



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Western Carolina University

Invitation for Bid #: 73-IFB-00718

Diplomas, Covers & Fulfillment Services

Date Issued: 10/9/2024

Bid Opening Date: 10/21/2024

At 2:00 PM ET

Direct all inquiries concerning this IFB to:

John Hamm

Purchasing specialist

Email: Jahamm@wcu.edu

Phone: 828-227-7203



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Invitation for Bids

73-IFB-00718

For internal State agency processing, including tabulation of bids, 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 bid.
Failure to do so shall be sufficient cause to reject your bid.**

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>

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
Division of Western Carolina University

Refer <u>ALL</u> Inquiries regarding this IFB to: John Hamm Purchasing Department Western Carolina University Phone: 828-227-7203 Fax: 828-227-7444 Email: Jahamm@wcu.edu	Invitation for Bids # 73-IFB-00718
	Bids will be publicly opened: 10/21/2024 AT 2:00PM ET
Using Agency: Western Carolina University	Commodity No. and Description: Diplomas, Covers & Fulfillment Services
Requisition No.:	

EXECUTION

In compliance with this Invitation for Bids (IFB), 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 bid, the undersigned Vendor understands that false certification is a Class I felony and certifies that:

- this bid is submitted competitively and without collusion (G.S. 143-54),
- that 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 bid, 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 IFB, 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 Contract; 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 bid response to the IFB, the undersigned certifies, for Vendor's entire organization and its employees or agents, that Vendor are not aware that any such gift has been offered, accepted, or promised by any employees or agents of Vendor's organization.

By executing this bid, 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 bid prior to submittal may render bid invalid and it MAY BE REJECTED. Late bids cannot be accepted.

COMPLETE/FORMAL NAME OF VENDOR:		
STREET ADDRESS:	P.O. BOX:	ZIP:
CITY & STATE & ZIP:	TELEPHONE NUMBER:	TOLL FREE TEL. NO:
PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS ADDRESS IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE (SEE INSTRUCTIONS TO VENDORS ITEM #21):		
PRINT NAME & TITLE OF PERSON SIGNING ON BEHALF OF VENDOR:		FAX NUMBER:
VENDOR'S AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:	DATE:	E-MAIL:

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. Any withdrawal of this offer shall be made in writing, effective upon receipt by the agency issuing this IFB.

BID ACCEPTANCE

If your bid is accepted, all provisions of this IFB, 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.

<p><u>FOR STATE USE ONLY:</u> Offer accepted and Contract awarded this ____ day of _____, 20____, as indicated on the attached certification, by _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Authorized Representative of Western Carolina University</p>

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1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Western Carolina University is requesting bids for the purchase of Diplomas, Covers, and Fulfillment Services which will be used by Western Carolina Universities Division of Academic Affairs.

The intent of this solicitation is to award an Agency Contract.

1.1 CONTRACT TERM

The Contract shall have an initial term of One (1) year, beginning on the date of final Contract execution.

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 no later than 90 days before the end of the Contract's then-current term. In addition, the State reserves the right to extend a contract term after the last active term.

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

2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

**3.0 Proposals must be submitted electronically at:
<https://wcu.bonfirehub.com/opportunities/27852>**

2.1 INVITATION FOR BID DOCUMENT

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

2.2 NOTICE TO VENDORS REGARDING IFB 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 IFB and comply with all requirements and specifications herein. Vendors also are responsible for obtaining and complying with all Addenda and other changes that may be issued in connection with this IFB.

If Vendors have questions or issues, or exceptions regarding any component within this IFB, those must be submitted as questions in accordance with the instructions in the BID 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 IFB 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 this process or 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 bid. This applies to any language appearing in or attached to the document as part of the Vendor's bid that purports to vary any terms and conditions or Vendors' instructions herein or to render the bid non-binding or subject to further negotiation. Vendor's bid 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 IFB 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 negotiations

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 bid as nonresponsive.

