS - RESERVED

7.15 AGENCY TERMS AND CONDITIONS - RESERVED

ATTACHMENT A: DEFINITIONS

- 1) **24x7:** A statement of availability of systems, communications, and/or supporting resources every hour (24) of each day (7 days weekly) throughout every year for periods specified herein. Where reasonable downtime is accepted, it will be stated herein. Otherwise, 24x7 implies NO loss of availability of systems, communications, and/or supporting resources.
- 2) **Cybersecurity Incident (GS 143B-1320):** An occurrence that:
 - a. Actually or imminently jeopardizes, without lawful authority, the integrity, confidentiality, or availability of information or an information system; or
 - b. Constitutes a violation or imminent threat of violation of law, security policies, privacy policies, security procedures, or acceptable use policies.
- 3) **Deliverables:** Deliverables, as used herein, shall comprise all Hardware, Vendor Services, professional Services, Software and provided modifications to any Software, and incidental materials, including any goods, Software or Services access license, data, reports and documentation provided or created during the performance or provision of Services hereunder. Deliverables include "Work Product" and means any expression of Licensor's findings, analyses, conclusions, opinions, recommendations, ideas, techniques, know-how, designs, programs, enhancements, and other technical information; but not source and object code or software.
- 4) **Goods:** Includes intangibles such as computer software; provided, however that this definition does not modify the definition of "goods" in the context of N.C.G.S. §25-2-105 (UCC definition of goods).
- 5) **NCDIT or DIT:** The NC Department of Information Technology.
- 6) **Open Market Contract:** A contract for the purchase of goods or Services not covered by a term, technical, or convenience contract.
- 7) **Reasonable, Necessary or Proper:** as used herein shall be interpreted solely by the State of North Carolina.
- 8) **Request for Proposal (RFP):** The RFP is a formal, written solicitation document typically used for seeking competition and obtaining offers for more complex services or a combination of goods and services. The RFP is used when the value is over \$10,000. This document contains specifications of the RFP, instructions to bidders and the standard IT Terms and Conditions for Goods and Related Services. User should add Supplemental Terms and Conditions for Software and Services, when applicable.
- 9) **Security Breach:** As defined in N.C.G.S. §75-61.
- 10) **Significant Security Incident (GS 143B-1320):** A cybersecurity incident that is likely to result in demonstrable harm to the State's security interests, economy, critical infrastructure, or to the public confidence, civil liberties, or public health and safety of the residents of North Carolina. A significant cybersecurity incident is determined by the following factors:
 - a. Incidents that meet thresholds identified by the Department jointly with the Department of Public Safety that involve information:
 - i. That is not releasable to the public and that is restricted or highly restricted according to Statewide Data Classification and Handling Policy; or
 - ii. That involves the exfiltration, modification, deletion, or unauthorized access, or lack of availability to information or systems within certain parameters to include (i) a specific threshold of number of records or users affected as defined in G.S. 75-65 or (ii) any additional data types with required security controls.

- b. Incidents that involve information that is not recoverable or cannot be recovered within defined time lines required to meet operational commitments defined jointly by the State agency and the Department or can be recovered only through additional measures and has a high or medium functional impact to the mission of an agency.

- 11) Vendor:** Company, firm, corporation, partnership, individual, etc., submitting an offer in response to a solicitation.
- 12) Agency:** Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC), including its authorized representatives, departments, and offices.
- 13) Borrower:** A current or former student of the Agency who has received one or more federal student loans under Title IV of the Higher Education Act and whose loan information is accessible through authorized federal systems, including the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS).
- 14) Cohort Default Rate (CDR):** The official metric calculated by the U.S. Department of Education that measures the percentage of a school's federal student loan borrowers who enter repayment during a federal fiscal year and default within the applicable monitoring period, as defined under Title IV regulations.
- 15) Default Prevention Services:** Services intended to reduce student loan delinquency and default, including borrower identification, outreach, counseling, repayment education, servicer coordination, and reporting activities as described in this RFP.
- 16) Indefinite Quantity Contract:** A contract under which the quantity of services to be provided is not fixed at the time of award and may vary over the contract term based on the Agency's actual needs, with no guarantee of minimum or maximum volumes.
- 17) National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS):** The U.S. Department of Education's central database for federal student aid that contains information on student loans, grants, enrollment, and related borrower data.
- 18) Outreach:** Communication attempts initiated by the Vendor to contact Borrowers through one or more approved methods, including telephone, email, or written correspondence, for purposes related to default prevention and loan repayment assistance.
- 19) Resolution / Resolved Borrower:** A borrower whose delinquent or at-risk loan status has been addressed through confirmed actions such as enrollment in a repayment plan, placement into deferment or forbearance, successful rehabilitation, or loan consolidation, as verified through authorized data sources or servicer confirmation.
- 20) Services:** All activities performed by the Vendor under this Agreement, including business, professional, consulting, technical, operational, and support services related to Student Loan Default Prevention and Management, whether or not specifically identified as Deliverables.

ATTACHMENT B: DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Section 1. General Terms and Conditions Applicable to All Purchases

1) **DEFINITIONS:**

- a) "Data" means information, formulae, algorithms, or other content that the State, the State's employees, agents and end users upload, create or modify using the Services pursuant to this Agreement. Data also includes user identification information and metadata which may contain Data or from which the State's Data may be ascertainable.
- b) "Deliverable/Product Warranties" shall mean and include the warranties provided for products or deliverables licensed to the State as included in Paragraph 7) c) of these Terms and Conditions unless superseded by the Vendor's Warranties pursuant to the Vendor's License or Support Agreements.
- c) "Services" shall mean the duties and tasks undertaken by the Vendor to fulfill the requirements and specifications of this solicitation including, without limitation, providing web browser access by authorized users to certain Vendor online software applications identified herein and to related services such as Vendor hosted Computer storage, databases, Support, documentation, and other functionalities, all as a Software as a Service ("SaaS") solution.
- d) "State" shall mean the State of North Carolina, the NC Department of Information Technology as an agency, or the agency identified in this solicitation as the Purchasing State Agency and Award Authority.
- e) "Support" includes provision of ongoing updates and maintenance for Vendor online software applications and as may be specified herein, consulting, training and other support Services as provided by the Vendor for SaaS tenants receiving similar SaaS Services.

2) **ACCESS AND USE OF SAAS SERVICES:**

- a) The Vendor grants the State a personal non-transferable and non-exclusive right to use and access, all Services and other functionalities or services provided, furnished or accessible under this Agreement. The State may utilize the Services as agreed herein and in accordance with any mutually agreed Acceptable Use Policy. The State is authorized to access State Data and any Vendor-provided data as specified herein and to transmit revisions, updates, deletions, enhancements, or modifications to the State Data. This shall include the right of the State to, and access to, Support without the Vendor requiring a separate maintenance or support agreement. Subject to an agreed limitation on the number of users, the State may use the Services with any computer, computer system, server, or desktop workstation owned or utilized by the State or other authorized users. User access to the Services shall be routinely provided by the Vendor and may be subject to a more specific Service Level Agreement (SLA) agreed to in writing by the parties. The State shall notify the Vendor of any unauthorized use of any password or account, or any other known or suspected breach of security access. The State also agrees to refrain from taking any steps such as reverse engineering, reverse assembly or reverse compilation to derive a source code equivalent to the Services or any portion thereof. Use of the Services to perform services for commercial third parties (so-called "service bureau" uses) is not permitted but the State may utilize the Services to perform its governmental functions. If the Services fees are based upon the number of Users and/or hosted instances, the number of Users/hosted instances available may be adjusted at any time (subject to the restrictions on the maximum number of Users specified in the Furnish and Deliver Table herein) by mutual agreement and State Procurement approval. All Services and information designated as "confidential" or "proprietary" shall be kept in confidence except as may be required by the North Carolina Public Records Act, N.C.G.S. § 132-1 *et seq.*
- b) The State's access license for the Services and its associated services neither transfers, vests, nor infers any title or other ownership right in any intellectual property rights of the Vendor or any third party nor does this license transfer, vest, or infer any title or other ownership right in any source code associated with the Services unless otherwise agreed to by the parties. The provisions of this paragraph will not be construed as a sale of any ownership rights in the Services.

