

Request for Information (RFI)

New York State Education Department (NYSED)

RFI #24-001

Overview of Request

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) Office of Teaching Initiatives (OTI) and Office of School Personnel Review and Accountability (OSPRA) are looking to modernize their current system for state teacher certification, fingerprinting and applicant review process. NYSED is seeking a request for information (RFI) to understand the current technology market and vendor landscape.

The OTI and OSPRA current services and software provide for:

- The application process for certification of teachers, school administrators and pupil personnel services professionals, including fingerprinting, background checks and supporting documentation.
- NYSED's application review and approval/denial process.
- The recommendation process for college administrators and confirming provisional or initial certification for graduate program candidates.
- School employers requesting fingerprint clearance for a prospective employee, viewing the application status, certifications, employment history and professional development hours, entering a Superintendent Statement and reporting the termination of an employee.
- Integrating certification data to NYSED's Information and Reporting System (IRS) and matching courses for public school reporting.
- Moral character investigations for applicants and certificate holders when required.
- Teacher tenure hearings and case management.
- Investigating and documenting educator test fraud.

The modernization project will encompass all the above processes in a new online system. NYSED is seeking to collect evaluation data from software vendors to determine market viability, vendor potential, and procurement options for a modernization solution to provide an improved and intuitive user experience for applicants and administrators.

Section 1. The RFI Response

An RFI response should include details highlighting the vendor's qualifications as requested in sections 1-3 of this RFI.

The vendor is requested to return an RFI response to the NYSED by December 20, 2024 and shall be sent via email to the following address: nysedtechresponse@nysed.gov. Other Key Dates are available in Section 3. The RFI process is NYSED's opportunity to ask questions to the vendor about requirements and software solutions and to learn more about how to procure any software solution. Specific questions regarding requirements to which the vendor must respond are in Section 2 of this RFI. As part of the RFI, we are looking for a vendor to provide information related to the following:

1. Details about the vendor's company strategy and software vision as well as organization history, especially in relation to NYS government agencies.
2. Details about vendor viability and economic standing and any vendor or government issues, including lawsuits or investigations, that have occurred either in the past ten years or are under current investigation or scrutiny in NYS.
3. Details of other state teacher certification software implementations or similar high-volume forms management (135k applications per year) and modernization projects.
4. Details of other software implementations and data migrations with highly confidential or restricted data.
5. Details of their software solution's features and functionality that positions their product above other similar market solutions.
6. Details on how NYSED users, with minimal training can create and modify forms, create the logic path/questions to present the appropriate application to the user, create new certifications with relevant requirements and documentation, create approval/denial routes, create automatic notifications, reports, and other basic functionality.
7. Overview of the implementation process, approach to the unique customizations NYSED will require and how changes can be incorporated prior to go live.
8. Details of solution's technical architecture and history (ex. in-house developed, COTS product, built on low-code platform, SaaS).
9. Details on approach to on premise software/hardware infrastructure versus cloud hosting capabilities and relevant security and compliance standards (ex. SOC 2, FedRAMP).
10. Details on approach to migrating an Oracle database with 20+ years of data and data cleanup/sanitization process.
11. Details about the product cost and procurement: what is the vendor's pricing model, what type of annual fees are necessary for maintenance and support, and what type of NYS or Federal contracting vehicles are available for procurement of the product.

Section 2. Overview of Request: Specific RFI Questions for Vendor Responses

As a vendor, please complete the below and return as part of your vendor response.

Questions for Pre-Defined Responses	Requirement Importance	Vendor's Ability to Deliver	Comments
Does your system allow for custom development?	Must Have		
Does your system offer a news/announcements module on the pre-login landing page or post login home page and allow NYSED users to post?	Nice to Have		
Does your system offer different views/dashboards based on the users' role (ex. Applicant, School Administrator, NYSED Reviewer/Approver, OSPRA Case Manager, NY State Approved Education Providers)	Must Have		
Does your system allow users to customize their specific dashboards?	Nice to Have		
Does your system provide easy to access statistical information such as total counts by status, application processing times, charts, graphs, and reports?	Must Have		
Does your system provide an easy to use and maintainable application for creating new forms?	Must Have		
Does your system provide an easy to use and maintainable application for creating the logic path/questions to present the appropriate application to the user?	Must Have		
Does your system provide an easy to use and maintainable application for creating a new credential, the qualifications for each credential and required supporting documentation?	Must Have		
Does your system provide an easy to use and maintainable application for creating application approval/denial routes?	Must Have		
Does your system provide an easy to use and maintainable application for creating automatic notifications based on specific events or changes in an application status?	Must Have		

