

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION**

**Independent Living Part B
RFP 2023-VR-IL Part B**

4/27/23

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SECTION 1 – Overview and Schedule

A. Executive Summary

The Department of Education, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, (now branded as Vocational Rehabilitation New Hampshire VRNH) seeks proposals from entities to provide Independent Living (IL), Part B services. The Independent Living Program provides funding to community not-for-profit or faith-based organizations meeting the requirements for the provision of independent living services to persons with significant disabilities. Applicants must successfully communicate a comprehensive approach to provide core and allowable independent living services to persons with a disability, and the community served by the organization as it relates to the implementation of the program’s standards.

The purpose of the IL program is to promote a philosophy of independent living, including a philosophy of client control (defined as vesting the power or authority of the organization in individuals with disabilities, including individuals who are, or have been recipients of, IL services), peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy, in order to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities, and the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society.

B. Schedule

The following table provides a Schedule of Events for this RFP through contract finalization and approval. The Agency reserves the right to amend this Schedule at its sole discretion and at any time through a published Addendum.

EVENT	DATE	LOCAL TIME
RFP Released (Advertisement)	4/27/23	
Vendor Conference (if applicable)	N/A	
Vendor Inquiry Period Ends	5/5/23	5:00 PM
Final Agency Responses to Inquiries	5/10/23	5:00 PM
Proposal Due	6/9/23	2:30 PM
Estimate Timeframe for Oral Presentations and Interviews (if applicable)	N/A	TBD
Estimated Notification of Selection	6/16/23	
Governor & Council Estimated Approval	August 2023	

C. Description of Agency or Program issuing the Request for Proposals

The New Hampshire Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (VRNH) assists eligible New Hampshire citizens with disabilities to secure suitable employment and financial and personal independence by providing appropriate individualized rehabilitation services necessary.

Vocational Rehabilitation New Hampshire is requesting proposals for Independent Living, Part B program services to provide core services in alignment with 45 CFR 1329. VRNH is the Designated State Entity (DSE) per State Independent Living Council (SILC) request to administer the program, in collaboration with the Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD) (staff to the Council). The contract period will be from 10/1/23-9/30/27.

D. Vendor Instructions

Interested vendors must read the entire RFP and submit the required documents in the manner specified in the RFP. Vendors are responsible for reviewing the most updated information related to this RFP before submitting proposals.

SECTION 2 – Requirements and Scope of Work

Vocational Rehabilitation New Hampshire is requesting proposals for Independent Living, Part B program services to provide core services in alignment with 45 CFR 1329. Services to provide include:

1. Information and referral services;
2. Independent Living Skills Training, delivered by organizations with certified Staff, where certification for specific subject matters exist;
3. Disability-specific, comprehensive Independent Living Services (e.g., persons who are blind; vision-impaired; deaf; hard-of-hearing; neuro-diverse; physically disabled; and otherwise, disabled individuals, with uniquely identified needs to prepare them for the ability to live and function independently in the public community);
4. Peer counseling, including cross-disability peer counseling;
5. Individual and systems advocacy;
6. Services that:
 - a. Facilitate the transition of individuals with significant disabilities from nursing homes and other institutions to home and community-based residences, with the requisite supports and services;
 - b. Provide assistance to individuals with significant disabilities who are at risk of entering an institution so that the individuals may remain in the community;
 - c. Facilitate the transition of youth and students who are individuals with significant disabilities, who were eligible for individual education plans.

The contractor(s) will be responsible for maintaining consumer case records, developing and maintaining a database for federal reporting, sending required reports and billing, and filing a federal report. In an effort to promote increased quality of services in the Independent Living, Part B program, the contractor(s) shall participate in bi-annual monitoring exercises undertaken by the DSE to support the contractors' to achieve consistent, continuous compliance with the Federal requirements of the Independent Living, Part B program and to be aware of, and responsive to, measures to strengthen the quality of the services provided. Failure to actively participate in, and timely respond to, all DSE-described monitoring components shall result in the contract being subject to termination. The contractor(s) shall, at its sole expense, obtain and

maintain in force, and shall require any subcontractor or assignee to obtain and maintain in force, for the benefit of the State the following insurance: comprehensive general liability insurance

against all claims of bodily injury, death, or property damage, in amounts not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate. In addition, the contractor(s) must have worker's compensation insurance coverage.