Any Services or technical and business information owned by the Vendor or its suppliers or licensors made accessible or furnished to the State shall be and remain the property of the Vendor or such other party, respectively. The Vendor has a limited, non-exclusive license to access and use the State Data as provided to the Vendor, but solely for performing its obligations under this Agreement and in confidence as provided herein.

- c) The Vendor or its suppliers shall, at a minimum, and except as otherwise agreed, provide telephone assistance to the State for all Services procured hereunder during the State's normal business hours (unless different hours are specified herein). The Vendor warrants that its Support and customer service and assistance will be performed in accordance with generally accepted industry standards. The State has the right to receive the benefit of upgrades, updates, maintenance releases or other enhancements or modifications made generally available to the Vendor's SaaS tenants for similar Services. The Vendor's right to a new use agreement for new version releases of the Services shall not be abridged by the foregoing. The Vendor may, at no additional charge, modify the Services to improve operation and reliability or to meet legal requirements.
 - d) The Vendor will provide to the State the same Services for updating, maintaining and continuing optimal performance for the Services as provided to other similarly situated users or tenants of the Services, but minimally as provided for and specified herein. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, Support will also be provided for any other (e.g., third party) software provided by the Vendor in connection with the Vendor's solution herein. The technical and professional activities required for establishing, managing, and maintaining the Services environment are the responsibilities of the Vendor. Any training specified herein will be provided by the Vendor to certain State users for the fees or costs as set forth herein or in an SLA.
 - e) Services provided pursuant to this Solicitation may, in some circumstances, be accompanied by a user clickwrap agreement. The term clickwrap agreement refers to an agreement that requires the end user to manifest his or her assent to terms and conditions by clicking an "ok" or "agree" button on a dialog box or pop-up window as part of the process of access to the Services. All terms and conditions of any clickwrap agreement provided with any Services solicited herein shall have no force and effect and shall be non-binding on the State, its employees, agents, and other authorized users of the Services.
 - f) The Vendor may utilize partners and/or subcontractors to assist in the provision of the Services so long as non-public State Data is not removed from the United States per paragraph 18) b). The Vendor shall identify all of its strategic business partners related to Services provided under this Agreement including, but not limited to, all subcontractors or other entities or individuals who may be a party to a joint venture or similar agreement with the Vendor or will be involved in any application development and/or operations.
 - g) The Vendor warrants that all Services will be performed with professional care and skill, in a workmanlike manner, and in accordance with the Services documentation and this Agreement.
 - h) An SLA or other agreed writing shall contain provisions for scalability of Services and any variation in fees or costs as a result of any such scaling.
 - i) Professional services provided by the Vendor at the request by the State in writing in addition to agreed Services shall be at the then-existing Vendor hourly rates when provided unless otherwise agreed in writing by the parties.
- 3) **WARRANTY OF NON-INFRINGEMENT; REMEDIES:**
- a) The Vendor warrants to the best of its knowledge that:
 - i) The Services do not infringe any intellectual property rights of any third party; and
 - ii) There are no actual or threatened actions arising from, or alleged under, any intellectual property rights of any third party.
 - b) Should any Services supplied by the Vendor become the subject of a claim of infringement of a patent, copyright, Trademark or a trade secret in the United States, the Vendor shall, at its option and expense, either procure for the State the right to continue using the Services or replace or modify the same to become non-infringing.

If neither of these options can reasonably be taken in the Vendor's judgment, or if further use shall be prevented by injunction, the Vendor agrees to cease provision of any affected Services and refund any sums the State has paid the Vendor and make every reasonable effort to assist the State in procuring substitute Services. If, in the sole opinion of the State, the cessation of use by the State of any such Services due to infringement issues makes the retention of other items acquired from the Vendor under this Agreement impractical, the State shall then have the option of terminating the Agreement, or applicable portions thereof, without penalty or termination charge and the Vendor agrees to refund any sums the State paid for unused Services.

- c) The Vendor, at its own expense, shall defend any action brought against the State to the extent that such action is based upon a claim that the Services supplied by the Vendor, their use, or operation infringes on a patent, copyright, trademark or violates a trade secret in the United States. The Vendor shall pay those costs and damages finally awarded or agreed in a settlement against the State in any such action. Such defense and payment shall be conditioned on the following:
 - i) That the Vendor shall be notified within a reasonable time in writing by the State of any such claim; and
 - ii) That the Vendor shall have the sole control of the defense of any action on such claim and all negotiations for its settlement or compromise provided, however, that the State shall have the option to participate in such action at its own expense.
- d) The Vendor will not be required to defend or indemnify the State if any claim by a third party against the State for infringement or misappropriation results from the State's material alteration of any Vendor-branded Services, or from the continued use of the good(s) or Services after receiving notice they infringe on a trade secret of a third party.

4) ACCESS AVAILABILITY; REMEDIES:

- a) The Vendor warrants that the Services will be in good working order and operating in conformance with the Vendor's standard specifications and functions as well as any other specifications agreed to by the parties in writing and shall remain accessible 24/7 with the exception of scheduled outages for maintenance and of other service level provisions agreed in writing (e.g., in an SLA). The Vendor does not warrant that the operation of the Services will be completely uninterrupted or error free or that the Services functions will meet all the State's requirements unless developed as Customized Services.
- b) The State shall notify the Vendor if the Services are not in good working order or inaccessible during the term of the Agreement. The Vendor shall, at its option, either repair, replace or reperform any Services reported or discovered as not being in good working order and accessible during the applicable Agreement term without cost to the State.

If the Services monthly availability averages less than 99.9% (excluding agreed-upon maintenance downtime), the State shall be entitled to receive automatic credits as indicated immediately below, or the State may use other contractual remedies such as recovery of damages as set forth herein in writing (e.g., in Specifications, Special Terms or in an SLA) and as such other contractual damages are limited by N.C.G.S. § 143B-1350(h1) and the Limitation of Liability paragraph below. If not otherwise provided, the automatic remedies for non-availability of the Services during a month are:

1. A 10% service credit applied against future fees if the Vendor does not reach 99.9% availability.
2. A 25% service credit applied against future fees if the Vendor does not reach 99% availability.
3. A 50% service credit applied against future fees or eligibility for early termination of the Agreement if the Vendor does not reach 95% availability.

If, however, Services meet the 99.9% service availability level for a month but are not available for a consecutive 120 minutes during that month, the Vendor shall grant to the State a credit of a pro-rated one-day of the monthly subscription Services fee against future Services charges.

Such credit(s) shall be applied to the bill immediately following the month in which the Vendor failed to meet the performance requirements or other service levels, and the credit will continue to be deducted from the monthly invoice for each prior month that the Vendor fails to meet the support response times for the remainder of the duration of the Agreement. If Services monthly availability averages less than 99.9% (excluding agreed-upon maintenance downtime) for three (3) or more months in a rolling twelve (12)-month period, the State may also terminate the Agreement for material breach in accordance with the Default provisions hereinbelow.

- c) Support Services. If the Vendor fails to meet Support Service response times as set forth herein or in an SLA for a period of three (3) consecutive months, a ten percent (10%) service credit will be deducted from the invoice in the month immediately following the third month, and the ten percent (10%) service credit will continue to be deducted from the monthly invoice for each month that the Vendor fails to meet the support response times for the remainder of the duration of the Agreement.

5) EXCLUSIONS:

- a) Except as stated above in Paragraphs 3 and 4, the Vendor and its parent, subsidiaries and affiliates, subcontractors and suppliers make no warranties, express or implied, as to the Services.
- b) The warranties provided in Paragraphs 3 and 4 above do not cover repair for damages, malfunctions, or service failures substantially caused by:
 - i) Actions of non-Vendor personnel.
 - ii) Failure to follow the Vendor's written instructions relating to the Services provided to the State.
 - iii) Force Majeure conditions set forth hereinbelow; or
 - iv) The State's sole misuse of, or its own inability to use, the Services.

- 6) PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND ACCOUNTABILITY:** N.C.G.S. § 143B-1340(f) and 09 NCAC 06B.1207 require provisions for performance review and accountability in State IT contracts. For this procurement, these shall include the holding of a retainage of ten percent (10%) of the contract value and withholding the final payment contingent on final acceptance by the State as provided in 09 NCAC 06B.1207(3) and (4) unless waived or otherwise agreed in writing. The Services herein will be provided consistent with and under these Services performance review and accountability guarantees.