2.3 IFB SCHEDULE

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

Event	Responsibility	Date and Time
Issue IFB	State	10/9/2024
Hold Pre-Bid Conference/Site Visit	State	N/A
Submit Written Questions	Vendor	10/16/2024 BY 5:00PM ET
Provide Responses to Questions	State	10/17/2024 BY 5:00PM ET
Submit Bids	Vendor	10/21/2024 BY 2:00PM ET
Contract Award	State	TBD
Contract Effective Date	State	TBD

2.4 BID SUBMITTAL

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an absolute requirement. Vendor shall bear the risk of late submission due to unintended or unanticipated delay. It is the Vendor’s sole responsibility to ensure its bid has been received as described in this IFB by the specified time and date of opening. The date and time of receipt will be marked on each bid when received. Any bid or portion thereof received after the bid submission deadline will be rejected.

- **Proposals must be submitted electronically at:**
<https://wcu.bonfirehub.com/opportunities/27852>

- Submit a **signed, original executed** bid responses via bonfire.
- Submit your bid via bonfire with the following information: (1) Vendor name; (2) the IFB number; and (3) the due date. If Vendor is submitting more than one (1) bid, each bid shall be submitted in separate bonfire application. Bids are subject to rejection unless submitted with the information above.

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

Critical updated information may be included in Addenda to this IFB. It is important that all Vendors responding on this IFB periodically check the bonfire 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 IFB and all Addenda thereto.

2.5 BID CONTENTS

Vendors shall populate all attachments of this IFB 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 bid, in the State’s sole discretion

Vendor IFB responses shall include the following items and attachments, which shall be arranged in the following order:

- a) Cover Letter, which must contain all of the following: (i) a statement that confirms that the Vendor has read the IFB in its entirety, including all links, and all Addenda released in conjunction with the IFB; (ii) a statement that the Vendor agrees to perform in accordance with the scope of work, requirements, and specifications contained herein; and (iii) Vendor's agreement to comply with all instructions, terms and conditions, and attachments.
- b) Title Page: Include the company name, address, phone number and authorized representative along with the Bid Number.
- c) Completed and signed version of EXECUTION PAGES, along with the body of the IFB.
- d) Signed receipt pages of any addenda released in conjunction with this IFB, if required to be returned.
- e) Vendor Response [*Indicate relative section references as a guide to responding to sections requiring additional responses outside of the solicitation document. If not required, delete.*]
- f) Completed version of ATTACHMENT A: PRICING
- g) Completed version of ATTACHMENT D: HUB SUPPLEMENTAL VENDOR INFORMATION
- h) Completed version of ATTACHMENT E: CUSTOMER REFERENCE FORM
- i) Completed version of ATTACHMENT F: LOCATION OF WORKERS UTILIZED BY VENDOR
- j) Completed and signed version of ATTACHMENT G: CERTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL CONDITION
- k) Completed and signed version of ATTACHMENT H: VENDOR REQUEST FOR EO50 PRICE-MATCHING, if applicable

2.6 ALTERNATE BIDS

Unless provided otherwise in this IFB, Vendor may submit alternate bids for comparable Goods, various methods or levels of Service(s), or that propose different options. Alternate bids must specifically identify the IFB requirements and advantage(s) addressed by the alternate bid. Any alternate bid, in addition to the marking described above, must be clearly marked with the legend: "Alternate Bid # ___ [*for 'name of Vendor'*]". Each bid 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 bid. Each bid must be complete and independent of other bids offered.

3.0 METHOD OF AWARD AND BID 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 responsive bids will be reviewed, and award or awards will be based on the responsive bid(s) offering the lowest price that meets the specifications to include any required verifications set out herein such as but not limited to past performance, references, and financial documents.

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

If a Vendor selected for award is determined by the State to be a non-resident of North Carolina, all responsive bids will be reviewed to determine if any of them were submitted by a North Carolina resident Vendor who requested an opportunity to match the price of the winning bid, pursuant to Executive Order #50 and G.S. 143-59 (for more information, please refer to ATTACHMENT H: VENDOR REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE ORDER #50 PRICE MATCHING. If such bid(s) are identified, the State will then determine whether any such bid falls within the price-match range, and, if so, make a Contract award in accordance with the process that implements G.S. 143-59 and Executive Order #50.