SECTION 3 -- Contract Terms and Conditions

A. Non-Exclusive Contract

Any resulting Contract from this RFP will be a non-exclusive Contract. The Agency reserves the right, at its discretion, to retain other contractors to provide any of the services or deliverables identified in this RFP or make an award by item, part or portion of an item, group of items, or total Proposal.

B. Award

If the Agency decides to award a contract as a result of this RFP process, any award is contingent upon approval of the contract by the Governor and Executive Council of the State of New Hampshire and upon continued appropriation of funding for the contract.

C. Standard Contract Terms

The Agency will require the selected vendor to execute a contract using the Standard Terms and Conditions of the State of New Hampshire (Form P-37) which is attached as Appendix A. In no event is a vendor to submit its own standard contract terms and conditions as a replacement for the State's terms in response to this solicitation.

The terms of this RFP and the selected vendor's Proposal will be used to form the terms of any resulting contract. The resulting contract may incorporate some or all of the selected vendor's Proposal. References in the P-37 to Exhibits A, B and C are references to the required structure of any resulting contract (Exhibit A – Special Provisions/Amendments to the P-37, Exhibit B – Scope of Services, and Exhibit C – Payment Terms) and are not references to sections of this RFP.

To the extent that a vendor believes that exceptions to the contract terms in Appendix A will be necessary for the vendor to enter into the contract, the vendor must note those issues during the Vendor Inquiry Period, as further described Section 4B.

SECTION 4 –Request for Proposal Process

A. Agency Point of Contact/Restriction of Contact with Agency Employees

The sole point of contact for this RFP, from the RFP issue date until the approval of the resulting contract by the Governor and Executive Council is:

TO: Lisa Hinson-Hatz; Lisa.K.Hatz@doe.nh.gov

CC: Bill Gaffney; William.G.Gaffney@doe.nh.gov

From the date of release of this RFP until an award is made and announced regarding the selection of a vendor, all communication with personnel employed by or under contract with the Agency regarding this RFP is prohibited unless first approved by the RFP Sole Point of Contact. Agency employees have been directed not to hold conferences and/or discussions concerning this RFP with any potential contractor during the selection process, unless otherwise authorized by the RFP Sole Point of Contact. Vendors may be disqualified for violating this restriction on communications.

B. Vendor Inquiries

All inquiries concerning this RFP, including but not limited to, requests for clarifications, questions, any changes to the RFP, and any exceptions to the contract terms in Appendix A, including the Form P-37, shall be submitted via email to the Agency Point of Contact specified above. Inquiries must be received by the end of vendor inquiry period (see Schedule of Events herein).

The vendor must identify the RFP name and the number and include the vendor's name, telephone number, and e-mail address.

The Agency will issue responses to properly submitted inquiries on or before the date specified in the Schedule of Events; however, this date is subject to change at the Agency's discretion. The Agency may consolidate and/or paraphrase questions for sufficiency and clarity. The Agency may, at its discretion, amend this RFP on its own initiative or in response to issues raised by inquiries, as it deems appropriate. **In response to requested exceptions to P37, the Agency will review requested exceptions and accept, reject or note that it is open to negotiation of the proposed exception at its sole discretion. Questions about or requested exceptions to the RFP, Form P-37 and/or any relevant attachments not raised during the inquiry period are waived.** Oral statements, representations, clarifications, or modifications concerning the RFP shall not be binding upon the Agency. Official responses by the Agency will be made only in writing by the process described above. Vendors shall be responsible for reviewing the most updated information related to this RFP before submitting a proposal.

C. Vendor Conference (if applicable)

Please include instructions relating to vendor conference such as whether it is mandatory and how to attend.

