



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Request for Proposals # 66-26009TS

DIPLOMA AND CERTIFICATE PRINTING AND MAILING SERVICE

Date of Issue: Wednesday, August 27th, 2025

Proposal Due Date: Thursday September 18th, 2025

At 2:00 PM ET

Direct all inquiries concerning this RFP to:

Trever Swint

Assistant Director of Purchasing

Email: wswint@charlotte.edu



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

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Request for Proposals #

66-26009TS

For internal State agency processing, including tabulation of proposals, provide your company's eVP (Electronic Vendor Portal) Number. Pursuant to G.S. 132-1.10(b) this identification number shall not be released to the public. **This page will be removed and shredded, or otherwise kept confidential**, before the procurement file is made available for public inspection.

**This page shall be filled out and returned with your proposal.
Failure to do so may subject your proposal to rejection.**

Vendor Name

Vendor eVP#

Note: For a contract to be awarded to you, your company (you) must be a North Carolina registered vendor in good standing. You must enter the vendor number assigned through eVP (Electronic Vendor Portal). If you do not have a vendor number, register at <https://vendor.ncgov.com/vendor/login>

Electronic responses ONLY will be accepted for this solicitation.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Refer <u>ALL</u> Inquiries regarding this RFP to: Trever Swint wswint@charlotte.edu	Request for Proposal # 66-26009TS
	Proposals will be received until: Thursday, September 18th 2025 at 2:00 PM ET

EXECUTION

In compliance with this Request for Proposals (RFP), and subject to all the conditions herein, the undersigned Vendor offers and agrees to furnish and deliver any or all items upon which prices are bid, at the prices set opposite each item within the time specified herein.

By executing this proposal, the undersigned Vendor understands that false certification is a Class I felony and certifies that:

- this proposal is submitted competitively and without collusion (G.S. 143-54),
- none of its officers, directors, or owners of an unincorporated business entity has been convicted of any violations of Chapter 78A of the General Statutes, the Securities Act of 1933, or the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (G.S. 143-59.2), and
- it is not an ineligible Vendor as set forth in G.S. 143-59.1.

Furthermore, by executing this proposal, the undersigned certifies to the best of Vendor’s knowledge and belief, that:

- it and its principals are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal or State department or agency.

As required by G.S. 143-48.5, the undersigned Vendor certifies that it, and each of its sub-Contractors for any Contract awarded as a result of this RFP, complies with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the NC General Statutes, including the requirement for each employer with more than 25 employees in North Carolina to verify the work authorization of its employees through the federal E-Verify system.

As required by Executive Order 24 (2017), the undersigned vendor certifies will comply with all Federal and State requirements concerning fair employment and that it does not and will not discriminate, harass, or retaliate against any employee in connection with performance of any Contract arising from this solicitation.

G.S. 133-32 and Executive Order 24 (2009) prohibit the offer to, or acceptance by, any State Employee associated with the preparing plans, specifications, estimates for public contracts; or awarding or administering public contracts; or inspecting or supervising delivery of the public contract of any gift from anyone with a contract with the State, or from any person seeking to do business with the State. By execution of this response to the RFP, the undersigned certifies, for Vendor’s entire organization and its employees or agents, that Vendor is not aware that any such gift has been offered, accepted, or promised by any employees of your organization.

By executing this proposal, Vendor certifies that it has read and agreed to the **INSTRUCTION TO VENDORS** and the **NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS incorporated herein**. These documents can be accessed from the ATTACHMENTS page within this document.

Failure to execute/sign proposal prior to submittal may render proposal invalid and it MAY BE REJECTED.
Late proposals CANNOT and will NOT be accepted.

COMPLETE/FORMAL NAME OF VENDOR:		
STREET ADDRESS:		P.O. BOX:
CITY, STATE & ZIP:		TELEPHONE NUMBER:
PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS ADDRESS IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE (SEE INSTRUCTIONS TO VENDORS ITEM #21):		
NAME OF PERSON SIGNING ON BEHALF OF VENDOR:		TITLE:
VENDOR’S AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:	DATE:	EMAIL:

VALIDITY PERIOD

Offer shall be valid for at least sixty 60 days from date of bid opening, unless otherwise stated here: _____ days, or if extended by mutual agreement of the parties in writing. Any withdrawal of this offer shall be made in writing, effective upon receipt by the agency issuing this RFP.

ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSAL

If your proposal is accepted, all provisions of this RFP, along with the written results of any negotiations, shall constitute the written agreement between the parties ("Contract"). The NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS are incorporated herein and shall apply. Depending upon the Goods or Services being offered, other terms and conditions may apply, as mutually agreed.

FOR STATE USE ONLY: Offer accepted and Contract awarded this _____ day of _____, 2025, as indicated on

The attached certification, by _____.

(Authorized Representative of UNC Charlotte)

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1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte was established in 1965 by the North Carolina General Assembly which transformed Charlotte College, with beginnings in 1946, into a campus of The University of North Carolina. It is organized into the following eight colleges: College of Arts & Architecture; College of Science; College of Humanities & Earth and Social Science; College of Business; College of Education; College of Engineering; College of Health and Human Services; and the College of Computing and Informatics. It offers a broad array of degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels and also in graduate certificate programs.

Enrollment is approximately 31,000 with 19 percent of the students pursuing graduate degrees. The University is expected to experience continued growth in the foreseeable future.