7) LIMITATION OF LIABILITY: Limitation of Vendor's Contract Damages Liability

- a) Where Services are under the State's exclusive management and control, the Vendor shall not be liable for direct damages caused by the State's failure to fulfill any State responsibilities of assuring the proper use, management and supervision of the Services and programs, audit controls, operating methods, office procedures, or for establishing all proper checkpoints necessary for the State's intended use of the Services.
- b) The Vendor's liability for damages to the State arising under the Agreement shall be limited to two (2) times the value of the Agreement.
- c) The foregoing limitation of liability shall not apply to claims covered by other specific provisions including, but not limited to, Service Level Agreement or Deliverable/Product Warranty compliance, or to claims for injury to persons or damage to tangible personal property, gross negligence or willful or wanton conduct. This limitation of liability does not apply to contributions among joint tortfeasors under N.C.G.S. § 1B-1 *et seq.* or the receipt of court costs or attorney's fees that might be awarded by a court in addition to damages after litigation based on this Agreement. For avoidance of doubt, the parties agree that the Service Level Agreement and Deliverable/Product Warranty Terms in the Agreement are intended to provide the sole and exclusive remedies available to the State under the Agreement for the Vendor's failure to comply with the requirements stated therein.

8) VENDOR'S LIABILITY FOR INJURY TO PERSONS OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY:

- a) The Vendor shall be liable for damages arising out of personal injuries and/or damage to real or tangible personal property of the State, employees of the State, persons designated by the State for training, or person(s) other than agents or employees of the Vendor, designated by the State for any purpose, prior to, during, or subsequent to delivery, installation, acceptance, and use of the Deliverables either at the Vendor's site or at the State's place of business, provided that the injury or damage was caused by the fault or negligence of the Vendor.
- b) The Vendor agrees to indemnify, defend and hold the Agency and the State and its Officers, employees, agents and assigns harmless from any liability relating to personal injury or injury to real or personal property of any kind, accruing or resulting to any other person, firm or corporation furnishing or supplying work, Services, materials or supplies in connection with the performance of this Agreement, whether tangible or intangible, arising out of the ordinary negligence, willful or wanton negligence, or intentional acts of the Vendor, its officers, employees, agents, assigns or subcontractors.
- c) The Vendor shall not be liable for damages arising out of or caused by an alteration or an attachment not made or installed by the Vendor.

9) MODIFICATION OF SERVICES: If the Vendor modifies or replaces the Services provided to the State and other tenants, and if the State has paid all applicable Subscription Fees, the State shall be entitled to receive, at no additional charge, access to a newer version of the Services that supports substantially the same functionality as the then accessible version of the Services. Newer versions of the Services containing substantially increased functionality may be made available to the State for an additional subscription fee. In the event of either of such modifications, the then accessible version of the Services shall remain fully available to the State until the newer version is provided to the State and accepted. If a modification materially affects the functionality of the Services as used by the State, the State, at its sole option, may defer such modification.

10) TRANSITION PERIOD:

- a) For ninety (90) days, either prior to the expiration date of this Agreement, or upon notice of termination of this Agreement, the Vendor shall assist the State, upon written request, in extracting and/or transitioning all Data in the format determined by the State ("Transition Period").
- b) The Transition Period may be modified in an SLA or as agreed upon in writing by the parties in a contract amendment.
- c) During the Transition Period, Services access shall continue to be made available to the State without alteration.
- d) The Vendor agrees to compensate the State for damages or losses the State incurs as a result of the Vendor's failure to comply with this Transition Period section in accordance with the Limitation of Liability provisions above.
- e) Upon termination, and unless otherwise stated in an SLA, and after providing the State Data to the State as indicated above in this section with acknowledged receipt by the State in writing, the Vendor shall permanently destroy or render inaccessible any portion of the State Data in the Vendor's and/or subcontractor's possession or control following the completion and expiration of all obligations in this section. Within thirty (30) days, the Vendor shall issue a written statement to the State confirming the destruction or inaccessibility of the State's Data.
- f) The State, at its option, may purchase additional Transition services as may be agreed upon in a supplemental agreement.

11) TRANSPORTATION: Transportation charges for any Deliverable sent to the State other than electronically or by download shall be FOB Destination unless delivered by internet or file-transfer as agreed by the State or otherwise specified in the solicitation document or purchase order.

12) TRAVEL EXPENSES: All travel expenses should be included in the Vendor's proposed costs. Separately stated travel expenses will not be reimbursed. In the event that the Vendor may be eligible to be reimbursed for travel expenses specifically agreed to in writing and arising under the performance of this Agreement, reimbursement will be at the out-of-state rates set forth in N.C.G.S. § 138-6 as amended from time to time.

I. The Vendor agrees to use the lowest available airfare not requiring a weekend stay and to use the lowest available rate for rental vehicles. All Vendor incurred travel expenses shall be billed on a monthly basis, shall be supported by receipt, and shall be paid by the State within thirty (30) days after invoice approval. Travel expenses exceeding the foregoing rates shall not be paid by the State. The State will reimburse travel allowances only for days on which the Vendor is required to be in North Carolina performing Services under this Agreement.

13) PROHIBITION AGAINST CONTINGENT FEES AND GRATUITIES: The Vendor warrants that it has not paid, and agrees not to pay, any bonus, commission, fee, or gratuity to any employee or official of the State for the purpose of obtaining any contract or award issued by the State. Subsequent discovery by the State of non-compliance with these provisions shall constitute sufficient cause for immediate termination of all outstanding Agreements with the Vendor. Violations of this provision may result in debarment of the Vendor as permitted by 9 NCAC 06B.1207 or other provision of law.

14) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS: Any and all payments by the State are expressly contingent upon and subject to the appropriation, allocation and availability of funds to the State for the purposes set forth in this Agreement. If this Agreement or any Purchase Order issued hereunder is funded in whole or in part by federal funds, the State's performance and payment shall be subject to and contingent upon the continuing availability of said federal funds for the purposes of the Agreement or Purchase Order. If the term of this Agreement extends into fiscal years subsequent to that in which it is approved, such continuation of the Agreement is *expressly contingent upon* the appropriation, allocation, and availability of funds by the N.C. Legislature for the purposes set forth in the Agreement. If funds to effect payment are not available, the State will provide written notification to the Vendor. If the Agreement is terminated under this paragraph, the Vendor agrees to terminate any Services supplied to the State under this Agreement and relieve the State of any further obligation thereof. The State shall remit payment for Services accepted on or prior to the date of the aforesaid notice in conformance with the payment terms.

15) PAYMENT TERMS:

- a) Payment may be made by the State in advance of or in anticipation of subscription Services to be actually performed under the Agreement or upon proper invoice for other Services rendered. Payment terms are Net 30 days after receipt of a correct invoice. Initial payments are to be made after final acceptance of the Services. Payments are subject to any retainage requirements herein. The Purchasing State Agency is responsible for all payments under the Agreement. Subscription fees for term years after the initial year shall be as quoted herein as optional costs for the State but shall not increase more than five percent (5%) over the prior term, except as the parties may have agreed to an alternate formula to determine such increases in writing. No additional charges to the State will be permitted based upon, or arising from, the State's use of a Business Procurement Card. The State may exercise any and all rights of Set Off as permitted in Chapter 105A-1 *et seq.* of the N.C. General Statutes and applicable Administrative Rules.
- b) Upon the Vendor's written request of not less than thirty (30) days and approval by the State, the State may:
 - i) Forward the Vendor's payment check(s) directly to any person or entity designated by the Vendor, or
 - ii) Include any person or entity designated in writing by the Vendor as a joint payee on the Vendor's payment check(s), however,
 - iii) In no event shall such approval and action obligate the State to anyone other than the Vendor and the Vendor shall remain responsible for fulfillment of all Agreement obligations.
- c) For any third-party software licensed by the Vendor or its subcontractors for use by the State, a copy of the software license including terms acceptable to the State, an assignment acceptable to the State, and documentation of license fees paid by the Vendor must be provided to the State before any related license fees or costs may be billed to the State.
- d) An undisputed invoice is an invoice for which the State and/or the Purchasing State Agency has not disputed in writing within thirty (30) days from the invoice date unless the Agency requests more time for review of the invoice.