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

3.2 CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROHIBITED COMMUNICATIONS DURING EVALUATION

While this IFB 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 29 of the Instructions To Vendors entitled COMMUNICATIONS BY VENDORS.

Each Vendor submitting a bid to this IFB, 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 bid 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 IFB or inquiries directed to the purchaser named in this IFB regarding requirements of the IFB (prior to proposal submission) or the status of the award (after submission) are excepted from this provision.

3.3 BID EVALUATION PROCESS

Only responsive submissions will be evaluated.

The State will conduct an evaluation of responsive Bids, as follows:

Bids will be received according to the method stated in the Bid Submittal section above.

All bids must be received by the issuing agency not later than the date and time specified in the IFB 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 IFB SCHEDULE Section above, unless modified by Addendum, the bids from each responding Vendor will be opened publicly and all offers (except those that have been previously withdrawn, or voided bids) will be tabulated. The tabulation shall be made public at the time it is created. When 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 tabulated at the time of opening. If negotiation is anticipated, cost and price shall become available for public inspection at the time of the award. Interested parties are cautioned that these costs and their components are subject to further evaluation for completeness and correctness and therefore may not be an exact indicator of a Vendor’s pricing 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 bid. Vendors are cautioned, however, that the evaluators are not required to request presentations or other clarification—and often do not. Therefore, all bids should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the Vendor. Prices bid cannot be altered or modified as part of a clarification.

Bids will generally be evaluated, based on completeness, content, cost and responsibility of the Vendor to supply the requested Goods and Services. Specific evaluation criteria are listed in Section 3.1 METHOD OF AWARD.

Upon completion of the evaluation process, the State will make Award(s) based on the evaluation and post the award(s) to the State’s eVP website under the IFB number for this solicitation. Award of a Contract to one Vendor does not mean that

the other bids lacked merit, but that, all factors considered, the selected bid 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 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 IFB, 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:

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

3.5 INTERPRETATION OF TERMS AND PHRASES

This IFB 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 bids 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 IFB. Except as specifically stated in the IFB, 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 bid in its entirety.

4.0 REQUIREMENTS

This Section lists the requirements related to this IFB. By submitting a bid, 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 IFB. If a Vendor is unclear about a requirement or specification or believes a change in a requirement would allow for the State to receive a better bid, the Vendor is encouraged to submit these items in the form of a question during the question and answer period in accordance with the Bid Questions Section above.

**• Proposals must be submitted electronically at:
<https://wcu.bonfirehub.com/opportunities/27852>**

- Awarded vendor must have at least 10 years’ experience in printing and mailing of diplomas to students.
**Does your company meet this requirement? Yes: ____ No: ____
- Vendor must provide corporate history including the number of years in the business and number of years the company has provided diploma (paper and electronic) proposed in the specifications of this bid to institutions the same size as or larger than WCU.
**Include above information in bid package.

- Vendor to provide their experience in diploma fulfillment (direct mail of diplomas and set up procedures) to institutions that are the same size as or larger than WCU for at least 5 years. A detailed plan for quality assurance and accuracy is required.
 **Include above information in bid package.

- Vendor shall provide a list of at least 2 references from universities in similar size for which they have provided diploma production and fulfillment to the specifications of this bid for 3 years or more.
 - For each reference, vendor must include the following:
 - Customer name and contact information.
 - Size of institution and brief description of work performed.

**** Refer to Section 4.11**

- Awarded vendor must be able to supply both diplomas and direct mailing services within 5 days of the bid award.

** Can your company meet this requirement? Yes: ____ No: ____

- Vendor must provide specific details as to the security that it offers surrounding the exchange of student data for the electronic diploma. Vendor must be capable of accepting electronic diploma orders via secure web portal or secure FTP due to exchange of FERPA protected student data.

**Can your company meet this requirement? Yes: ____ No: ____

- Vendor must have a web-based, online management system for the submittal of paper and electronic diploma orders. All electronic diploma data also must be available in the same portal as the paper diploma information with 24/7 accessibility, including the ability to revoke or reactivate an electronic diploma instantly.