The intent of this solicitation is to seek proposals from qualified suppliers that can provide undergraduate and graduate level diploma and certificate printing and mailing services according to the scope of work and specifications provided within this solicitation.

1.1 CONTRACT TERM

The Contract shall have an initial term of one (1) year, beginning on the date of final Contract execution (the “Effective Date”).

At the end of the Contract’s initial term, the State shall have the option, in its sole discretion, to renew the Contract on the same terms and conditions for up to two (2) additional one-year terms. The State will give the Vendor written notice of its intent to exercise each option before the end of the Contract’s then-current term. In addition to any optional renewal terms, and with the Vendor’s concurrence, the State reserves the right to extend the Contract after the last active term.

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

This RFP is comprised of the base RFP document, any attachments, and any addenda released before Contract award, which are incorporated herein by reference.

2.2 E-PROCUREMENT

ATTENTION: NC E-Procurement does NOT apply to this solicitation and the paragraph entitled ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT of the North Carolina General Terms and Conditions does NOT apply.

2.3 NOTICE TO VENDORS REGARDING RFP TERMS AND CONDITIONS

It shall be the Vendor’s responsibility to read the Instructions to Vendors, the North Carolina General Terms and Conditions, all relevant exhibits and attachments, and any other components made a part of this RFP and comply with all requirements and specifications herein. Vendors are also responsible for obtaining and complying with all Addenda and other changes that may be issued in connection with this RFP.

If Vendors have questions or issues regarding any component of this RFP, those must be submitted as questions in accordance with the instructions in the PROPOSAL QUESTIONS Section. If the State determines that any changes will be made as a result of the questions asked, then such decisions will be communicated in the form of an RFP addendum.

The State may also elect to leave open the possibility for later negotiation of specific provisions of the Contract that have been addressed during the question-and-answer period, prior to contract award.

Other than through the process of negotiation under 01 NCAC 05B.0503, the State rejects and will not be required to evaluate or consider any additional or modified terms and conditions submitted with Vendor’s proposal or otherwise. This applies to any language appearing in or attached to the document as part of the Vendor’s proposal that purports to vary any terms and conditions or Vendors’ instructions herein or to render the proposal non-binding or subject to further negotiation. Vendor’s proposal shall constitute a firm offer that shall be held open for the period required herein (“Validity Period” above).

The State may exercise its discretion to consider Vendor proposed modifications. By execution and delivery of this RFP Response, the Vendor agrees that any additional or modified terms and conditions, whether submitted purposely or inadvertently, shall have no force or effect, and will be disregarded unless expressly agreed upon through negotiation and incorporated by way of a Best and Final Offer (BAFO). Noncompliance with, or any attempt to alter or delete, this paragraph shall constitute sufficient grounds to reject Vendor’s proposal as nonresponsive.

2.4 RFP SCHEDULE

The table below shows the **intended** schedule for this RFP. The State will make every effort to adhere to this schedule.

Event	Responsibility	Date and Time
Issue RFP	State	Wednesday, August 27 th , 2025
Submit Written Questions	Vendor	Thursday, September 4 th , 2025 at 12:00 PM ET
Provide Response to Questions	State	Tuesday, September 9 th , 2025
Submit Proposals	Vendor	Thursday, September 18 th , 2025 at 2:00 PM ET
Contract Award	State	Thursday, September 25 th , 2025

2.5 PROPOSAL QUESTIONS

Upon review of the RFP documents, Vendors may have questions to clarify or interpret the RFP in order to submit the best proposal possible. To accommodate the Proposal Questions process, Vendors shall submit any such questions by the “Submit Written Questions” date and time provided in the RFP SCHEDULE Section above, unless modified by Addendum.

Written questions shall be emailed to wswint@charlotte.edu by the date and time specified above. Vendors should enter “RFP # 66-26009TS: Questions” as the subject for the email. Question submittals should include a reference to the applicable RFP section.

Questions received prior to the submission deadline date, the State’s response, and any additional terms deemed necessary by the State will be posted in the form of an addendum to **the electronic Vendor Portal (eVP), <https://evp.nc.gov>**, and shall become an Addendum to this RFP. No information, instruction or advice provided orally or informally by any State personnel, whether made in response to a question or otherwise in connection with this RFP, shall be considered authoritative or binding. Vendors shall rely *only* on written material contained in the RFP and an addendum to this RFP.

2.6 PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an absolute requirement. Vendor shall bear the risk of late submission due to unintended or unanticipated delay, or technical issue. It is the Vendor’s sole responsibility to ensure its proposal has been received via the eVP as described in this RFP by the specified time and date of opening. The date and time of receipt will be

electronically time stamped by the system when received. Any proposal or portion thereof received or attempted to be submitted after the proposal submission deadline will be rejected.

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>.

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

This will be a One-Step proposal process:

Vendor's proposal may contain both the Technical and Financial Proposal (ATTACHMENT A) submitted for evaluation in a single file.

If confidential and proprietary information is included in the proposal, also submit one (1) signed, REDACTED copy of the proposal. Such information may include trade secrets defined by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 66-152 and other information exempted from the Public Records Act pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. §132- 1.2. 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 so redacting 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 determined to be confidential and proprietary and redacted as such, meet the requirements of the Rules and Statutes set forth above. However, under no circumstances shall price information be designated as confidential.

If the Vendor does not provide a redacted version of the proposal with its proposal submission, the University may release an unredacted version if an open records request is received.