Upon the Vendor's receipt of a disputed invoice notice, the Vendor will work to correct the applicable invoice error, provided that such dispute notice shall not relieve the State or the applicable Purchasing State Agency from its payment obligations for the undisputed items on the invoice or for any disputed items that are ultimately corrected. The Purchasing State Agency is not required to pay the Vendor for any Software or Services provided without a written purchase order from the appropriate Purchasing State Agency. In addition, all such Services provided must meet all terms, conditions, and specifications of this Agreement and purchase order and be accepted as satisfactory by the Purchasing State Agency before payment will be issued.

- e) The Purchasing State Agency shall release any amounts held as retainages for Services completed within a reasonable period after the end of the period(s) or term(s) for which the retainage was withheld. Payment retainage shall apply to all invoiced items, excepting only such items as the Vendor obtains from Third Parties and for which costs are chargeable to the State by agreement of the parties. The Purchasing State Agency, in its sole discretion, may release retainages withheld from any invoice upon acceptance of the Services identified or associated with such invoices.

16) ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA:

- a) Initial acceptance testing is required for all Vendor supplied Services before going live unless provided otherwise in the solicitation documents or a Statement of Work. The State may define such processes and procedures as may be necessary or proper, in its opinion and discretion, to ensure compliance with the State's specifications and the Vendor's technical representations. Acceptance of Services may be controlled by additional written terms as agreed by the parties.
- b) After initial acceptance of Services, the State shall have the obligation to notify the Vendor in writing and within ten (10) days following provision of any Deliverable described in the Agreement if it is not acceptable. The notice shall specify in reasonable detail the reason(s) a Deliverable is unacceptable. Acceptance by the State of any Vendor re-performance or correction shall not be unreasonably withheld but may be conditioned or delayed as required for confirmation by the State that the issue(s) in the notice has been successfully corrected.

17) CONFIDENTIALITY: The State may maintain the confidentiality of certain types of information described in N.C.G.S. § 132-1 *et seq.* Such information may include trade secrets defined by N.C.G.S. § 66-152 and other information exempted from the Public Records Act pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 132-1.2. The Vendor may designate information, Products, Services or appropriate portions of its response as confidential, consistent with and to the extent permitted under the Statutes and Rules set forth above, by marking the top and bottom of pages containing confidential information with a legend in boldface type "**CONFIDENTIAL.**" By so marking any page, or portion of a page, the Vendor warrants that it has formed a good faith opinion, having received such necessary or proper review by counsel and other knowledgeable advisors, that the portions marked "confidential" meet the requirements of the Rules and Statutes set forth above. ***However, under no circumstances shall price information be designated as confidential.*** The State agrees to promptly notify the Vendor in writing of any action seeking to compel the disclosure of the Vendor's confidential information. If an action is brought pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 132-9 to compel the State to disclose information marked "confidential," the Vendor agrees that it will intervene in the action through its counsel and participate in defending the State, including any public official(s) or public employee(s). The Vendor agrees that it shall hold the State and any official(s) and individual(s) harmless from any and all damages, costs, and attorneys' fees awarded against the State in the action. The State shall have the right, at its option and expense, to participate in the defense of the action through its counsel. The State shall have no liability to the Vendor with respect to the disclosure of the Vendor's confidential information ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 132-9 or other applicable law.

18) SECURITY OF STATE DATA:

- a) All materials, including software, Data, information and documentation provided by the State to the Vendor (State Data) during the performance or provision of Services hereunder are the property of the State of North Carolina and must be kept secure and returned to the State. The Vendor will protect State Data in its hands from unauthorized disclosure, loss, damage, destruction by natural event or other eventuality.

Proprietary Vendor materials shall be identified to the State by the Vendor prior to use or provision of Services hereunder and shall remain the property of the Vendor. Derivative works of any Vendor proprietary materials prepared or created during the performance of provision of Services hereunder shall be provided to the State as part of the Services. The Vendor shall not access State User accounts or State Data except (i) during data center operations; (ii) in response to service or technical issues; (iii) as required by the express terms of this Agreement; or (iv) at the State's written request. The Vendor shall protect the confidentiality of all information, Data, instruments, studies, reports, records and other materials provided to it by the State or maintained or created in accordance with this Agreement. No such information, Data, instruments, studies, reports, records and other materials in the possession of the Vendor shall be disclosed in any form without the prior written agreement with the State. The Vendor will have written policies governing access to and duplication and dissemination of all such information, Data, instruments, studies, reports, records and other materials.

- b) The Vendor shall not store or transfer non-public State data outside of the United States. This includes backup data and Disaster Recovery locations. The Service Provider will permit its personnel and contractors to access State of North Carolina data remotely only as required to provide technical support.
- c) Protection of personal privacy and sensitive data. The Vendor acknowledges its responsibility for securing any restricted or highly restricted data, as defined by the Statewide Data Classification and Handling Policy (<https://it.nc.gov/document/statewide-data-classification-and-handling-policy>), that is collected by the State and stored in any Vendor site or other Vendor housing systems including, but not limited to, computer systems, networks, servers, or databases, maintained by the Vendor or its agents or subcontractors in connection with the provision of the Services. The Vendor warrants, at its sole cost and expense, that it shall implement processes and maintain the security of data classified as restricted or highly restricted; provide reasonable care and efforts to detect fraudulent activity involving the data; and promptly notify the State of any breaches of security within twenty-four (24) hours of confirmation as required by N.C.G.S. § 143B-1379.
- d) The Vendor will provide and maintain secure backup of the State Data. The Vendor shall implement and maintain secure passwords for its online system providing the Services as well as all appropriate administrative, physical, technical and procedural safeguards at all times during the term of this Agreement to secure such Data from Data Breach, and protect the Data and the Services from loss, corruption, unauthorized disclosure, and the introduction of viruses, disabling devices, malware and other forms of malicious or inadvertent acts that can disrupt the State's access to its Data and the Services. The Vendor will allow periodic back-up of State Data by the State to the State's infrastructure as the State requires or as may be provided by law.
- e) The Vendor shall certify to the State:
 - i) The sufficiency of its security standards, tools, technologies and procedures in providing Services under this Agreement;
 - ii) That the system used to provide the Subscription Services under this Agreement has and will maintain a valid third party security certification not to exceed one (1) year and is consistent with the data classification level and security controls appropriate for low or moderate information system(s) per the National Institute of Standards and Technology NIST 800-53 revision 4. The State reserves the right to independently evaluate, audit, and verify such requirements.
 - iii) That the Services will comply with the following:
 - (1) Any NCDIT security policy regarding Cloud Computing and the NCDIT Statewide Information Security Policy Manual to include encryption requirements as defined below:
 - (a) The Vendor shall encrypt all non-public data in transit regardless of the transit mechanism.
 - (b) For engagements where the Vendor stores sensitive personally identifiable or otherwise confidential information, this data shall be encrypted at rest.

Examples are Social Security number, date of birth, driver license number, financial data, federal/state tax information, and hashed passwords. The Vendor's encryption shall be consistent with validated cryptography standards as specified in National Institute of Standards and Technology FIPS140-2, Security Requirements. The key location and other key management details will be discussed and negotiated by both parties. When the Service Provider cannot offer encryption at rest, it must maintain, for the duration of the Agreement, cyber security liability insurance coverage for any loss resulting from a data breach. Additionally, where encryption of data at rest is not possible, the Vendor must describe existing security measures that provide a similar level of protection.