SECTION 5 – RFP Terms and Conditions

A. Debarment

Vendors who are ineligible to bid on proposals, bids or quotes issued by the Department of Administrative Services, Division of Procurement and Support Services pursuant to the provisions of RSA 21-I:11-c shall not be considered eligible for an award under this RFP.

B. Proposal Preparation Cost

By submitting a proposal, a vendor agrees that in no event shall the Agency be either responsible for or held liable for any costs incurred by a vendor in the preparation of or in connection with the Proposal, or for work performed prior to the Effective Date of a resulting Contract.

C. Validity of Proposal

Proposals must be valid for one hundred and eighty (180) days following the deadline for submission of Proposals in Schedule of Events, or until the Effective Date of any resulting Contract, whichever is later.

D. RFP Addendum

The Agency reserves the right to amend this RFP at its discretion, prior to the Proposal submission deadline. In the event of an addendum to this RFP, the Agency, at its sole discretion, may extend the Proposal submission deadline, as it deems appropriate.

E. Non-Collusion

The vendor's signature on a Proposal submitted in response to this RFP guarantees that the prices, terms and conditions, and work quoted have been established without collusion with other Vendors and without effort to preclude the Agency from obtaining the best possible competitive Proposal.

F. Property of the Agency

All material received in response to this RFP shall become the property of the Agency and will not be returned to the vendor. Upon contract award, the Agency reserves the right to use any information presented in any Proposal.

G. Proposal Confidentiality

Unless necessary for the approval of a contract, the substance of a proposal must remain confidential until the Effective Date of any Contract resulting from this RFP. A vendor's

disclosure or distribution of Proposals other than to the Agency may be grounds for disqualification.

H. Public Disclosure

The information submitted in response to this RFP (including all materials submitted in connection with it, such as attachments, exhibits, addenda, and presentations), any resulting contract, and information provided during the contractual relationship may be subject to public disclosure under Right-to-Know law, including RSA 91-A. In addition, in accordance with RSA 9-F:1, any contract entered into as a result of this RFP will be made accessible to the public online via the website Transparent NH (<http://www.nh.gov/transparentnh/>).

Confidential, commercial or financial information may be exempt from public disclosure under RSA 91-A:5, IV. If a vendor believes any information submitted in response to this RFP should be kept confidential, the vendor must specifically identify that information where it appears in the submission in a manner that draws attention to the designation and must mark/stamp each page of the materials that the vendor claims must be exempt from disclosure as “CONFIDENTIAL.” Vendors must also provide a letter to the person listed as the point of contact for this RFP, identifying the specific page number and section of the information you consider to be confidential, commercial or financial and providing your rationale for each designation. Marking or designating an entire proposal, attachment or section as confidential shall neither be accepted nor honored by the State. Vendors must also provide a separate copy of the full and complete document, fully redacting those portions and shall note on the applicable page or pages that the redacted portion or portions are “confidential.”

Submissions which do not conform to these instructions by failing to include a redacted copy (if necessary), by failing to include a letter specifying the rationale for each redaction, by failing to designate the redactions in the manner required by these instructions, or by including redactions which are contrary to these instructions or operative law may be rejected by the State as not conforming to the requirements of the proposal.

Pricing, which includes but is not limited to, the administrative costs and other performance guarantees in Proposals or any subsequently awarded contract shall be subject to public disclosure regardless of whether it is marked as confidential.

Notwithstanding a vendor’s designations, the State is obligated under the Right-to-Know law to conduct an independent analysis of the confidentiality of the information submitted in a proposal. If a request is made to the State to view or receive copies of any portion of the proposal, the State shall first assess what information it is obligated to release. The State will then notify you that a request has been made, indicate what, if any, information the State has assessed is confidential and will not be released, and specify the planned release date of the remaining portions of the proposal. To halt the release of information by the State, a vendor must initiate and provide to the State, prior to the date specified in the notice, a court action in the Superior Court of the State of New Hampshire, at its sole expense, seeking to enjoin the release of the requested information.