Failure to submit a proposal in strict accordance with these instructions shall constitute sufficient cause to reject a Vendor's proposal(s). Vendors are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to upload proposals.

Critical updated information may be included in Addenda to this RFP. It is important that all Vendors responding to this RFP periodically check the State's eVP website for any Addenda that may be issued prior to the bid opening date. All Vendors shall be deemed to have read and understood all information in this RFP and all Addenda thereto.

2.7 PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Vendors shall populate all attachments of this RFP that require the Vendor to provide information and include an authorized signature where requested. Failure to provide all required items, or Vendor's submission of incomplete items, may result in the State rejecting Vendor's proposal, in the State's sole discretion.

Vendor RFP responses shall include the following items and attachments:

- a) Cover Letter, which must contain the following: (i) a statement that confirms that the proposer has read the RFP in its entirety, including all links, and all Addenda released in conjunction with the RFP, (ii) a statement that the Vendor agrees to perform in accordance with the scope of work, requirements, and specifications contained herein; (iii) Vendor's agreement to comply with all instructions, terms and conditions, and attachments; and (iv) contact information for Vendor's representative responsible for this RFP.
- b) Completed and signed version of all EXECUTION PAGES, and any pages requiring vendor input.
- c) Signed receipt pages of any addenda released in conjunction with this RFP, if required to be returned.
- d) Vendor's Proposal addressing all requirements of this RFP.
- e) Completed version of ATTACHMENT A: FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

- f) Completed version of ATTACHMENT D: HUB SUPPLEMENTAL VENDOR INFORMATION
- g) Completed version of ATTACHMENT E: CUSTOMER REFERENCE FORM
- h) Completed version of ATTACHMENT F: LOCATION OF WORKERS UTILIZED BY VENDOR
- i) Completed and signed version of ATTACHMENT G: CERTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL CONDITION

2.8 ALTERNATE PROPOSALS

Unless provided otherwise in this RFP, Vendor may submit alternate proposals for comparable Goods, various methods or levels of Service(s), or that propose different options. Alternate proposals must specifically identify the RFP requirements and advantage(s) addressed by the alternate proposal. Any alternate proposal, in addition to the marking described above, must be clearly marked with the legend: “Alternate Proposal #66-26009 TS [for ‘name of Vendor’]”. Each proposal must be for a specific set of Goods and Services and must include specific pricing. If a Vendor chooses to respond with various offerings, each must be offered with a separate price and be contained in a separate proposal document. Each proposal must be complete and independent of other proposals offered.

2.9 DEFINITIONS, ACRONYMS, AND ABBREVIATIONS

Relevant definitions for this RFP are provided in 01 NCAC 05A .0112 and in the Instructions to Vendors found below which are incorporated herein by this reference.

3 METHOD OF AWARD AND PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS

3.1 METHOD OF AWARD

North Carolina G.S. 143-52 provides a general list of criteria the State shall use to award contracts, as supplemented by the additional criteria herein. The Goods or Services being procured shall dictate the application and order of criteria; however, all award decisions shall be in the State’s best interest. All qualified proposals will be evaluated, and awards will be made to the Vendor(s) meeting the specific RFP Specifications and achieving the highest and best final evaluation, based on the criteria described below.

While the intent of this RFP is to award a Contract to a single Vendor, the State reserves the right to make separate awards to different Vendors for one or more portions, to not award one or more portions or to cancel this RFP in its entirety without awarding a Contract, if it is considered to be most advantageous to the State to do so.

The State reserves the right to waive any minor informality or technicality in proposals received.

3.2 CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROHIBITED COMMUNICATIONS DURING EVALUATION

While this RFP is under evaluation, the responding Vendor, including any subcontractors and suppliers, is prohibited from engaging in conversations intended to influence the outcome of the evaluation. See the Paragraph of the Instructions to Vendors entitled COMMUNICATIONS BY VENDORS.

Each Vendor submitting a proposal to this RFP, including its employees, agents, subcontractors, suppliers, subsidiaries and affiliates, is prohibited from having any communications with any person inside or outside the using agency; issuing agency; other government agency office or body (including the purchaser named above, any department secretary, agency head, members of the General Assembly and Governor’s office); or private entity, if the communication refers to the content of Vendor’s proposal or qualifications, the content of another Vendor’s proposal, another Vendor’s qualifications or ability to perform a resulting contract, and/or the transmittal of any other communication of information that could be reasonably considered to have the effect of directly or indirectly influencing the evaluation of proposals, the award of a contract, or both.

Any Vendor not in compliance with this provision shall be disqualified from evaluation and award. A Vendor’s proposal may be disqualified if its subcontractor and/or supplier engage in any of the foregoing communications during the time that the procurement is active (*i.e.*, the issuance date of the procurement until the date of contract award or cancellation of the procurement). Only those discussions, communications or transmittals of information authorized or initiated by the issuing agency for this RFP or inquiries directed to the purchaser named in this RFP regarding requirements of the RFP (prior to proposal submission) or the status of the award (after submission) are excepted from this provision.

3.3 PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS

Only responsive submissions will be evaluated.

The State will conduct a One-Step evaluation of Proposals:

Proposals will be received according to the method stated in the Proposal Submittal Section above.

All proposals must be received by the issuing agency not later than the date and time specified in the RFP SCHEDULE Section above, unless modified by Addendum. Vendors are cautioned that this is a request for offers, not an offer or request to contract, and the State reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all offers at any time if such rejection is deemed to be in the best interest of the State.