- (2) Privacy provisions of the Federal Privacy Act of 1974;
 - (3) The North Carolina Identity Theft Protection Act, N.C.G.S. Chapter 75, Article 2A (e.g., N.C.G.S. §§ 75-65 and -66);
 - (4) The North Carolina Public Records Act, N.C.G.S. Chapter 132;
 - (5) Applicable Federal, State and industry standards and guidelines including, but not limited to, relevant security provisions of the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standard (PCIDSS) including the PCIDSS Cloud Computing Guidelines, Criminal Justice Information, The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA); and
 - (6) Any requirements implemented by the State under N.C.G.S. §§ 143B-1376 and -1377.
- f) Security Breach. "Security Breach" under the NC Identity Theft Protection Act (N.C.G.S. § 75-60 *et seq.*) means (1) any circumstance pursuant to which applicable Law requires notification of such breach to be given to affected parties or other activity in response to such circumstance (e.g., N.C.G.S. § 75-65); or (2) any actual, attempted, suspected, threatened, or reasonably foreseeable circumstance that compromises, or could reasonably be expected to compromise, either Physical Security or Systems Security (as such terms are defined below) in a fashion that either does or could reasonably be expected to permit unauthorized Processing (as defined below), use, disclosure or acquisition of or access to any the State Data or state confidential information. "Physical Security" means physical security at any site or other location housing systems maintained by the Vendor or its agents or subcontractors in connection with the Services. "Systems Security" means security of computer, electronic or telecommunications systems of any variety (including data bases, hardware, software, storage, switching and interconnection devices and mechanisms), and networks of which such systems are a part or communicate with, used directly or indirectly by the Vendor or its agents or subcontractors in connection with the Services. "Processing" means any operation or set of operations performed upon the State Data or State confidential information, whether by automatic means such as creating, collecting, procuring, obtaining, accessing, recording, organizing, storing, adapting, altering, retrieving, consulting, using, disclosing or destroying.
- g) Breach Notification. In the event the Vendor becomes aware of any Security Breach due to Vendor acts or omissions other than in accordance with the terms of the Agreement, the Vendor shall, at its own expense (1) immediately notify the State's Contract Administrator of such Security Breach and perform a root cause analysis thereon; (2) investigate such Security Breach; (3) provide a remediation plan, acceptable to the State, to address the Security Breach and prevent any further incidents; (4) conduct a forensic investigation to determine what systems, data and information have been affected by such event; and (5) cooperate with the State, and any law enforcement or regulatory officials, credit reporting companies, and credit card associations investigating such Security Breach. The State shall make the final decision on notifying the State's persons, entities, employees, service providers and/or the public of such Security Breach, and the implementation of the remediation plan. If a notification to a customer is required under any Law or pursuant to any of the State's privacy or security policies, then notifications to all persons and entities who are affected by the same event (as reasonably determined by the State) shall be considered legally required.

- h) Notification Related Costs. The Vendor shall reimburse the State for all Notification Related Costs incurred by the State arising out of or in connection with any such Security Breach due to Vendor acts or omissions other than in accordance with the terms of the Agreement resulting in a requirement for legally required notifications. "Notification Related Costs" shall include the State's internal and external costs associated with addressing and responding to the Security Breach including, but not limited to (1) preparation and mailing or other transmission of legally required notifications; (2) preparation and mailing or other transmission of such other communications to customers, agents or others as the State deems reasonably appropriate; (3) establishment of a call center or other communications procedures in response to such Security Breach (e.g., customer service FAQs, talking points and training); (4) public relations and other similar crisis management services; (5) legal and accounting fees and expenses associated with the State's investigation of and response to such event; and (6) costs for credit reporting services that are associated with legally required notifications or are advisable, in the State's opinion, under the circumstances. If the Vendor becomes aware of any Security Breach which is not due to Vendor acts or omissions other than in accordance with the terms of the Agreement, the Vendor shall immediately notify the State of such Security Breach and the parties shall reasonably cooperate regarding which of the foregoing or other activities may be appropriate under the circumstances, including any applicable Charges for the same.
- i) The Vendor shall allow the State reasonable access to Services security logs, latency statistics, and other related Services security data that affect this Agreement and the State's Data, at no cost to the State.
- j) In the course of normal operations, it may become necessary for the Vendor to copy or move Data to another storage destination on its online system, and delete the Data found in the original location. In any such event, the Vendor shall preserve and maintain the content and integrity of the Data, except by prior written notice to, and prior written approval by, the State.
- k) Remote access to Data from outside the continental United States including, without limitation, remote access to Data by authorized Services support staff in identified support centers, is prohibited unless approved in advance by the State Chief Information Officer or the Purchasing State Agency.
- l) In the event of temporary loss of access to Services, the Vendor shall promptly restore continuity of Services, restore Data in accordance with this Agreement and as may be set forth in an SLA, restore accessibility of Data and the Services to meet the performance requirements stated herein or in an SLA. As a result, Service Level remedies will become available to the State as provided herein, in the SLA or other agreed and relevant documents. Failure to promptly remedy any such temporary loss of access may result in the State exercising its options for assessing damages under this Agreement.
- m) In the event of disaster or catastrophic failure that results in significant State Data loss or extended loss of access to Data or Services, the Vendor shall notify the State by the fastest means available and in writing, with additional notification provided to the State Chief Information Officer or designee of the Purchasing State Agency. The Vendor shall provide such notification within twenty-four (24) hours after the Vendor reasonably believes there has been such a disaster or catastrophic failure. In the notification, the Vendor shall inform the State of:
- (1) The scale and quantity of the State Data loss;
 - (2) What the Vendor has done or will do to recover the State Data from backups and mitigate any deleterious effect of the State Data and Services loss; and
 - (3) What corrective action the Vendor has taken or will take to prevent future State Data and Services loss.
 - (4) If the Vendor fails to respond immediately and remedy the failure, the State may exercise its options for assessing damages or other remedies under this Agreement.

The Vendor shall investigate the disaster or catastrophic failure and shall share the report of the investigation with the State. The State and/or its authorized agents shall have the right to lead (if required by law) or participate in the investigation.

The Vendor shall cooperate fully with the State, its agents and law enforcement.

- n) In the event of termination of this Agreement, cessation of business by the Vendor or other event preventing the Vendor from continuing to provide the Services, the Vendor shall not withhold the State Data or any other State confidential information or refuse for any reason, and promptly return to the State the State Data and any other State confidential information (including copies thereof) if requested to do so on such media as reasonably requested by the State, even if the State is then or is alleged to be in breach of the Agreement. As a part of the Vendor's obligation to provide the State Data pursuant to this Paragraph 18) n), the Vendor will also provide the State any data maps, documentation, software, or other materials necessary including, without limitation, handwritten notes, materials, working papers or documentation, for the State to use, translate, interpret, extract and convert the State Data.
 - o) Secure Data Disposal. When requested by the State, the Vendor shall destroy all requested data in all of its forms (e.g., disk, CD/DVD, and paper). Data shall be permanently deleted and shall not be recoverable according to National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) approved methods and certificates of destruction shall be provided to the State.
- 19) ACCESS TO PERSONS AND RECORDS:** Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 147-64.7, the State, the State Auditor, appropriate federal officials, and their respective authorized employees or agents are authorized to examine all books, records, and accounts of the Vendor insofar as they relate to transactions with any department, board, officer, commission, institution, or other agency of the State of North Carolina pursuant to the performance of this Agreement or to costs charged to this Agreement. The Vendor shall retain any such books, records, and accounts for a minimum of three (3) years after the completion of this Agreement. Additional audit or reporting requirements may be required by any State if, in the State's opinion, such requirement is imposed by federal or state law or regulation. The Vendor shall allow the State to audit conformance including contract terms, system security, and data centers as appropriate. The State may perform this audit or contract with a third party at its discretion at the State's expense. Such reviews shall be conducted with at least thirty (30) days' advance written notice and shall not unreasonably interfere with the Service Provider's business.
- 20) ASSIGNMENT:** The Vendor may not assign this Agreement or its obligations hereunder except as permitted by 09 NCAC 06B.1003 and this Paragraph. The Vendor shall provide reasonable notice of not less than thirty (30) days of any consolidation, acquisition, or merger. Any assignee shall affirm this Agreement attorning to the terms and conditions agreed, and the Vendor shall affirm that the assignee is fully capable of performing all obligations of the Vendor under this Agreement. An assignment may be made, if at all, in writing by the Vendor, assignee, and the State setting forth the foregoing obligation of the Vendor and the assignee.
- 21) NOTICES:** Any notices required under this Agreement should be delivered to the Contract Administrator for each party. Unless otherwise specified in the Solicitation Documents, any notices shall be delivered in writing by U.S. Mail, Commercial Courier, facsimile or by hand.
- 22) TITLES AND HEADINGS:** Titles and Headings in this Agreement are used for convenience only and do not define, limit or proscribe the language of terms identified by such Titles and Headings.
- 23) AMENDMENT:** This Agreement may not be amended orally or by performance. Any amendment must be made in written form and signed by duly authorized representatives of the State and the Vendor.
- 24) TAXES:** The State of North Carolina is exempt from Federal excise taxes and no payment will be made for any personal property taxes levied on the Vendor or for any taxes levied on employee wages. Agencies of the State may have additional exemptions or exclusions for federal or state taxes. Evidence of such additional exemptions or exclusions may be provided to the Vendor by Agencies, as applicable, during the term of this Agreement. Applicable State or local sales taxes shall be invoiced as a separate item.
- 25) GOVERNING LAWS, JURISDICTION, AND VENUE:** This Agreement is made under and shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of North Carolina. The place of this Agreement or purchase order, its situs and forum, shall be Wake County, North Carolina where all matters, whether sounding in contract or in tort, relating to its validity, construction, interpretation and enforcement shall be determined.

