



State Universities Retirement System

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR Call Center Assessment and Roadmap

Issued December 15, 2015

Responses due January 11, 2016 by 4:30 pm Local Time

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I. Introduction

The State Universities Retirement System of Illinois (SURS) is requesting proposals from an independent consulting firm to review our current customer contact capabilities including call center, web applications and other communications channels and to help us develop a roadmap leveraging current and new technologies to create efficiencies and improve customer satisfaction with our 229,000 members.

The review and subsequent roadmap creation will use a collaborative process between the selected firm and SURS management representatives. The engagement deliverable will contain steps to achieve agreed upon goals and objectives. It will also include budgetary estimates, expected ROI and potential vendors.

SURS is committed to increasing racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in all aspects of its vendor utilization to provide goods and services to the System, to the greatest extent feasible, and within the bounds of financial and fiduciary prudence. To that end, the System strongly encourages qualified minority, female, and firms owned by persons with disabilities to submit proposals for this RFP.

A proposer's preparation and submittal of a proposal or subsequent participation in presentations or contract negotiations creates no obligation on the System to award a contract or to pay any associated costs. All proposals and related materials will be retained by the System and will be subject to disclosure as required in accordance with the Illinois Freedom of Information Act.

II. Description of SURS

SURS is the administrator of a cost-sharing multiple employer public employee retirement system that provides retirement, survivor, disability and death benefits for employees of Illinois state universities, community colleges, and certain other affiliated organizations and agencies. SURS was created in 1941, by an act of the Illinois General Assembly, and is governed by the Illinois Pension Code (40 ILCS 5/15-101 *et seq.*). SURS provides benefit services to over 229,000 members who work for 64 employers.

An elected and appointed, eleven-person, Board of Trustees, governs SURS. The chairperson of the Board of Trustees is, by statute, the chairperson of the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Five members of the Board are appointed by the Governor of the State of Illinois. The remaining six members of the Board are elected by participating members (four individuals) and annuitants (two individuals). Our trustees serve six year terms. SURS is funded by participant payroll deductions and annual employer contributions provided by the State of Illinois. By statute, SURS is defined as a "body politic and corporate".

SURS currently employs approximately 130 staff, located in 2 offices in Champaign and Naperville, Illinois. Two SURS employees are located in the Naperville office. The remainder of SURS employees is situated in the Champaign office.

A copy of SURS' most recent Comprehensive Annual Financial Report ("CAFR") is available for review, or to download, at www.surs.org.

SURS is authorized to pay vendors directly for administrative expenses from trust assets. The lack of a FY2016 state budget does not impair the System from making timely payments on obligations and to make payment for services such as those requested in this document.

III. Services Required

The services required are listed below. They may be organized and performed at the discretion of the selected vendor.

1. Assess the current operation
 - a. Call Center functions and performance
 - b. Self-service web capabilities
 - c. Other member outreach processes
2. Develop a strategy to enhance current capabilities
 - a. Improve efficiency of current functions
 - b. Add additional functions
 - c. Consider additional channels
 - d. Add functions that leverage technology
3. Create a deliverable that will outline the steps to be taken and a business case to support those steps.

Although generally organized around the Call Center functions, the assessment should look at all processes that could affect Call Center efficiencies. The current call center has 16 seats and our current technologies allow for overflow to other staff in our Member Services Division. We receive approximately 10,000 calls per month. Staff answering calls has accessibility to a business system containing all member information.

We provide information to members through web applications which have some self-service capabilities. We want to consider IVR and other CTI technologies. We want to evaluate cloud based versus on premise technologies.

The project deliverable should at all times reflect the small size of our organization:

1. Outline the steps over a defined period of time to achieve the objectives driven by the strategies developed during the assessment.
2. Provide a business case for investing in the improvements

3. Provide a list of potential vendors
4. Provide a list of services that your company can provide to assist in implementation
5. Provide an estimated start date

IV. Proposal Content

At a minimum, the proposal must include the following information to be considered for the engagement. For ease of review, each requirement should be addressed in a separate section. The proposal should include a table of contents. Failure to provide information in the prescribed format may result in rejection of the proposal. All responses will be subject to verification for accuracy. **Proposals containing false or misleading information will be rejected.**