At the date and time provided in the RFP SCHEDULE Section above, unless modified by Addendum, the proposal from each responding Vendor will be accessed via the eVP and all offers (except those that have been previously withdrawn, or voided bids) will be noted. Since negotiations after receipt of bids is authorized pursuant to G.S. 143-49 and 01 NCAC 05B.0503, only the names of offerors and the Goods and Services offered shall be noted at the time of opening. Interested parties are cautioned that proposals and their components are subject to further evaluation for completeness and correctness and therefore may not be an exact indicator of a Vendor’s final position.

At their option, the evaluators may request oral presentations or discussions with any or all Vendors for clarification or to amplify the materials presented in any part of the proposal. Vendors are cautioned, however, that the evaluators are not required to request presentations or other clarification—and often do not. Therefore, all proposals should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the Vendor.

Upon completion of the evaluation process, the State will make award(s) based on the evaluation and post the award(s) to the eVP website under the RFP number for this solicitation. Award of a Contract to one Vendor does not mean that the other proposals lacked merit, but that, all factors considered, the selected proposal was deemed most advantageous and represented the best value to the State.

The State reserves the right to negotiate with one or more vendors, or to reject all original offers and negotiate with one or more sources of supply that may be capable of satisfying the requirement, and in either case to require Vendor to submit a Best and Final Offer (BAFO) based on discussions and negotiations with the State.

3.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

In addition to the general criteria in G.S. 143-52 which may or may not be relevant to this RFP, all qualified proposals will be evaluated, and award made based on considering the following criteria, to result in an award most advantageous to the State:

Vendor Background/References 10%

- Vendor must submit Company Background & Experience per Section 4.5
- References provided per Section 4.6

Technical Aspects **10%**

- Low to no impact on University IT resources
 - Implementation
 - Maintenance
- Data Validation

Functional Aspects **40%**

- Product Fulfillment
 - Specs
 - Production to shipping time
 - Shipping method
 - Customer Service
- Demand for UNCC staff resources
- Student UI/UX
- Staff UI/UX

Financial Proposal **40%**

- ATTACHMENT A: Part B will be used to calculate scoring. Part B pricing MUST match line pricing in Part A.

The State will determine low cost by normalizing the scores as follows:

The proposal with the lowest cost will receive a score of XX. All other competing proposals will be assigned a portion of the maximum score using the formula:

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Financial Proposal} \\ \text{Points Available} \\ \text{(XX)} \end{array} \times \frac{\text{the cost of the lowest cost proposal}}{\text{the cost of the cost proposal being evaluated}}$$

3.5 PERFORMANCE OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

Vendor shall complete ATTACHMENT F: LOCATION OF WORKERS UTILIZED BY VENDOR. In addition to any other evaluation criteria identified in this RFP, the State may also consider, for purposes of evaluating proposed or actual contract performance outside of the United States, how that performance may affect the following factors to ensure that any award will be in the best interest of the State:

- Total cost to the State
- Level of quality provided by the Vendor
- Process and performance capability across multiple jurisdictions
- Protection of the State’s information and intellectual property
- Availability of pertinent skills
- Ability to understand the State’s business requirements and internal operational culture
- Particular risk factors such as the security of the State’s information technology
- Relations with citizens and employees
- Contract enforcement jurisdictional issues

3.6 INTERPRETATION OF TERMS AND PHRASES

This RFP serves two functions: (1) to advise potential Vendors of the parameters of the solution being sought by the State; and (2) to provide (together with other specified documents) the terms of the Contract resulting from this procurement. The use of phrases such as “shall,” “must,” and “requirements” are intended to create enforceable contract conditions. In determining whether proposals should be evaluated or rejected, the State will take into consideration the degree to which Vendors have proposed or failed to propose solutions that will satisfy the State’s needs as described in the RFP. Except as specifically stated in the RFP, no one requirement shall automatically disqualify a Vendor from consideration. However, failure to comply with any single requirement may result in the State exercising its discretion to reject a proposal in its entirety.

4.0 REQUIREMENTS

This Section lists the requirements related to this RFP. By submitting a proposal, the Vendor agrees to meet all stated requirements in this Section as well as any other specifications, requirements, and terms and conditions stated in this RFP. If a Vendor is unclear about a requirement or specification, or believes a change to a requirement would allow for the State to receive a better proposal, the Vendor is urged to submit these items in the form of a question during the question and answer period in accordance with the Proposal Questions Section above.

4.1 FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

Proposal price shall constitute the total cost to the State for complete performance in accordance with the requirements and specifications herein, including all applicable charges for handling, transportation, administrative and other similar fees. Complete ATTACHMENT A: FINANCIAL PROPOSAL and include in Vendor’s proposal. The pricing provided in ATTACHMENT A, or resulting from any negotiations, is incorporated herein and shall become part of any resulting Contract. Vendor MUST complete ATTACHMENT A, but may elect to submit additional pricing options in a separate document labeled “Additional Pricing Options”. Additional pricing options may be reviewed and considered based on the needs of the University.

4.2 INVOICES

The standard format for invoicing shall be single Invoices meaning that the Vendor shall provide the University with an invoice for each order. Invoices shall include detailed information to allow University to verify pricing at point of receipt matches the correct price from the original date of order.