The Vendor agrees and submits, solely for matters relating to this Agreement, to the jurisdiction of the courts of the State of North Carolina and stipulates that Wake County shall be the proper venue for all matters.

- 26) DEFAULT:** In the event Services or other Deliverable furnished or performed by the Vendor during performance of any Agreement term fail to conform to any material requirement(s) of the Agreement specifications, notice of the failure is provided by the State and if the failure is not cured within ten (10) days, or the Vendor fails to meet the material requirements and specifications herein, the State may cancel the Agreement. Default may be cause for debarment as provided in 09 NCAC 06B.1206. The rights and remedies of the State provided above shall not be exclusive and are in addition to any other rights and remedies provided by law or under the Agreement.
- a) If the Vendor fails to deliver or provide correct Services within the time required by this Agreement, the State shall provide written notice of said failure to the Vendor, and by such notice require performance assurance measures pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143B-1340(f). The Vendor is responsible for the delays resulting from its failure to deliver or provide Services or other Deliverables.
 - b) Should the State fail to perform any of its obligations upon which the Vendor's performance is conditioned, the Vendor shall not be in default for any delay, cost increase or other consequences resulting from the State's failure. The Vendor will use reasonable efforts to mitigate delays, costs or expenses arising from assumptions in the Vendor's offer documents that prove erroneous or are otherwise invalid. Any deadline that is affected by any such Vendor failure in assumptions or performance by the State shall be extended by an amount of time reasonably necessary to compensate for the effect of such failure. The Vendor shall provide a plan to cure any delay or default if requested by the State. The plan shall state the nature of the delay or default, the time required for cure, any mitigating factors causing or tending to cause the delay or default, and such other information as the Vendor may deem necessary or proper to provide.
- 27) FORCE MAJEURE:** Except as provided for herein, neither party shall be deemed to be in default of its obligations hereunder if and so long as it is prevented from performing such obligations as a result of events beyond its reasonable control including, without limitation, fire, power failures, any act of war, hostile foreign action, nuclear explosion, riot, strikes or failures or refusals to perform under subcontracts, civil insurrection, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, or other catastrophic natural event or act of God.
- 28) COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS:** The Vendor shall comply with all laws, ordinances, codes, rules, regulations, and licensing requirements that are applicable to the conduct of its business and the provision of Services hereunder, including those of federal, state, and local agencies having jurisdiction and/or authority.
- 29) TERMINATION:** Any notice or termination made under this Agreement shall be transmitted via US Mail, Certified Return Receipt Requested. The period of notice for termination shall begin on the day the return receipt is signed and dated. The parties may mutually terminate this Agreement by written agreement at any time.

The State may terminate this Agreement, in whole or in part, pursuant to Paragraph 26) entitled "Default," or pursuant to Special Terms and Conditions in the Solicitation Documents, if any, or for any of the following:

- i) Termination for Cause: In the event any goods, Services, or service furnished by the Vendor during performance fails to conform to any material specification or requirement of the Agreement, and the failure is not cured within the specified time after providing written notice thereof to the Vendor, the State may cancel and procure the articles or Services from other sources holding the Vendor liable for any excess costs occasioned thereby, subject only to the limitations provided in Paragraph 7), entitled "Limitation of Liability." The rights and remedies of the State provided above shall not be exclusive and are in addition to any other rights and remedies provided by law or under the Agreement. The Vendor shall not be relieved of liability to the State for damages sustained by the State arising from the Vendor's breach of this Agreement and the State may, in its discretion, withhold any payment due as a setoff until such time as the damages are finally determined or as agreed by the parties.

Voluntary or involuntary Bankruptcy or receivership by the Vendor shall be cause for termination.

- ii) Termination for Convenience Without Cause: The State may terminate service and indefinite quantity contracts in whole or in part by giving thirty (30) days' prior notice in writing to the Vendor. The Vendor shall be entitled to sums due as compensation for Services performed in conformance with the Agreement. In the event the Agreement is terminated for the convenience of the State, the State will pay for all Services and work performed or delivered in conformance with the Agreement up to the date of termination.

30) DISPUTE RESOLUTION: The parties agree that it is in their mutual interest to resolve disputes informally. A claim by the State shall be submitted in writing to the Vendor's Contract Administrator for decision. The parties shall negotiate in good faith and use all reasonable efforts to resolve such dispute(s). During the time the parties are attempting to resolve any dispute, each shall proceed diligently to perform their respective duties and responsibilities under this Agreement. If a dispute cannot be resolved between the parties within thirty (30) days after delivery of notice, either Party may elect to exercise any other remedies available under this Agreement or at law. This term shall not constitute an agreement by either party to mediate or arbitrate any dispute.

31) SEVERABILITY: In the event a court of competent jurisdiction holds that a provision or requirement of this Agreement violates any applicable law, each such provision or requirement shall be enforced only to the extent it is not in violation of law or is not otherwise unenforceable and all other provisions and requirements of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect. All promises, requirements, terms, conditions, provisions, representations, guarantees and warranties contained herein shall survive the expiration or termination date unless specifically provided otherwise herein, or unless superseded by applicable federal or State statute, including statutes of repose or limitation.

32) FEDERAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY BANKRUPTCY PROTECTION ACT: The parties agree that the State shall be entitled to any and all rights and benefits of the Federal Intellectual Property Bankruptcy Protection Act, Public Law 100-506, codified at 11 U.S.C. 365(n), and any amendments thereto.

33) ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT: Purchasing shall be conducted through the Statewide eProcurement Service. The State's third-party agent shall serve as the Supplier Manager for this eProcurement Service. The Vendor shall register for the Statewide eProcurement Service within two (2) business days of notification of award in order to receive an electronic purchase order resulting from award of this contract.

- a) The Supplier Manager will capture the order from the State approved user, including the shipping and payment information, and submit the order in accordance with the eProcurement Service. Subsequently, the Supplier Manager will send those orders to the appropriate Vendor on State Agreement. The State or State approved user, not the Supplier Manager, shall be responsible for the solicitation, bids received, evaluation of bids received, award of contract, and the payment for goods delivered.
- b) The Vendor agrees at all times to maintain the confidentiality of its username and password for the Statewide eProcurement Services. If the Vendor is a corporation, partnership or other legal entity, the Vendor may authorize its employees to use its password. The Vendor shall be responsible for all activity and all charges for such employees. The Vendor agrees not to permit a third party to use the Statewide eProcurement Services through its account. If there is a breach of security through the Vendor's account, the Vendor shall immediately change its password and notify the Supplier Manager of the security breach by e-mail. The Vendor shall cooperate with the State and the Supplier Manager to mitigate and correct any security breach.