Cover Letter

A cover letter, which will be considered an integral part of the proposal package, in the form of a standard business letter, must be signed by an individual authorized to bind the proposer contractually. This cover letter must indicate the signer is so authorized, and must indicate the signer's title or position. An unsigned proposal will be rejected. The cover letter must also include:

- a. A statement that the proposal meets all requirements of this RFP, and that the offer tendered by the proposal will remain in full force and effect until, and may be accepted by SURS at any time prior to 30 days beyond the deadline for submittal.
- b. A disclosure of any current business relationship or any current negotiations for prospective business with SURS, or with any member of the Board of Trustees or SURS staff, or any party currently rendering services to SURS.
- c. A statement that the proposer acknowledges that all documents submitted in response to this RFP may be subject to disclosure under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and/or the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

Statement of Minimum Qualifications

Proposers must complete and return the Minimum Qualifications Certification in the form contained in Appendix A.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire contained in Appendix C to this RFP must be completed and returned as part of the proposal

Fee Proposal

Proposers must submit their fee in the format prescribed in Appendix D. Any deviation from the prescribed format which in the opinion of SURS is material may result in the rejection of the proposal.

The proposed fee shall include all costs and expenses for providing the services to SURS as described in this RFP. Once finalists are selected, fees may be subject to a “best and final” offer process to be determined at the discretion of the System.

The fee proposal must expressly state that the proposed fees are guaranteed for the term of any resulting contract.

Contract

This Request for Proposal is neither a contract nor meant to serve as a contract.

It is anticipated that one or more of the proposals submitted in response to this Request for Proposal may be selected as the basis for negotiation of a contract with the proposer. Such a contract is presently contemplated to contain, at a minimum, the terms of the proposal submitted, as finally negotiated and approved by the System. SURS reserves the right to negotiate additions, deletions, or modifications to the terms of proposals submitted.

V. Submission of Proposals

All proposals must be received **no later than the deadline stated in the Anticipated Timeline and Contact Information section**. Submissions must be made via email to the identified contact person by the stated deadline. Only email submissions will be accepted.

The proposals become the property of SURS upon submission. All costs for developing proposals and attending presentations and/or interviews are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be chargeable to SURS.

Only one proposal from an individual, firm, partnership, corporation, or combination thereof, will be considered for this assignment.

VI. Evaluation Process

Pre-Evaluation Review

All proposals will be reviewed to determine if they contain all the required submittals specified in this RFP. Those not submitting all required information in the prescribed format will be rejected.

Proposal Evaluation

Proposals that pass the pre-evaluation review will undergo an evaluation process conducted by SURS staff. SURS will consider the following various elements in the decision process, ranked in no specific order, and will render a decision based on the perceived best value for the engagement. Fees will be one of the determining factors in this decision but will not be the primary determinative. Proposals will

be evaluated based on criteria including:

- Understanding of the services requested including acknowledgement of the size of the SURS organization and its effect on the project
- Cost including all related expenses
- Firm qualifications and established record of success in similar work
- Individual qualifications of assigned staff
- Soundness of the approach and the quality of the proposal
 - How will the engagement be organized?
 - How many individuals will be assigned to the project?
 - What will be the durations?
 - What SURS staff will need to be accessible during the engagement?
- Proposed deliverables
 - How will the deliverable be organized?
 - How will the finished product appear?

During the evaluation process, proposers may be requested to provide additional information and/or clarify contents of their proposal. Other than information requested by SURS, no proposer will be allowed to alter the proposal or add new information after the filing date.

Once finalists are selected, fees may be subject to a “best and final” offer process to be determined at the discretion of the System.

VII. Anticipated Timeline and Contact Information*

SURS Contact Information:

Chris Hansen
chansen@surs.org
SURS
1901 FOX DR
PO BOX 2710
CHAMPAIGN, IL 61825-2710

Date RFP Issued	December 14, 2015
Deadline for Submitting RFP Response	January 11, 2016
Proposal Evaluation	January 12 – 15, 2016
Consultant(s) Selected	January 18, 2016
Anticipated Contract Start Date	February 1, 2016

**Subject to change at SURS discretion*

VIII. General Conditions

Clarification of the RFP

To maintain the integrity of the RFP process, interested proposers are expected to respond to this RFP to the best of their understanding **without asking questions or requesting clarification**. If a proposer discovers an error or has a question regarding this RFP, the proposer should notify the SURS contact person listed in the previous section in writing at the email address listed above. If deemed necessary or appropriate in the System's discretion, SURS may clarify or modify any part of this RFP by posting notice on the SURS Web site prior to the proposal deadline.