By submitting a proposal, vendors acknowledge and agree that:

- The State may disclose any and all portions of the proposal or related materials which are not marked as confidential and/or which have not been specifically explained in the letter to the person identified as the point of contact for this RFP;
- The State is not obligated to comply with a vendor's designations regarding confidentiality and must conduct an independent analysis to assess the confidentiality of the information submitted in your proposal; and
- The State may, unless otherwise prohibited by court order, release the information on the date specified in the notice described above without any liability to a vendor.

I. Electronic Posting of RFP Results and Resulting Contract

At the time of receipt of proposals, the Agency will post the number of responses received with no further information. No later than five (5) business days prior to submission of a contract to the Department of Administrative Services, the Agency will post the ranks or scores of each responding vendor. In the event that the contract does not require Governor & Executive Council approval, the Agency will disclose the rank or score at least 5 business days before final approval of the contract.

Pursuant to RSA 91-A and RSA 9-F:1, the Secretary of State will post to the public any document submitted to G&C for approval, including contracts resulting from this RFP, and posts those documents on its website (<https://sos.nh.gov/administration/miscellaneous/governor-executive-council/>). By submitting a proposal, vendors acknowledge and agree that, in accordance with the above-mentioned statutes and policies, (and regardless of whether any specific request is made to view any document relating to this RFP), any contract resulting from this RFP that is submitted to G&C for approval will be made accessible to the public online.

J. Non-Commitment

Notwithstanding any other provision of this RFP, this RFP does not commit the Agency to award a contract. The Agency reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any and all proposals, or any portions thereof, at any time; to cancel this RFP; and to solicit new proposals under a new acquisition process.

K. Ethical Requirements

From the time this RFP is published until a contract is awarded, no vendor shall offer or give, directly or indirectly, any gift, expense reimbursement, or honorarium, as defined by RSA 15-B, to any elected official, public official, public employee, constitutional official, or family member of any such official or employee who will or has selected, evaluated, or awarded an RFP, or similar submission. Any vendor that violates RSA 21-G:38 shall be subject to prosecution for an offense under RSA 640:2. Any vendor who has been convicted of an offense based on conduct in violation of this section, which has not been annulled, or who is subject to a pending criminal charge for such an offense, shall be disqualified from bidding on the RFP, or similar request for submission and every such vendor shall be disqualified from bidding on any RFP or similar

request for submission issued by any state agency. A vendor that was disqualified under this section because of a pending criminal charge which is subsequently dismissed, results in an acquittal, or is annulled, may notify the department of administrative services, which shall note that information on the list maintained on the state’s internal intranet system, except in the case of annulment, the information, shall be deleted from the list.

L. Challenges to Identification of Selected Vendor

Within 5 business days of the Agency’s posting of the rank or score on its website, vendors may, in accordance with RSA 21-G:37, request that the agency review its selection process. The request must be in writing and must specify all points on which the vendor believes the agency erred in its process and shall contain such argument in support of its position as the vendor seeks to present. In its request for review, a vendor shall not submit, and an agency will not accept nor consider, any substantive information that was not included in the original proposal. The agency will respond to the request within 5 business days of its receipt.

SECTION 6 – Evaluation of Proposals

A. Criteria for Evaluation and Scoring

The Agency will evaluate each responsive Proposal using a scoring scale of 100 points, which will be distributed as set forth in the table below.

CATEGORIES							POINTS
TECHNICAL PROPOSAL with the following potential maximum scores for each Technical Proposal category;							
APPROACH – Statement outlining the overall approach to be employed by the bidder.							15
PROJECT SUMMARY							20
RESOURCE LEVERAGING AND PARTNERS							15
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES - Description of the bidder’s organizational capabilities to deliver the services, including a brief description of their company, a history of their firms and/or personal experience in implementing similar projects, including at least once example if a completed project of comparable scope. A description of related experience in the field, and comprehensive résumés for all staff who will work on this project and three references along with your proposal.							25
BUDGET PROPOSAL- The budget will explain how all costs listed in the budget are necessary, reasonable, and allocable to deliver the outcomes specified in the proposal. All expenditures should be clearly connected to an activity related to the services to be provided.							25
Must show (in state fiscal years):							
Budget Item	FY24 (10/1/23-6/30/24)	FY25 (7/1/24-6/30/25)	FY26 (7/1/25-6/30/26)	FY27 (7/1/26-6/30/27)	FY28 (7/1/28-9/30/28)	Total	