Section 2: Terms and Conditions Applicable to Information Technology Goods and Services – RESERVED

Section 3: Terms and Conditions Applicable to Personnel and Personal Services

- 1) **VENDOR'S REPRESENTATION:** Vendor warrants that qualified personnel will provide Services in a professional manner. "Professional manner" means that the personnel performing the Services will possess the skill and competence consistent with the prevailing business standards in the information technology industry. Vendor agrees that it will not enter any agreement with a third party that might abridge any rights of the State under the Agreement. Vendor will serve as the prime Vendor under the Agreement. Should the State approve any subcontractor(s), the Vendor shall be legally responsible for the performance and payment of the subcontractor(s). Names of any third party Vendors or subcontractors of Vendor may appear for purposes of convenience in Contract documents; and shall not limit Vendor's obligations hereunder. Such third party subcontractors, if approved, may serve as subcontractors to Vendor. Vendor will retain executive representation for functional and technical expertise as needed in order to incorporate any work by third party subcontractor(s).
 - a) Intellectual Property. Vendor represents that it has the right to provide the Services and other Deliverables without violating or infringing any law, rule, regulation, copyright, patent, trade secret or other proprietary right of any third party. Vendor also represents that its Services and other Deliverables are not the subject of any actual or threatened actions arising from, or alleged under, any intellectual property rights of any third party.
 - b) Inherent Services. If any Services or other Deliverables, functions, or responsibilities not specifically described in the Agreement are required for Vendor's proper performance, provision and delivery of the Services and other Deliverables pursuant to the Agreement, or are an inherent part of or necessary sub-task included within the Services, they will be deemed to be implied by and included within the scope of the Contract to the same extent and in the same manner as if specifically described in the Contract.
 - c) Vendor warrants that it has the financial capacity to perform and to continue to perform its obligations under the Contract; that Vendor has no constructive or actual knowledge of an actual or potential legal proceeding being brought against Vendor that could materially adversely affect performance of the Agreement; and that entering into the Agreement is not prohibited by any Contract, or order by any court of competent jurisdiction.
- 2) **SERVICES PROVIDED BY VENDOR:** Vendor shall provide the State with implementation Services as specified in a Statement of Work ("SOW") executed by the parties. This Agreement in combination with each SOW individually comprises a separate and independent contractual obligation from any other SOW. A breach by Vendor under one SOW will not be considered a breach under any other SOW. The Services intended hereunder are related to the State's implementation and/or use of one or more Software Deliverables licensed hereunder or in a separate software license agreement between the parties ("License Agreement"). (Reserve if not needed)
- 3) **PERSONNEL:** Vendor shall not substitute key personnel assigned to the performance of the Agreement without prior written approval by the Agency Contract Administrator. The individuals designated as key personnel for purposes of the Agreement are those specified in the Vendor's offer. Any desired substitution shall be noticed to the Agency's Contract Administrator in writing accompanied by the names and references of Vendor's recommended substitute personnel. The Agency will approve or disapprove the requested substitution in a timely manner. The Agency may, in its sole discretion, terminate the Services of any person providing Services under the Agreement. Upon such termination, the Agency may request acceptable substitute personnel or terminate the Contract Services provided by such personnel.
 - a) Unless otherwise expressly provided in the Contract, Vendor will furnish all of its own necessary management, supervision, labor, facilities, furniture, computer and telecommunications equipment, software, supplies and materials necessary for the Vendor to provide and deliver the Services and other Deliverables.
 - b) Vendor personnel shall perform their duties on the premises of the State, during the State's regular work days and normal work hours, except as may be specifically agreed otherwise, established in the specification, or statement of work.

- c) The Agreement shall not prevent Vendor or any of its personnel supplied under the Agreement from performing similar Services elsewhere or restrict Vendor from using the personnel provided to the State, provided that:
 - i) Such use does not conflict with the terms, specifications or any amendments to the Agreement, or
 - ii) Such use does not conflict with any procurement law, regulation or policy, or
 - iii) Such use does not conflict with any non-disclosure agreement, or term thereof, by and between the State and Vendor or Vendor's personnel.
 - d) Unless otherwise provided by the Agency, the Vendor shall furnish all necessary personnel, Services, and otherwise perform all acts, duties and responsibilities necessary or incidental to the accomplishment of the tasks specified in the Agreement. The Vendor shall be legally and financially responsible for its personnel including, but not limited to, any deductions for social security and other withholding taxes required by state or federal law. The Vendor shall be solely responsible for acquiring any equipment, furniture, and office space not furnished by the State necessary for the Vendor to comply with the Agreement. The Vendor personnel shall comply with any applicable State facilities or other security rules and regulations.
- 4) PERSONAL SERVICES:** The State shall have and retain the right to obtain personal Services of any individuals providing Services under the Agreement. This right may be exercised at the State's discretion in the event of any transfer of the person providing personal Services, termination, default, merger, acquisition, bankruptcy or receivership of the Vendor to ensure continuity of Services provided under the Agreement. Provided, however, that the Agency shall not retain or solicit any Vendor employee for purposes other than completion of personal Services due as all or part of any performance due under the Agreement.
- a) Vendor personnel shall perform any duties on the premises of the State during the State's regular work days and normal work hours, except as may be specifically agreed otherwise, established in the specification, or statement of work.
 - b) The State has and reserves the right to disapprove the continuing assignment of Vendor personnel provided by Vendor under the Agreement. If this right is exercised and the Vendor is not able to replace the disapproved personnel as required by the State, the parties agree to employ best commercial efforts to informally resolve such failure equitably by adjustment of other duties, set-off, or modification to other terms that may be affected by Vendor's failure.
 - c) Vendor will make every reasonable effort consistent with prevailing business practices to honor the specific requests of the State regarding assignment of Vendor's employees. Vendor reserves the sole right to determine the assignment of its employees. If one of Vendor's employees is unable to perform due to illness, resignation, or other factors beyond Vendor's control, Vendor will provide suitable personnel at no additional cost to the State.
 - d) The Agreement shall not prevent Vendor or any of its personnel supplied under the Agreement from performing similar Services elsewhere or restrict Vendor from using the personnel provided to the State, provided that:
 - i) Such use does not conflict with the terms, specifications or any amendments to the Agreement, or
 - ii) Such use does not conflict with any procurement law, regulation or policy, or
 - iii) Such use does not conflict with any non-disclosure agreement, or term thereof, by and between the State and Vendor or Vendor's personnel

ATTACHMENT C: DESCRIPTION OF OFFEROR

Provide the information about the offeror.

Offeror's full name	
Offeror's address	
Offeror's telephone number	
Ownership	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Subsidiary <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)
Date established	
If incorporated, State of incorporation.	
North Carolina Secretary of State Registration Number, if currently registered	
Number of full-time employees on January 1 st for the last three years or for the duration that the Vendor has been in business, whichever is less.	
Offeror's Contact for Clarification of offer: Contact's name Title Email address and Telephone Number	
Offeror's Contact for Negotiation of offer: Contact's name Title Email address and Telephone Number	
If Contract is Awarded, Offeror's Contact for Contractual Issues: Contact's name Title Email address and Telephone Number	
If Contract is Awarded, Offeror's Contact for Technical Issues: Contact's name Title Email address and Telephone Number	

HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES

Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) consist of minority, women and disabled business firms that are at least fifty-one percent owned and operated by an individual(s) of the categories. Also included as HUBs are disabled business enterprises and non-profit work centers for the blind and severely disabled.”

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. §§ 143B-1361(a), 143-48 and 143-128.4, the State invites and encourages participation in this procurement process by businesses owned by minorities, women, disabled, disabled business enterprises and non-profit work centers for the blind and severely disabled. This includes utilizing subcontractors to perform the required functions in this RFP. Contact the North Carolina Office of historically Underutilized Businesses at 919-807-2330 with questions concerning NC HUB certification. <http://ncadmin.nc.gov/businesses/hub>

Respond to the questions below.

1. Is Vendor a Historically Underutilized Business? Yes No
2. Is Vendor Certified with North Carolina as a Historically Underutilized Business? Yes No

If so, state HUB classification:

ATTACHMENT D: COST FORM

The Vendor must complete the following cost tables with firm, all-inclusive pricing. All proposed costs must include all applicable expenses, including but not limited to:

- Administrative and operational costs
- Reporting and account management
- Training (if applicable)
- Documentation
- Vendor-hosted system access
- Support services
- Travel, if applicable, in accordance with state travel rates

Vendors shall embed any anticipated travel or living costs related to meetings, training, or service delivery into the prices proposed below. Standalone travel or living expense line items will not be evaluated separately and must comply with applicable State requirements, as set forth in Attachment B, if approved in advance.

This solicitation will result in an indefinite quantity, agency-specific contract. Quantities referenced below, if any, are provided for evaluation purposes only and do not represent a commitment by the Agency to purchase any minimum volume of services.

Costs not expressly identified in this Cost Form shall be deemed included in the prices proposed and will not be paid separately.

One-Time or Initial Costs (Year 1)

Cost Component	Cost (USD)
Contract Onboarding / Setup	\$
Initial Coordination and Planning	\$
Training for Agency Staff (if applicable)	\$
Initial Reporting Configuration	\$
Other One-Time Costs (describe)	\$
Total One-Time Costs (Year 1)	\$

(If no one-time costs apply, Vendors shall enter "\$0" or "Not Applicable.")