** Does your company meet this requirement? Yes: ____ No: ____

**A description of its capabilities should be included in bid.

This system should be nonproprietary, requiring no special programming, and allow the school to submit their orders in Excel or similar. Features to include but not limited to:

- Status of orders must be available 24 hours a day. Vendor to stipulate how the university would submit and check their diploma orders.
- Orders must be searchable by student allowing the school to view all information pertaining to that order, such as when the student’s diploma (including electronic diploma) was ordered, when it was shipped, where it was shipped, any available tracking information, and all degree information.
- Upload and view all signatures on file with vendor.

** Does your system meet these requirements? Yes: ____ No: ____

- Vendor must provide detailed method for security and maintenance of all diploma stocks, including who has the authority to access said stock, as well as a specific methodology for maintaining inventory. Vendor must provide secure storage for WCU images, seals, signatures, etc. used in diploma production and must submit details with regards to security measures in place as above.

** Can your company meet this requirement? Yes: ____ No: ____

- Vendor must produce an exact replica of diploma’s currently in use (11” x 14” and 8 ½” x 11”) in terms of archival quality paper, size, font, color, layout, style, quality, etc. Exact printing specifications of the current diplomas must be used.
 ** Can your company meet this requirement? Yes: ____ No: ____
- Vendor must execute diploma production and fulfillment within 10 days of receipt of order, no matter the size of order, and shall offer both 5-day and 24-hour rush services.
 ** Can your company meet this requirement? Yes: ____ No: ____
- Vendor must have the ability to replace any defective or rejected diplomas in 24 hours.
 ** Can your company meet this requirement? Yes: ____ No: ____
- Vendor must specify its diploma error rate (i.e. how many errors per thousand) and describe the procedures that are in place to ensure the stated accuracy. WCU expects an error rate of 0.5% (one-half percent) or better.
 Diploma Error Rate: ____ / 1000

Description of procedures as requested above:

- Diplomas must be mailed in a WCU “branded” mailing envelope. Brand must conform to WCU standards and be approved by the WCU Publications Office.
 ** Will your company agree to meet this requirement? Yes: ____ No: ____
- Vendor to describe the policies and procedures in place to ensure accuracy and quality of direct mailing service. **Include above requested information in bid package.
- Vendor must include complimentary e-mail and/or text notification to students when their diploma ships. This e-mail must also include the notification of the availability of the certified electronic diploma and a link to the ordering page.
 ** Will your company agree to meet this requirement? Yes: ____ No: ____
- Vendor to state any additional services that might benefit the university, including future service options, such as but not limited to services allowing students to order replacement or electronic diplomas directly via vendor. **Include above requested information in bid package.
- Vendor must have the capability to produce a secure electronic version of the diploma and provide documentation to its acceptability in the marketplace. Electronic diploma must be able to be validated in real time via the issuing institution. Third party validations will not be accepted.
 ** Can your company meet this requirement? Yes: ____ No: ____
 **Attach above requested information to your bid response.
- Vendor must give a detailed response as to the security of the document, all technical details, the number of schools offering their electronic diploma, and case samples detailing when and where their electronic diploma was accepted as proof of education.
 **Attach above requested information to your bid response.

- Vendor must have the capability to produce a secure, identical electronic version of the paper diploma and should include the following features:
 - A method of verifying authenticity of the certified e-diploma through the vendor. Digital signing alone and/or 3rd party validation are not acceptable.
 - Each electronic diploma must be digitally signed.
 - Each electronic diploma can be revoked or reinstated by the school through an online management system provided by the vendor.
 - Vendor’s electronic diploma solution must be fully automated and not require any involvement from the school: the school is looking for a fully outsourced service.
 - Vendor must have had at least 50 successful launches of their electronic diploma among 4-year, higher education institutions. School reserves the right to ask for vendor’s complete client list for this service.

** Can your company meet these requirements? Yes: ____ No: ____

**Attach above requested information to your bid response.

4.1 PRICING

Bid price shall constitute the total cost to the State for delivery fully assembled and ready for use, including all applicable charges for shipping, delivery, handling, administrative and other similar fees. Complete ATTACHMENT A: PRICING FORM and include in Vendor’s response.