The following fields shall be included on all invoices, as relevant:

Vendor’s Billing Address, Customer Account Number, NC Contract Number, Order Date, Buyer’s Purchase Order Number, Manufacturer Part Numbers, Vendor Part Numbers, Item Descriptions, Price, Quantity, and Unit of Measure.

INVOICES MAY NOT BE PAID UNTIL AN INSPECTION HAS OCCURRED AND THE GOODS OR SERVICES ACCEPTED.

4.3 FINANCIAL STABILITY

As a condition of contract award, the Vendor must certify 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 this Contract; and that entering into this Contract is not prohibited by any contract, or order by any court of competent jurisdiction.

Each Vendor shall certify it is financially stable by completing ATTACHMENT G: CERTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL CONDITION. The State is requiring this certification to minimize potential issues from contracting with a Vendor that is

financially unstable. From the date of the Certification to the expiration of the Contract, the Vendor shall notify the State within thirty (30) days of any occurrence or condition that materially alters the truth of any statement made in this Certification. The Contract Manager may require annual recertification of the Vendor's financial stability.

4.4 HUB PARTICIPATION

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute G.S. 143-48, it is State policy to encourage and promote the use of small, minority, physically handicapped, and women contractors in purchasing Goods and Services. As such, this RFP will serve to identify those Vendors that are minority owned or have a strategic plan to support the State's Historically Underutilized Business program by meeting or exceeding the goal of 10% utilization of diverse firms as 1st or 2nd tier subcontractors. Vendor shall complete ATTACHMENT D: HUB SUPPLEMENTAL VENDOR INFORMATION.

4.5 VENDOR BACKGROUND & EXPERIENCE

In its Proposal, Vendor shall include information of the company's professional background and history as well as demonstrate experience with public and/or private sector clients with similar or greater size and complexity to the State. Vendor shall provide information as to the qualifications and experience of all executive, managerial, legal, and professional personnel to be assigned to this project, including resumes citing experience with similar projects and the responsibilities to be assigned to each person.

4.6 REFERENCES

Vendor shall provide three (3) references, using ATTACHMENT E: CUSTOMER REFERENCE FORM, for which it has provided Services of similar size and scope to those proposed herein. The State may contact these users to determine whether the Services provided are substantially similar in scope to those proposed herein and whether Vendor's performance has been satisfactory. The information obtained may be considered in the evaluation of the Proposal.

4.7 BACKGROUND CHECKS

Any personnel or agent of Vendor performing Services under any Contract arising from this RFP may be required to undergo a background check at the expense of the Vendor, if so requested by the State.

4.8 PERSONNEL

Vendor warrants that qualified personnel shall provide Services under this Contract 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 industry. Vendor will serve as the prime contractor under this Contract and shall be responsible for the performance and payment of all subcontractor(s) that may be approved by the State. 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. Vendor will retain executive representation for functional and technical expertise as needed in order to incorporate any work by third party subcontractor(s).

Should the Vendor's proposal result in an award, the Vendor shall be required to agree that it will not substitute key personnel assigned to the performance of the Contract without prior written approval by the Contract Lead. Vendor shall further agree that it will notify the Contract Lead of any desired substitution, including the name(s) and references of Vendor's recommended substitute personnel. The State will approve or disapprove the requested substitution in a timely manner. The State may, in its sole discretion, terminate the Services of any person providing Services under this Contract. Upon such termination, the State may request acceptable substitute personnel or terminate the contract Services provided by such personnel.

4.9 VENDOR’S REPRESENTATIONS

If Vendor’s Proposal results in an award, Vendor agrees that it will not enter any agreement with a third party that may abridge any rights of the State under the Contract. If any Services, deliverables, functions, or responsibilities not specifically described in this solicitation are required for Vendor’s proper performance, provision and delivery of the Service and deliverables under a resulting Contract, or are an inherent part of or necessary sub-task included within such Service, 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. Unless otherwise expressly provided herein, 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/or other Deliverables.

4.10 AGENCY INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS MODIFICATION

A. Default Insurance Coverage from the General Terms and Conditions applicable to this Solicitation:

- Small Purchases
- Contract value in excess of the Small Purchase threshold, but up to \$1,000,000.00
- Contract value in excess of \$1,000,000.00

4.11 QUESTIONS TO VENDORS

Vendor shall respond to each of the following questions and points. Vendors are requested to keep responses concise and relevant and should not include generic marketing materials. Responses will be reviewed as part of the evaluation process.

- In your response, please clearly explain how you intend to meet the requirements of 5.2 (i.e. quality of product/service), how quickly you can do so and what resources from the University (i.e. Registrar’s Department, Office of One IT) you will require for both implementation and day-to-day usage/maintenance.

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5.0 SPECIFICATIONS AND SCOPE OF WORK

5.1 GENERAL

This document outlines the general specifications for a Request for Proposal (RFP) for qualified service providers to provide comprehensive diploma printing, finishing, and mailing services. The successful offeror will demonstrate proven expertise in high-volume, secure document printing and fulfillment, with a strong focus on data security, quality control, and timely delivery.