Transactional Service Pricing

Service Category	Unit of Measure	Unit Price
Borrower Outreach / Counseling	Per Borrower Loaded	\$
Delinquency Management	Per Delinquent Account	\$
Skip Tracing (if applicable)	Per Account	\$
Other Transactional Services (describe)		\$

Outcome-Based Fees (If Applicable)

Outcome Definition	Unit of Measure	Fee
Loan Resolution	Per Resolved Account	\$
Other Outcomes (describe)		\$

Recurring or Annual Costs/Service Fees (Years 1–5, If Applicable)

Cost Component	Year 1	Year 2 (Optional)	Year 3 (Optional)	Year 4 (Optional)	Year 5 (Optional)
Base Program Fee (if any)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Reporting / Dashboard Access	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Account Management / Support	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Other Recurring Fees (describe)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Estimated Annual Recurring Fees	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Optional Services or Modules (Not Required for Base Proposal)

Optional Component or Add-On	Cost (if selected)	Description
Financial Education Modules	\$	
Additional Reporting	\$	
Enhanced Outreach Services	\$	
Other Optional Services	\$	

Cost Summary (Evaluation Purposes Only)

Category	Amount
Total One-Time Costs	\$
Estimated Annual Recurring Costs (Year 1)	\$
Estimated Transactional Costs (Agency-Provided Scenario)	\$
Estimated Total Year-1 Cost	\$

ATTACHMENT E: VENDOR CERTIFICATION FORM

1) ELIGIBLE VENDOR

The Vendor certifies that in accordance with N.C.G.S. §143-59.1(b), Vendor is not an ineligible vendor as set forth in N.C.G.S. §143-59.1 (a).

The Vendor acknowledges that, to the extent the awarded contract involves the creation, research, investigation or generation of a future RFP or other solicitation; the Vendor will be precluded from bidding on the subsequent RFP or other solicitation and from serving as a subcontractor to an awarded vendor.

The State reserves the right to disqualify any bidder if the State determines that the bidder has used its position (whether as an incumbent Vendor, or as a subcontractor hired to assist with the RFP development, or as a Vendor offering free assistance) to gain a competitive advantage on the RFP or other solicitation.

2) CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Applicable standards may include: N.C.G.S. §§143B-1352 and 143B-1353, 14-234, and 133-32. The Vendor shall not knowingly employ, during the period of the Agreement, nor in the preparation of any response to this solicitation, any personnel who are, or have been, employed by a Vendor also in the employ of the State and who are providing Services involving, or similar to, the scope and nature of this solicitation or the resulting contract.

3) E-VERIFY

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143B-1350(k), the State shall not enter into a contract unless the awarded Vendor and each of its subcontractors comply with the E-Verify requirements of N.C.G.S. Chapter 64, Article 2. Vendors are directed to review the foregoing laws. Vendors claiming exceptions or exclusions under Chapter 64 must identify the legal basis for such claims and certify compliance with federal law regarding registration of aliens including 8 USC 1373 and 8 USC 1324a. Any awarded Vendor must submit a certification of compliance with E-Verify to the awarding agency, and on a periodic basis thereafter as may be required by the State.

4) CERTIFICATE TO TRANSACT BUSINESS IN NORTH CAROLINA

As a condition of contract award, awarded Vendor shall have registered its business with the North Carolina Secretary of State and shall maintain such registration throughout the term of the Contract.

Signature: _____

Date:

Printed Name: _____

Title:

ATTACHMENT F: LOCATION OF WORKERS UTILIZED BY VENDOR - DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

In accordance with the Statewide Information Security Manual (SISM), the State restricts the location of information systems that receive, process, store, or transmit State and Federal data to the United States which includes the following areas: US States, US Territories, US Embassies, and US Military installations (stateside or overseas). This restriction applies to the Vendor and to any subcontractors engaged to provide Services under this Agreement or with access to State Data. The Vendor must ensure that its subcontractor agreements contain the same restrictions and will be responsible for monitoring and enforcing subcontractor compliance at all times.

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. §143B-1361(b), the Vendor must complete and return this Disclosure Statement Attachment F with its solicitation response. The Vendor may attach additional pages to its response if needed. The State of North Carolina will evaluate Disclosure Statement Attachments for additional risks, costs, and other factors associated with its service prior to making an award for any such Vendor's offer. The Vendor must provide the following information in its bid response:

- a. The location of work performed under a state contract by the Vendor, any subcontractors, employees, or other persons performing the contract and whether any of this work will be performed outside the United States.

Click here to enter text.

- b. The corporate structure and location of corporate employees and activities of the Vendor, its affiliates or any other subcontractors.

Click here to enter text.

- c. Vendor agrees to provide notice of the relocation of the Vendor, employees of the Vendor, subcontractors of the Vendor, or other persons performing Services under a state contract outside of the United States in the event such relocation occurs during the contract term.

Click here to enter text.

- d. Vendor agrees that any Vendor or subcontractor providing call or contact center Services to the State of North Carolina shall disclose to inbound callers the location from which the call or contact center Services are being provided.

Click here to enter text.

- e. Will any work under this contract be performed outside the United States?

YES NO

The use of resources or workers located outside the United States is a critical security exception that must be escalated to the State Chief Information Officer for review pursuant to N.C.G.S. §143B-1376(c) and §143B-1320(c). These critical security exceptions are approved only in rare and extenuating circumstances. Vendor should account for this when preparing its response.

ATTACHMENT G: REFERENCES

The Vendor shall provide three (3) references from customers currently utilizing, or having recently utilized, Student Loan Default Prevention and Management Services comparable in scope and complexity to the services described in this RFP. References from public higher education institutions, including community colleges, are strongly preferred.

At least two (2) references should reflect services that have been actively provided within the past three (3) years. References may include ongoing engagements that began prior to that period, provided the services remain substantially similar and are currently active or were completed within the last three years.

For each reference, the Vendor shall provide the following information:

- a. Customer name and institution type
- b. Customer address
- c. Name, title, telephone number, and email address of a customer representative knowledgeable about the Vendor's services
- d. Time period during which the services were provided
- e. Brief description of the services provided, including borrower outreach, counseling, and default prevention activities
- f. Approximate number of borrowers supported annually under the engagement
- g. Summary of outcomes relevant to default prevention or repayment support, if available

The Agency reserves the right to contact references and to consider information obtained from references as part of the evaluation process.

ATTACHMENT H: FINANCIAL REVIEW FORM

Vendor shall review the Financial Review Form, provide responses in the gray-shaded boxes, and submit the completed Form as an Excel file with its offer. Vendor shall not add or delete rows or columns in the Form, or change the order of the rows or column in the file.

1. Vendor Name:
2. Company structure for tax purposes (C Corp, S Corp, LLC, LLP, etc.):
3. Have you been in business for more than three years? Yes No
4. Have you filed for bankruptcy in the past three years? Yes No
5. In the past three years, has your auditor issued any notification letters addressing significant issues? If yes, please explain and provide a copy of the notification letters. Yes No
6. Are the financial figures below based on audited financial statements? Yes No
7. Start Date of financial statements:
End Date of financial statements:
8. Provide a link to annual reports with financial statements and management discussion for the past three complete fiscal years:
9. Provide the following information for the past three complete fiscal years:

	Latest complete fiscal year minus two years	Latest complete fiscal year minus one year	Latest complete fiscal year
BALANCE SHEET DATA			
a. Cash and Temporary Investments			
b. Accounts Receivable (beginning of year)			
c. Accounts Receivable (end of year)			
d. Average Account Receivable for the Year (calculated)			
e. Inventory (beginning of year)			
f. Inventory (end of year)			
g. Average Inventory for the Year (calculated)			
h. Current Assets			
i. Current Liabilities			
j. Total Liabilities			
k. Total Stockholders' Equity (beginning of year)			
l. Total Stockholders' Equity (end of year)			
m. Average Stockholders' Equity during the year (calculated)			
INCOME STATEMENT DATA			
a. Net Sales			
b. Cost of Goods Sold (COGS)			
c. Gross Profit (Net Sales minus COGS) (calculated)			
d. Interest Expense for the Year			
e. Net Income after Tax			
f. Earnings for the Year before Interest & Income Tax Expense			
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS			
a. Cash Flow provided by Operating Activities			
b. Capital Expenditures (property, plant, equipment)			