TOTAL MAXIMUM POINTS	100

The Agency will select a vendor based upon the criteria and standards contained in this RFP and from applying the weighting in this section. Oral interviews and reference checks, to the extent they are utilized by the Agency, will be used to refine and finalize scores.

If the Agency, decides to make an award based on these evaluations, the Agency will notify the selected vendor(s). Should the Agency be unable to reach agreement with the selected vendor(s) during Contract discussions, the Agency may then undertake Contract discussions with the next preferred vendor and so on, or the Agency may reject all proposals, cancel this RFP, or solicit new Proposals under a new acquisition process.

B. Planned Evaluations Steps

The Agency plans to use the following process:

- Step 1. Initial screening to ensure that the Proposals follow submission requirements.
- Step 2. Preliminary evaluation of the Technical Proposals.
- Step 3. Oral interviews and Product Demonstrations (if necessary);
- Step 4. Final Scoring of Technical Proposals.
- Step 5. Price Proposals review.
- Step 6. Final Selection: Select the highest scoring vendor(s) and begin contract execution.

C. Step 1: Initial Screening

The Agency will conduct an initial screening to verify vendor compliance with the proposal submission requirements set forth in Sections 4 and 7. The Agency may waive or offer a limited opportunity to cure immaterial deviations from the RFP requirements if it is determined to be in the best interest of the State.

D. Step 2: Preliminary Technical Scoring of Proposals

The Agency will establish an evaluation team to review for compliance of the minimum requirements as set forth in Section 2. This evaluation team will then review the technical proposals and give a preliminary score to the technical proposals under the guidelines set forth in Section 6. Should a vendor fail to achieve 60 Points in the preliminary technical scoring, it will receive no further consideration from the evaluation team and the vendor’s price proposal will be returned unopened. Price proposals will not be reviewed by the evaluation team during the preliminary technical review.

E. Step 3: Oral Interviews and Product Demonstrations

If the Agency determines that it is appropriate, vendors may be invited to oral interviews and/or product demonstrations including demonstrations of any proposed automated systems or

technology components. The Agency retains the sole discretion to determine whether to conduct oral interviews, with which vendors; and the number of interviews. Vendors are advised that the Agency may decide to conduct interviews with less than all responsive vendors.

The purpose of oral interviews and product demonstrations is to clarify and expound upon information provided in the written proposals. Vendors are prohibited from altering the basic substance of their proposals during the oral interviews and product demonstrations. The Agency may ask the vendor to provide written clarifications of elements in their technical proposal regardless of whether it intends to conduct oral interviews. Information gained from oral interviews and product demonstrations will be used to refine technical review scores assigned from the initial review of the proposals.

F. Step 4: Final Technical Scoring of Proposals

Following oral interviews, product demonstrations, reference checks (if appropriate) and/or review of written clarifications of proposals requested by the Agency, the evaluation team will determine a final score for each technical proposal.

G. Step 5: Price Proposal Review

Price proposals will be reviewed upon completion of the final technical scoring of proposals. The vendor's price proposal will be allocated a maximum potential score of 100 points. Vendors are advised that this **is not a low bid award** and that the scoring of the price proposal will be combined with the scoring of the technical proposal to determine the overall highest scoring vendor.

The following formula will be used to assign points for costs:

Vendor's Price Score = (Lowest Proposed Price / Vendor's Proposed Price) x Number of Points for Score

For the purpose of use of this formula, the lowest proposed price is defined as the lowest price proposed by a vendor who has scored above the minimum necessary for consideration on the Technical Score.