5.2 TASKS/DELIVERABLES

➤ Service

- Produce print diplomas for University Degrees and Certificates at multiple levels of study including, but not limited to; Undergraduate Degrees, Graduate Degrees, Doctoral Degrees, Graduate Certificates, Posthumous Degrees, Degrees in Memoriam, and Honorary Doctorate.
- Provide and maintain e-Diploma product and services for all diplomas and certificates at no additional cost.
- Must deliver print credentials to recipient within 7-15 business days of the diploma order data being provided to Vendor.
- Diplomas and certificates must be shipped by vendor to graduate's requested address in properly protective packaging, sufficient to prevent any damage or destruction.
- Both domestic and international mail courier service used must be trackable, dependable, and economic, with expedited and certified (or its equivalent) shipping options available.
- The vendor must provide and maintain a secure, automated diploma management software platform/ordering system with secure protocol for sending and receiving student and financial information between the University, the vendor, the graduate, and the recipient.
- The vendor must offer a twenty-four (24) hour turnaround time for emergency domestic requests.
- Monitor stock levels of all products.
- Notification of the shipment date must be sent to students when orders are completed.
- Provide services to include implementation, testing, execution and all training.
- Provide and conduct all services in compliance with FERPA and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's confidentiality policies and terms.
- Have the ability to insert flyers in diploma mailings.
- Data must be encrypted in transit and at rest in the vendor database.
- Vendor must comply with all federal, state, and institutional privacy and security standards including FERPA and University Policy 402.
- Production data must reside at a Tier IV rated data center that has completed a SOC 2 audit in the last 12 months located in the US.
- Must Maintain PCI Compliance.

The specific items and any specifications that the University is seeking are listed below. Items offered by the Vendor must meet or exceed the listed Specifications.

➤ Diploma Specifications:

- Paper: Size fourteen inches by eleven inches (14" x 11")
- Archival Quality
- 65# cover
- Text: School's name - Black (raised) thermography
- Font: Old English
- Seal: **Raised** Gold foil stamped
- Signatures: Degree: *Chancellor & Board of Trustee Chair*; Degree in Memoriam: *College Dean & Provost*; Graduate Certificate: *Provost & Dean of the Graduate School* (updated signatures provided)

as they change, include cost for set-up if there is a change)

- o Student names will be submitted through the automated diploma management software system with the corresponding Degree, Major and any honors notations to be added
- o Pricing should be based on three diploma plates used for all degrees/certificates
- o Diploma must be identical, nearly identical, or an improvement to current diplomas and certificates.
- o Vendor must utilize secure print facilities within the continental U.S.
- o Provide a safe and secure area for storage of unused diplomas.
- o University not responsible for the destruction costs of overstock.
- o Provide a secure area for all plates. Plates used by the vendor will become the property of the the University.

➤ Degree

- o Signatures will be the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees Chair. In bold, it also includes Name, Degree, 1-3 Majors, Latin Honor, and Date (not in bold).



➤ **Graduate Certificate**

- Signatures will be the Provost and Vice-Chancellor and the Dean of the Graduate School.



➤ **Degree in Memoriam**

Each Memoriam certificate will have the Dean’s signature of the College presenting. Also, there will be a variation in the first two lines that will state the College and/or the Faculty of study. Signatures will be the Provost and Vice Chancellor and the Dean of the presenting College/School.



➤ **eDiploma**

eDiploma product must be:

- Transmitted securely
- Tamper-proof
- Tamper-evident
- Easily verified
- Easily and securely sharable by student to all major social media platforms
- Retain security features when shared
- Permanently available to graduate in perpetuity
- Identical in appearance to paper-based credentials
- Included at no extra cost to student

Vendor must use and maintain up-to-date, globally recognized, and industry-standard electronic document technologies.

Digital credentials must be portable and securely shared on social media platforms including LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and secure certified PDF download.

Solution must provide reporting and analytics on credential claim rates and social sharing across social media platforms.

Digital credentials must retain security features when shared.

The Digital Diploma must be tamper evident and will automatically validate to ANY recipient that the electronic credential is valid

➤ **Authentication**

- Vendor provides means of digitally authenticating both print and eDiplomas and certificates that is Web-based
- requires no site license fee
- does not require action on the part of the University or its staff

➤ **Automated Diploma Management Software:**

The system must be modern, intuitive, and include at a minimum:

- import processing,
- export option,
- record management,
- hold checking,
- searching,
- tracking, and
- metrics (orders, diplomas, sales)

Requires minimal to no University IT resources to implement nor maintain.

Multiple user roles: Admin, Maintenance, and View/Search only.

Data file fields: diploma address; ID; student email; Name; Major(s); Degree; Latin Honors; Date; hold; diploma template

Manual entry for batch uploading or one-off orders.

Search capability via custom data fields, i.e. student id, name, major etc. Predefined searches based on import date, grad date etc.

Address functionality

- update
- verification

Data collected exported back to University via .csv, API, or other standard and secure on-demand transmission

Ability to enter notes about the order.

Reporting, metrics, and export options.

Public-facing web status option with the ability for students to track current orders and reference prior orders.

Easily and efficiently manage historical signatures and templates for past diploma reprints

Ability for University staff to select ship-to-University instead of the graduates' address on both

individual and batch orders.

Detail the capabilities of the system proposed and provide screenshots, to clearly illustrate operation. Provide user documentation, training, and ongoing support. Requires no site license fee.

➤ **Re-Orders/Replacement Diplomas:**

- Accept, process and ship replacement diploma orders.
- The expectation is an online ordering system for which students order, select quantity and shipping method, submit payment, and fulfill the order.
- This process should require University staff only upon exception, such as when verification of a degree is necessitated.
- Automated and FERPA compliant authentication of requester.
- All orders and re-orders are system-verified as degree-awarded and hold-cleared prior to accepting the order, fulfilling the order, and accepting payment.