4.2 PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION

SUITABILITY FOR INTENDED USE

Vendors are requested to offer only items directly complying with the specifications herein or comparable items which will provide the equivalent capabilities, features and diversity called for herein. The State reserves the right to evaluate all bids for suitability for the required use and to award the one best meeting requirements and considered to be in the State’s best interest.

4.4 TRANSPORTATION AND IDENTIFICATION

The Vendor shall deliver Free-On-Board (FOB) Destination to any requested location within the State of North Carolina with all transportation costs and fees included in the total bid price.

When an order is placed using a purchase order, the purchase order number shall be shown on all packages and shipping manifests to ensure proper identification and payment of invoices. If an order is placed without using a purchase order, such as via phone, the Buyer’s name shall be show on all packages. A complete packing list shall accompany each shipment. Vendors shall not ship any products until they have received an order.

4.5 DELIVERY

The Vendor shall deliver Free-On-Board (FOB) Destination to the following location(s):

3660 Old Cullowhee Rd
Cullowhee, NC 28723

Vendor shall complete delivery within 30 consecutive calendar days after receipt of purchase order.

For completion by Vendor: Delivery will be made from _____ (city, state) within _____ consecutive calendar days after receipt of purchase order. Promptness of delivery may be used as a factor in the award criteria.

Delivery shall not be considered to have occurred until installation has been completed. Upon completion of the installation, the Vendor shall remove and properly dispose of all waste and debris from the installation site. The Vendor shall be responsible for leaving the installation area clean and ready to use.

4.6 AUTHORIZED RESELLER

The Vendor shall be authorized by the manufacturer to distribute or resell the products and/or maintenance offered in this IFB. The Vendor shall provide a signed statement from the manufacturer confirming authorization with its bid response. Failure to provide this statement shall constitute sufficient grounds for rejection of Vendor’s offer, at the discretion of the State.

Vendor is the: Manufacturer Dealer Reseller Distributor

Authorized: Yes No Attached Manufacturer’s Authority: Yes No

4.7 WARRANTY

Manufacturer’s standard warranty shall apply. Vendors shall include a copy of the manufacturer’s standard warranty with the bid response.

Vendor warrants that all equipment furnished under this IFB will be newly manufactured, of good material and workmanship. The warranty will apply from date equipment is put into operation for a minimum period of twelve (12) months or the length of the manufacturer’s warranty, whichever is longer. Such warranty shall cover the cost of all defective parts replacement, labor, freight, and technicians’ travel at no additional cost to the State, or as specified by the Purchasing Agency herein. To the extent not superseded by the terms of this paragraph, manufacturer’s warranty terms shall apply. Vendor’s warranty shall be at least the level of coverage provided for its comparable customers.

The report of a problem does not presuppose that every call must result in an “on-site” visit for service/repair. The Vendor and/or service sub-contractor shall utilize best efforts to resolve problems in a timely fashion by using acceptable servicing methods to include, but not limited to, verbal problem analysis and remote diagnosis. The warranty requirement does not impose any additional duty on the State to make other than normal and good faith problem resolution efforts or expenditures of time. Vendor shall be responsible for compliance with warranty terms by any third-party service provider. Vendor shall provide contact information for warranty service provider, below.

Vendor is authorized by manufacturer to repair equipment offered during the warranty period? YES NO

Will the Vendor provide warranty service? YES NO, a manufacturer-authorized third party will perform warranty service.

Contact information for warranty service provider:

Company Name: _____

Company Address: _____

Contact Person (name): _____

Contact Person (phone number): _____

Contact Person (email): _____

4.8 MAINTENANCE OPTION

Following expiration of the above warranty, Vendor, or its third-party service provider, shall maintain the system specifications and performance level in accordance with the manufacturer’s published specifications and those of this IFB. Maintenance shall include all parts, remedial maintenance labor, travel and living expenses incurred. Except as specifically provided for elsewhere herein, coverage shall be at least for 8:00 am ET to 5:00 pm ET, Monday through Friday, except State recognized holidays and

shall include a minimum of two (2) preventive and safety maintenance inspections per year. The State shall have the option to accept the maintenance coverage in this paragraph at the price offered in ATTACHMENT A: PRICING of this IFB, if applicable.