Restrictions on Communication

Proposers must not discuss or share the contents of their proposals with other potential proposers. **Any attempt to initiate contact with SURS staff or SURS Trustees, other than as specifically stated in this RFP, may disqualify the proposer from further consideration.**

Reservation of Rights

SURS reserves the right to withdraw this RFP, to accept or reject any or all proposals submitted, and to waive any immaterial deviation, defect, or irregularity, whenever it would be in the best interest of SURS to do so. Waiver of an immaterial deviation shall in no way modify the Request for Proposal or excuse a proposer from full compliance with all RFP requirements.

Proposals that contain false or misleading statements or that provide references which do not support an attribute or condition claimed by the proposer will be rejected. Issuance of the Request for Proposal creates no obligation to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal. Nothing in this RFP or any resulting contract shall preclude SURS from procuring services similar to those described herein from other sources.

No Confidentiality

Proposals and all materials submitted in response to this RFP cannot be considered confidential. All proposals and related materials will be retained by SURS and will be subject to disclosure as required in accordance with the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140. Any trade secret or confidential material must be labeled as such.

Equal Opportunity

SURS does not discriminate because of race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, military status, certain unfavorable discharges from military service, political affiliation, citizenship, ancestry, national origin, physical or mental handicap or disability or any other characteristic protected by law. It is the System's intent to comply with all state, federal, and local equal employment and opportunity laws and public policies.

Reference Checks

Reference checks may be conducted for each finalist. Please provide reference authorization letter in the format prescribed in Appendix B.

Appendix A: Statement of Minimum Qualifications

(Firm Name) _____ certifies that it meets the following minimum qualifications.

Please initial each as applicable.

- 1. _____ Stated firm/individual has a minimum of 5 years of experience in performing call center assessments.

- 2. _____ Stated firm/individual has had at least 5 clients who have contracted for Call Center consulting in the last two years.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Appendix B: Reference Authorization Letter
[On prospective firm letterhead]

[Month, Day, Year]

[Reference Name]

[Reference Title]

[Company Name]

[Reference Address]

[City, State, Zip]

Dear [Reference Name]:

(Prospective Firm Name) has submitted a proposal to the State Universities Retirement System of Illinois ("System") with regard to providing Call Center Assessment services. The System is conducting its due diligence with regard to *(Prospective Firm Name)*. Through this written authorization, *(Prospective Firm Name)* hereby authorizes any individual, business, corporation, retirement system, state agency, or other entity to release any facts and information it may have concerning *(Prospective Firm Name)*, its principals, employees and agents, to the System.

A copy of this authorization may be used as if it were an original. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

(Prospective Firm Name)

(Authorized Signature and Title)

Appendix C: Questionnaire

The following questionnaire must be completed and included with your response to this RFP. Type your responses in the same order as the questionnaire, listing the question first followed by your answer.

Contact and Company Information

Name of Firm: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Federal Employer Identification Number: _____

Contact Person(s):

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Title: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Website: _____

Firm Background

1. Please provide a general description and history of the firm, its operations (please include any history of mergers and/or acquisitions), year founded, ownership structure, biographies of the principals and percentage ownership by current employees.
2. Briefly describe your firm's background and history of performing Call Center Assessment services.
3. How many professionals are employed by your firm and what is their level of experience and professional credentials?
4. Please list the firm's professional staff that you perceive to be assigned to this engagement and an estimated timeframe for completion.
5. Describe the turnover of the firm over the past five years.

Client Relationships

1. Please provide three references (preferably one from a public pension fund client) from Call Center engagements that you/your firm have conducted in the last two years. By providing references, the proposer authorizes SURS to contact the reference to inquire about the proposer's services.

Appendix D: Fee Proposal

Please quote your flat fee for the following services. Please detail the scope of services to be provided under the proposed engagement and provide quotes for any additional services.

A. Fee for Call Center Assessment services \$_____

B. Please state how expenses pertaining to performance of on-site work are included in your fee proposal, including but not limited to telephone, facsimile, Internet, or other communications device, computer, postage, delivery, copying, travel, transportation, lodging, food and per diem, clerical time, and overtime.