➤ **Direct Mailing Service:**

- Mailer: Printed by the vendor and of high quality, non-bendable construction.
- Must be securely sealed and pre-printed with the University's logo, return address, and appropriate warning messages i.e. ("Diploma - Do Not Bend.")
- Capability for graduate to provide alternate delivery address.
- Both domestic and international mail courier service used must be trackable, dependable, and economic, with expedited and certified (or its equivalent) shipping options available.
- Must be able to service our large international and global population of students in all countries.
- Students may select and pay for expedited and certified mailing options.

➤ **Batch University Orders:**

- Some batch orders (e.g. Doctoral Diplomas) can be shipped directly to University prior to commencement.
- Batch University orders to minimize shipping costs while maintaining document protection, courier reliability, security, and speed. Expedited shipping is available upon request.

➤ **Postage/Shipping:**

- Must be charged at cost; variations are allowed for postal increases.
- Please provide mail courier(s) used and a detailed breakdown of mailing costs which clearly differentiates any and all handling charges from actual courier mailing costs.
- Must supply shipment visibility via tracking (e.g. USPS, UPS, and/or FedEx) to both graduate and University on all orders.

➤ **Quantities:**

These figures are estimates for planning purposes only.

Academic Year	Totals
2022 (actual)	8,559
2023 (actual)	8,772
2024 (actual)	9,055

2025 (projected)	9,450
2026 (projected)	10,000
2027 (projected)	10,650

- **Pricing:**
 - The University shall be billed only for actual diplomas produced. **ANY ADDITIONAL CHARGES NOT DISCLOSED IN THE PROPOSAL ADDED TO INVOICES WILL NOT BE HONORED FOR PAYMENT.**

- **Proposers are encouraged to propose and detail any new technology not mentioned in this RFP that is currently available or coming in the near future. Provide details of said technology to include, but not be limited to, functionality, ease of use, the difference between current and new offerings, improvements upon the existing solution, and costs of the package. The University may use any additional information presented in its evaluation of proposals received, factor this information into an award decision, and may request additional information from any or all proposers before making an award decision.**

5.3 PROJECT ORGANIZATION

Vendor shall describe the organizational and operational structure it proposes to utilize for the work described in this RFP and identify the responsibilities to be assigned to each person Vendor proposes to staff the work.

5.4 TECHNICAL APPROACH

Vendor’s proposal shall include, in narrative, outline, and/or graph form the Vendor's approach to accomplishing the tasks outlined in the Scope of Work section of this RFP. A description of each task and deliverable and the schedule for accomplishing each shall be included.

6.0 CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

All Contract Administration requirements are conditioned on an award resulting from this solicitation.

6.1 CONTRACT MANAGER AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Vendor shall be required to designate and make available to the State a contract manager. The contract manager shall be the State’s point of contact for Contract related issues and issues concerning performance, progress review, scheduling, and service.

Contract Manager Point of Contact	
Name:	
Office Phone #:	
Mobile Phone #:	
Email:	

The Vendor shall be required to designate and make available to the State a contact for customer service for all customer service-related issues.

Customer Service Point of Contact	
Name:	
Office Phone #:	
Mobile Phone #:	
Email:	

6.2 POST AWARD PROJECT REVIEW MEETINGS

The Vendor, at the request of the State, shall be required to meet periodically with the Department for Project Review meetings. The purpose of these meetings will be to review project progress reports, discuss Vendor and State performance, address outstanding issues, review problem resolution, provide direction, evaluate continuous improvement and cost saving ideas, and discuss any other pertinent topics.

6.3 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The State encourages the Vendor to identify opportunities to reduce the total cost the State. A continuous improvement effort consists of various ways to enhance business efficiencies as performance progresses.

6.4 ACCEPTANCE OF WORK

Performance of the work and/or delivery of Goods shall be conducted and completed at least in accordance with the Contract requirements and recognized and customarily accepted industry practices. Performance shall be considered complete when the Services or Goods are approved as acceptable by the Contract Administrator.

Acceptance of work products shall be based on the following criteria: All deliverables and services provided under the contract shall be subject to review and approval by The Office of the Registrar o/b/o University of North Carolina at Charlotte to determine whether the work meets the requirements set forth in this RFP and the resulting contract. If a deliverable is rejected, the Contractor shall correct the identified deficiencies and submit the deliverable within 7-10 business days at no additional cost to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Final acceptance of all work shall be contingent upon the successful completion of all deliverables and services in accordance with the contract specifications, to the satisfaction of The Office of the Registrar o/b/o the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

The State shall have the obligation to notify Vendor, in writing ten (10) calendar days following completion of such work or delivery of a deliverable described in the Contract that it is not acceptable. The notice shall specify in reasonable detail the reason(s) it is unacceptable. Acceptance by the State shall not be unreasonably withheld; but may be conditioned or delayed as required for reasonable review, evaluation, installation, or testing, as applicable to the work or deliverable. Final acceptance is expressly conditioned upon completion of all applicable assessment procedures. Should the work or deliverables fail to meet any specifications, acceptance criteria or otherwise fail to conform to the Contract, the State may exercise any and all rights hereunder, including, for Goods deliverables, such

rights provided by the Uniform Commercial Code, as adopted in North Carolina.