4.9 SAMPLES

SAMPLE

Samples of items offered shall be furnished upon request, free of expense, and if not destroyed will, upon request, be returned at the Vendor’s expense. A written request for return shall be made no later than thirty (30) days after the bid award, and Vendor shall provide a prepaid, pre-addressed shipping label suitable for return of the sample(s). Otherwise, the samples shall become the State’s property to be used or disposed of at the State’s discretion. Each individual sample shall be labeled with the Vendor’s name, bid number, and item number. A sample on which an award is made, will be retained until the contract is completed, and then returned, if requested as specified above.

Forward samples to:

BID NUMBER: 73-IFB-00718

Attention: John Hamm

301 HF Robinson building

Cullowhee NC 28723

Jahamm@wcu.edu

4.10 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 IFB 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.

4.11 REFERENCES

Vendors shall provide at least three (3) references, using ATTACHMENT E: CUSTOMER REFERENCE FORM, for which your company has supplied the exact model of equipment offered. The State *may* contact these users to determine quality level of the offered equipment; as well as, but not limited to user satisfaction with Vendor performance. Information obtained *may* be considered in the evaluation of the bid.

4.12 VENDOR’S REPRESENTATIONS

If the bid 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.

4.13 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 the ATTACHMENT G: CERTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL CONDITION. The State is requiring this certification to minimize potential performance issues from contracting with a Vendor that is financially unstable. This Certification shall be deemed continuing, and 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.

4.14 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

5.0 PRODUCT SPECIFICATIONS

5.1 SPECIFICATIONS

Quantity, Price Time:

Supplier will furnish up to (3500) three thousand five hundred covers annually to be received annually at WCU by March 31. Quantity shipped may vary depending on WCU's current inventory. Additionally, diplomas will be included at 3500 annually and provide fulfillment (mailers, labels, with appropriate postal warning message, manually prepare mailing and schedule diploma pick-up for a (5) three-year period.

Original bid price will be guaranteed for this period. Supplier will accept WCU's finalized diploma orders in May, August and December. Additionally, order(s) may be placed monthly outside the specified period for duplicates, samples, honorary, and/or late additions. All orders will be placed electronically via secure web portal or secure FTP. WCU reserves the right to discontinue the contract on a yearly basis if service and quality of product are not satisfactory.

Diploma:

The diploma shall be of archival quality paper, crème to match sample, text will be black thermography and bear the raised WCU University Seal-foil stamped in purple and red with gold engraved/burnished outline. Screened alumni tower shall be in the background. Name, Degree, Major, Honors, and date line to be embossed. Diplomas shall be printed, fulfillment completed and mailed within (10) days following receipt of order. Vendor must provide 24 hr. turnaround time at NO additional charge. Sizes to be furnished: 11" x 14" and 8½x 11".

Diploma Cover and Lining:

The cover shall be a padded folder, dark purple leather with smooth finish, long top hinge, imprinted with the gold WCU University Seal in the center and with two additional lines reading: Western Carolina University Cullowhee, NC. The cover shall be folded and bulk packed with (1) one shipment yearly. A Registrar's staffer will request number and sizes to be received annually by March 31. Top inside lining shall be gold cut silk moiré'. Bottom inside lining shall be gold cut silk moiré' with 7/8" gold full corner pockets. Sizes to be furnished will be 11" x 14" and 8½x 11". Acetate covers to be included.

Diploma Mailer:

The mailer shall be a pre-printed white cardboard stay flat self-seal mailer and address label for each diploma. The

mailer shall be pre-printed with the Registrar's Office return address and appropriate postal warning messages imprinted in color on the mailers. Size to be furnished will be 11" x 13 ½" and 12 ½x 15".