Questions for Pre-Defined Responses	Requirement Importance	Vendor's Ability to Deliver	Comments
<p>Does your system have the capability to easily integrate information to/from other systems within the NYSED network and outside? Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fingerprinting - IdentoGo, N.Y. State Department of Criminal Justice, U.S. Department of Justice • Application Process -National Student Clearing House, Parchment, Pearson, Education Testing Service (ETS), World Education Services (WES) • Customer Service – Zendesk 	Must Have		
Does your system have the functionality to handle credit card payment processing (via Elavon)?	Must Have		
Does your system provide the ability to email a secure URL with an employment verification form to an applicant's previous employers?	Must Have		
Does your system provide a report writing tool?	Must Have		
Does your system have the functionality to create templates for letters, emails and notifications and call in relevant static data?	Must Have		
Does your system have the functionality to print certificates?	Must Have		
Does your system provide case/document management for the legal review processes?	Must Have		
Does your system have the ability for NYSED users to create simple web forms (ex. Test Security Incident Report Form)?	Must Have		
Does your system offer chat/email communications (bi-directional) functionality for the authorized users and NYSED users securely within the system?	Must Have		
Does your system allow for creating distribution lists based on applicant certifications/demographics for general information or emailing, text messaging, and hard copy mailing lists?	Nice to Have		

Questions for Pre-Defined Responses	Requirement Importance	Vendor's Ability to Deliver	Comments
Is your system able to meet all requirements for handling Criminal History Record Information (CHRI)/Criminal Justice Information (CJI) in accordance with the U.S. Department of Justice/Federal Bureau of Investigation?	Must Have		
Does your system provide an audit trail for all modifications, generate, and easily display version history and audit trail logs/reports to the field level including date, modifications, deletions, and users?	Must Have		
Do your system "logs" track each audited event by: date and time; component of information system (e.g. software, hardware where event occurred; type of event; user/subject identity; and outcome (success of failure of the event)?	Must Have		
Does your system provide administrative functions such as creating users, user roles and updating dropdown values through a maintenance module?	Must Have		
Does your system offer adaptive/responsive web design?	Must Have		
Does your implementation adhere to Agile best practices?	Must Have		
Do you offer end-user training, including documentation and video support?	Must Have		
Do you offer ongoing technical support?	Must Have		
Is your system hosted in the Cloud?	Nice to Have		
Is your system offered as a Software-As-A-Service solution?	Nice to Have		
Does your system have, or will you offer Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities in the future?	Nice to Have		

Section 3. Next Steps and Key Dates

NYSED will receive and review all vendor responses to the RFI questionnaire. The RFI is a critical tool that will assist NYSED with developing next steps related to the OTI and OSPRA system modernization. It will allow for the comparison of features and functionality among various vendor solutions and allow NYSED to build a business case for moving forward with plans for a comprehensive online solution.

Note: This IS NOT a Request for Proposal or offer of contract. Information obtained may be used to develop a needs requirement upon which a future procurement might be based. If further discussion is required, or should questions arise, please contact the NYSED contact email below. Participation in this RFI is voluntary, and NYSED will not pay for the preparation of any information submitted by a respondent or for NYSED's use of that information.

Vendors are advised that if any part of their response to this RFI contains trade secrets or is submitted to NYSED by a commercial enterprise or derived from information obtained from a commercial enterprise and which, if disclosed, would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of the subject enterprise, then vendors should identify such in their response.

NYSED Contact Information:

E-mail: nysedtechresponse@nysed.gov

Questions:

All questions regarding the RFI must be submitted in writing to the above email address.

Key Dates	Day/Month/Year	Time
Release of RFI	October 22, 2024	5:00 pm EST
Questions Due from Potential Vendors	November 15, 2024	4:00 pm EST
Answers Provided by NYSED to Vendor Questions	December 4, 2024	5:00 pm EST
Responses to RFI due from Vendors	December 20, 2024	4:00 pm EST

NYSED wants to thank all vendors who take the time to provide a response to this RFI. As the agency works toward modernizing more internal systems, it is helpful to have partnership with vendors who can assist us with planning through RFI responses.