6.5 TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

If a Contract results from this solicitation, and the Contract is not renewed at the end of the last active term, or is canceled prior to its expiration, for any reason, Vendor shall provide transition assistance to the State, at the option of the State, for up to six (6) months to allow for the expired or canceled portion of the Services to continue without interruption or adverse effect, and to facilitate the orderly transfer of such Services to the State or its designees. If the State exercises this option, the Parties agree that such transition assistance shall be governed by the terms and conditions of the Contract (notwithstanding this expiration or cancellation), except for those Contract terms or conditions that do not reasonably apply to such transition assistance. The State shall agree to pay Vendor for any resources utilized in performing such transition assistance at the most current rates provided by the Contract for performance of the Services or other resources utilized.

6.6 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

During the performance of the Contract, the parties agree that it is in their mutual interest to resolve disputes informally. Any claims by the Vendor shall be submitted in writing to the State's Contract Manager for resolution. Any claims by the State shall be submitted in writing to the Vendor's Project Manager for resolution. The Parties shall agree to 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 Contract. The Parties will agree on a reasonable amount of time to resolve a dispute. If a dispute cannot be resolved between the Parties within the agreed upon period, either Party may elect to exercise any other remedies available under the Contract, or at law. This provision, when agreed in the Contract, shall not constitute an agreement by either party to mediate or arbitrate any dispute.

6.7 CONTRACT CHANGES

Contract changes, if any, over the life of the Contract shall be implemented by contract amendments agreed to in writing by the State and Vendor. Amendments to the contract can only be through the contract administrator.

6.8 PIGGYBACKING OPTION

All public agencies or public higher education institutions may utilize this solicitation and subsequent award to satisfy mandated competition requirements. The other public agencies and other public higher education institutions shall be individually responsible for their obligations with the awarded Vendor. Likewise, Vendor shall be responsible to the public agencies or public higher education institutions in any ensuing contract. University of North Carolina at Charlotte makes no representations, guarantees, or warranties regarding any contract made between awarded Vendor and other public agencies or public higher education institutions.

6.9 PRICE ADJUSTMENTS

Prices proposed by the Vendor shall be firm against any increase for *three hundred sixty five (365)* days from the effective date of the Contract.

Price increase requests shall be submitted in writing to the Contract Lead, which shall include the reason(s) for the request and contain supporting documentation for the need. Price increases will be negotiated and agreed to by both the State and Vendor in advance of any price increase going into effect. The State is not obligated to accept pricing

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Vendor: _____

adjustments or increases and reserves the right to accept or reject them in part or in whole. Price de-escalation or decreases may be requested by the State at any time.

It is understood and agreed that orders will be shipped at the established Contract prices in effect on the date an order is placed. Invoicing that deviates from this provision may result in Contract to cancellation.

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7.0 ATTACHMENTS

****IMPORTANT NOTICE****

RETURN THE REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS WITH YOUR RESPONSE

EACH ATTACHMENT CAN BE ACCESSED FROM THIS LINK:

<https://www.doa.nc.gov/divisions/purchase-contract/vendor-forms>

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ATTACHMENT A: FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

Complete PART A and PART B for the pricing associated with this IFB, in the table below:

PART A : LINE ITEM PRICING

Item #	QTY.	UOM	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE
1	1	each	Undergraduate and Graduate Degree	\$ _____
2	1	each	Graduate Certificate	\$ _____
3	1	each	Degree in Memoriam	\$ _____
4	1	each	Honorary Doctorate	\$ _____
5	1	each	Re-Orders	\$ _____
6	1	each	Direct Mailing Service	\$ _____
7	1	each	Postage	\$ _____
8	1	each	Emergency Requests – 24 hour turnaround	\$ _____
9	1	each	Inserts	\$ _____
10	1	each	Setup Fee	\$ _____
11	1	each	eDiplomas	\$ _____

PART B : Annual Order Estimate

This scenario is based on a 10,000 diploma need estimate. The pricing provided for this scenario must match the line-by-line pricing above. This estimate will be used when evaluating the costs to the University for the purpose of awarding this IFB. The scenario consists of a total order of 10,000 various diplomas in total. 2500 diplomas will need to be direct mailed to the recipients.

Item #	QTY.	UOM	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE
1	8000	each	Undergraduate and Graduate Degree	\$ _____
2	1500	each	Graduate Certificate	\$ _____
3	250	each	Degree in Memoriam	\$ _____
4	250	each	Honorary Doctorate	\$ _____
5	2500	each	Direct Mailing Service	\$ _____
6			Setup Fee	\$ _____

Total Cost for Order \$ _____

ATTACHMENT B: INSTRUCTIONS TO VENDORS

The Instructions to Vendors are incorporated herein by this reference.

ATTACHMENT C: NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

The North Carolina General Terms and Conditions are incorporated herein by this reference.

ATTACHMENT D: HUB SUPPLEMENTAL VENDOR INFORMATION

Complete and return the Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) Vendor Information form.

ATTACHMENT E: CUSTOMER REFERENCE FORM

Complete and return the Customer Reference form.

ATTACHMENT F: LOCATION OF WORKERS UTILIZED BY VENDOR

Complete and return the Location of Workers Utilized by Vendor form.

ATTACHMENT G: CERTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL CONDITION

Complete, sign, and return the Certification of Financial Condition form.

LOBBYING ACTIVITY CERTIFICATION FOR FEDERAL GRANTS

Complete both the Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements and the OMB Standard Form LLL.

***** Failure to Return the Required Attachments May Eliminate
Your Response from Further Consideration *****