H. No Best and Final Offer

The Proposal should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms which the vendor can offer. There will be no best and final offer procedure.

I. Final Selection

The Agency will conduct a final selection based on the final evaluation of the proposals or, if requested, as a result of the Best and Final Offer, and begin contract discussions with the selected vendor(s).

J. Rights of the Agency in Accepting and Evaluating Proposals

The Agency reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to:

- Make independent investigations in evaluating proposals;
- Request additional information to clarify elements of a proposal;
- Waive minor or immaterial deviations from the RFP and contract requirements, if determined to be in the best interest of the State;
- Omit any planned evaluation step if, in the Agency's view, the step is not needed;
- Reject any and all proposals at any time; and
- Open contract discussions with the second highest scoring vendor and so on, if the Agency is unable to reach an agreement on contract terms with the higher scoring vendor(s).

SECTION 7 – Process for Submitting a Proposal

A. Proposal Submission, Deadline, and Location Instructions

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP must be received no later than the Proposal Due Date specified in the Schedule of Events, herein.

The Price proposal must be labeled clearly and submitted separately from the technical proposal.

Unless waived as a non-material deviation in accordance with Section 6, late submissions will not be accepted and will be returned to the vendors unopened. Delivery of the Proposals shall be at the vendor's expense. The time of receipt shall be considered when a Proposal has been officially documented by the Agency, in accordance with its established policies, as having been received at the location designated below. The Agency accepts no responsibility for damaged, mislabeled, or undeliverable mailed or emailed proposals. Any damage that may occur due to shipping shall be the vendor's responsibility.

Proposals must include one electronic copy of the Proposal with all Confidential Information fully redacted, as provided for in Section 5H of this RFP.

Proposals must be clearly marked as follows:

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

RESPONSE TO RFP VR2023-IL Part B

Independent Living Part B

It is recommended to send electronic version proposals and if choosing to send hard copies below are instructions and send 5 (five) hard copies.

Electronic Proposals

Electronic Proposals must be addressed to:

TO: christine.a.langille-lewis@doe.nh.gov

CC: Lisa.K.Hatz@doe.nh.gov; William.G.Gaffney@doe.nh.gov

Subject line must include: RESPONSE TO RFP VR2023-VR-IL Part B:
Independent Living, Part B FY24-FY28 (state fiscal years)

Electronic Submissions must be submitted using the following criteria:

- a. Searchable PDF Format
- b. Files must be less than 10MB in size.

Exception: If files are greater than 10MB in size, the vendor will be required to submit their proposal in parts. It is the vendors responsibility to ensure a complete proposal is submitted

Physical Proposals

Physical Proposals must be addressed to:

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Vocational Rehabilitation of New Hampshire

21 S. Fruit Street, Suite 20

Concord, NH 03301

Physical Submissions shall include:

- a) One original and 5 (five) clearly identified copies of the Proposal including required attachments; and
- b) One (1) Electronic submission via email attachment or USB drive.

SECTION 8 – Proposal Content and Requirements

Proposals shall follow the below format and provide the required information set forth below:

- Cover page of interest and general description of recommended approaches, scope of work, processes, and deliverables for this project.
- Glossary of Common Terms, to include any technical terms and acronyms.
- Implementation Plan including tentative schedule, region(s) to be served, estimated amount to be served, and the date reporting plan.
- Company Profile/Background, overview of the company including

- Number of years in business
 - Number of employees
 - Location(s)
 - Expertise
 - Key Personnel
- Technical Proposal:
 - Executive summary and proposal summary
 - A description of the bidder's organizational capabilities to deliver the services.
 - A description of related experience in the field, and comprehensive
 - Project Plan - Description of the bidder's plan for project implementation, timeframe, and strategies for meeting the deliverables.
 - Three (3) References
 - At least once example of a completed project of comparable scope.
 - Résumés for all staff who will work on this project
- Price Proposal: must be submitted separately
 - Personnel Costs
 - Transportation Costs
 - Other costs
- Other attachments – N/A