Fulfillment:

Supplier shall furnish diploma, diploma cover, diploma mailer/labels, prepare and mail diplomas according to above specifications and schedule diploma pick-up. Supplier will also send a confirmation email via a secure web portal or FTP to each student that their diploma has been mailed. Additionally, a confirmation diploma order email will be sent to a Registrar staffer

5.2 CERTIFICATION AND SAFETY LABELS

All manufactured items and/or fabricated assemblies subject to operation under pressure, operation by connection to an electric source, or operation involving a connection to a manufactured, natural, or LP gas source shall be constructed and approved in a manner acceptable to the appropriate state inspector which customarily requires the label or re-examination listing or identification marking of the appropriate safety standard organization; such as the American Society of Mechanical Engineers for pressure vessels; the Underwriters Laboratories and /or National Electrical Manufacturers' Association for electrically operated assemblies; or the American Gas Association for gas operated assemblies, where such approvals of listings have been established for the type of device offered and furnished. Further, all items furnished shall meet all requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), and state and federal requirements relating to clean air and water pollution.

6.0 CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

All Contract Administration requirements are conditioned on an award resulting from this solicitation. This information is provided for the Vendor's planning purposes

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 for customer service. The customer service point of contact shall be the State's point of contact for customer service-related issues (define roles and responsibilities). Customer Service Point of Contact	
Name:	
Office Phone #:	
Mobile Phone #:	

Email:	
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6.3 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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

6.4 ACCEPTANCE OF WORK

Performance of the work and 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.

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.

6.6 INVOICES

Vendor shall invoice the Purchasing Agency. The standard format for invoicing shall be Single Invoices meaning that the Vendor shall provide the Purchasing Agency with an invoice for each order. Invoices shall include detailed line item information to allow Purchasing Agency to verify pricing at point of receipt matches the correct price from the original date of order. At a minimum, the following fields shall be included on all invoices:

Vendor’s Billing Address, Customer Account Number, NC Contract Number, Order Date, Buyer’s 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 ACCEPTED.

6.7 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.

6.8 PRODUCT RECALL

Vendor expressly assumes full responsibility for prompt notification to the Buyer listed on the face of this IFB of any product recall in accordance with the applicable state or federal regulations. The Vendor shall support the State, as necessary, to promptly replace any such products, at no cost to the State.

6.9.1 PRICE ADJUSTMENTS

Prices proposed by the Vendor shall be firm against any increase for 90 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 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.

6.10 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 made through the contract administrator.

The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank

7.0 ATTACHMENTS

****IMPORTANT NOTICE****

RETURN THE REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS WITH YOUR RESPONSE
FOLLOW THE LINKS TO ACCESS EACH ATTACHMENT

ATTACHMENT A: PRICING

Complete and return the Pricing associated with this IFB, which can be found in the table below:

Quantity	Description	Unit Price	Extended Price
Approximately 3500 yearly	Diplomas, Covers and Fulfillment Services meeting the specifications listed in section 5.1 of this bid		

ATTACHMENT B: INSTRUCTIONS TO VENDORS

The Instructions to Vendors, which are incorporated herein by this reference, may be found here:

<https://ncadmin.nc.gov/formnorth-carolina-instructions-vendors032023/download?attachment>

ATTACHMENT C: NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

The North Carolina General Terms and Conditions, which are incorporated herein by this reference, may be found here:

<https://www.doa.nc.gov/form-north-carolina-general-terms-and-conditions-11-2023/open>

ATTACHMENT D: HUB SUPPLEMENTAL VENDOR INFORMATION

Complete and return the Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) Vendor Information form, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.doa.nc.gov/pandc/onlineforms/form-hub-supplemental-vendor-information-9-2021/download>

ATTACHMENT E: CUSTOMER REFERENCE FORM

Complete and return the Customer Reference Form, which can be found at the following link:

<https://ncadmin.nc.gov/media/15503/open>

ATTACHMENT F: LOCATION OF WORKERS UTILIZED BY VENDOR

Complete and return the Location of Workers Utilized by Vendor, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.doa.nc.gov/pandc/onlineforms/form-location-workers-09-2021/download>

ATTACHMENT G: CERTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL CONDITION

Complete, sign, and return the Certification of Financial Condition, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.doa.nc.gov/pandc/onlineforms/form-certification-financial-condition-09-2021/download>

ATTACHMENT H: VENDOR REQUEST FOR EO50 PRICE-MATCHING

Complete, sign, and return the Vendor Request for EO50 Price-Matching, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.doa.nc.gov/pandc/onlineforms/form-vendor-price-matching-opportunity-09-2021/open>

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