



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
FOR
INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM DATA SYSTEM**

**RFI # 33101-2113833136FIN0
April 19, 2021**

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The State of Tennessee, Department of Education (hereinafter referred to as “the Department”), issues this Request for Information (“RFI”) for the purpose of gaining information regarding web-based educational data systems. This system will be utilized to gather and maintain data related to educational records for students with disabilities. We appreciate your input and participation in this process.

Through this RFI, the state seeks to understand:

1. Vendor pricing models, including those related to development, customization, and maintenance; and
2. The capacity of vendors to meet the State’s needs for customization, timeline expectations, security, confidentiality, and customer service.

2. BACKGROUND:

Since 2015, the current IEP (“Individual Education Program”) data management system, EdPlan/EasyIEP, has served the department in the development, maintenance, storage, and monitoring/analysis of student records. This system has not only created a unified, statewide mechanism for creating and storing IEPs, but has also functioned as the primary source of data for the Department’s state and federal reporting requirements. EdPlan/EasyIEP has been built, updated, and customized to meet the needs of Tennessee’s special education teachers, students with disabilities (“SWDs”), and Department staff and currently plays an integral role in the efficient and necessary provision of services to SWDs.

The Department is currently evaluating procurement options for these services, as the current contract is set to expire on June 30, 2022. This RFI will not result in a contract award; rather, it is

gathering information that the Department will utilize in determining whether a new solicitation (i.e. RFP) is appropriate and in the best interest of the State. Specifically, the Department is seeking information for the same type of data system capable of developing, maintaining, storing, and monitoring/analyzing IEPs while ensuring that there would be no degradation in the level of service offered by the current vendor, should a new system be chosen through any future solicitations. The system will need to be customizable, as each year there are changes to state and federal requirements related to both IEP creation and data reporting as well as updated monitoring protocols for verifying statewide compliance with federal law. The system must facilitate the development of IEPs and allow users to modify active records at any time, storing all records for the duration of the contract term. The system must be capable of organizing data by multiple fields, including but not limited to state-defined date ranges, record status (e.g., active, inactive), type of program, student name, school, grade level, race, disability, placement, age, and case manager. The system must be able to generate a variety of reports containing this student data information, developed to meet the specifications of the state and accessible to system users. Similarly, an algorithm will need to be developed to pull IDs randomly based on the aforementioned fields in order to fulfill compliance monitoring requirements. In general, the system must be able to provide on-demand access to student records, effectively organize and report data, and provide tools for both compliance- and improvement-focused data analysis. Finally, the system must provide an internal mechanism for communication between the Contractor/Department users and Local Education Agency (“LEA”) users, such as a message board or other embedded messaging software.

As this system will be used by teachers, administrators, and Department members across the state to enter, monitor, and maintain data that is crucial to the well-being and educational advancement of Tennessee’s students with disabilities, the robust functionality and steadfast reliability of this system are paramount. The data system must be user friendly and entirely web-based, requiring no application specific software to be downloaded by users. It must be accessible from any major web browser (i.e., Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, etc.) from either Mac or PC to ensure that users may access the service readily, regardless of the platform their school system or organization utilizes.

Security and confidentiality are also of extreme importance regarding this system, as the data is of a sensitive nature. A potential contractor must put utmost care in the fabrication of security for this system. It is important that a liaison between the State and the Contractor be established so that needs may be addressed promptly, whether they be security related or otherwise.

3. COMMUNICATIONS:

3.1. Please submit your response to this RFI to:
Jonathan Smith, Sourcing Account Specialist
Department of General Services, Central Procurement Office
312 Rosa L. Parks Ave, Nashville, TN 37243
(615) 741-1462
Jonathan.L.Smith@tn.gov

3.2. Please feel free to contact the TN Department of Education – Special Populations Division with any questions regarding this RFI. The main point of contact will be:
Michael Holman
TN Department of Education
710 James Robertson Pkwy, Nashville TN 37243
(615) 770 - 1064
Michael.Holman@tn.gov

3.3. Please reference RFI # **33101-2113833136FIN0** with all communications to this RFI.

4. RFI SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

EVENT		TIME (Central Time Zone)	DATE (all dates are State business days)
1.	RFI Issued		4/19/21
2.	RFI Response Deadline	4:30 P.M.	4/29/21

5. GENERAL INFORMATION:

5.1. Please note that responding to this RFI is not a prerequisite for responding to any future solicitations related to this project and a response to this RFI will not create any contract rights. Responses to this RFI will become property of the State.

5.2. The information gathered during this RFI is part of an ongoing procurement. In order to prevent an unfair advantage among potential respondents, the RFI responses will not be available until after the completion of evaluation of any responses, proposals, or bids resulting from a Request for Qualifications, Request for Proposals, Invitation to Bid or other procurement method. In the event that the state chooses not to go further in the procurement process and responses are never evaluated, the responses to the procurement including the responses to the RFI, will be considered confidential by the State.

5.3. The State will not pay for any costs associated with responding to this RFI.

6. INFORMATIONAL FORMS:

The State is requesting the following information from all interested parties. Please fill out the following forms:

- a) Technical Informational Form
- b) Cost Informational Form
- c) Additional Considerations

7. Potential Scope of Service:

7.1 The Contractor shall provide implementation and setup for a web-based software system that will provide LEAs with a mechanism for creating, managing, and storing IEPs. Workstation client software must not be necessary for the operation of this software. It must be accessible from major web browsers and operable via PC or Mac devices, including mobile devices such as phones or tablets.

7.2 During implementation and setup, the Contractor shall ensure all historical data existing on the current Tennessee IEP data management system are uploaded to the Contractor's IEP system.

7.3 The Contractor shall provide hosting for all current and historical data transferred to and retained within the IEP system.

7.4 The Contractor shall provide regular, timely maintenance and support as part of an annual subscription license. The Contractor shall work in collaboration with the State to make consistent updates/upgrades and ensure the system functionality aligns with current technological advances and meets current technological demands.

7.5 The Contractor must be able to expand the functionality of the system to store other types of student records commonly maintained by the Division of Special Populations (e.g., service plans, 504 plans, educational service plans ("ESPs"), and individual learning plans ("ILPs")).

7.6 The Contractor must be able to create and house within the system customized reports (either as a regularly run/scheduled pull or on-demand query) and a customized monitoring platform that uses algorithms to pull student records.

7.7 Web-based training for both state and LEA users shall be provided by the Contractor following modifications to functionality.

7.8 The Contractor must provide on-demand support and assistance, through a primary liaison and team devoted to State activities, in order to ensure timely communication with the Department and prompt addressal of issues and concerns brought forth by users.

7.9 Programming issues that directly affect the provision of services to SWDs must be resolved within 24 hours of written notification from the State. All other system updates requested by the State must be completed on an agreed upon timeline that aligns with the specific needs and requirements of the State.

7.10 The Contractor must adhere to the State's policy that vendors shall not have access to the IEP System and the Contractor shall not access the system for purposes not explicitly stated in this scope of services.

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TECHNICAL INFORMATIONAL FORM

1. RESPONDENT LEGAL ENTITY NAME:

2. RESPONDENT CONTACT PERSON:

Name, Title:

Address:

Phone Number:

Email:

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EXPERIENCE PROVIDING SIMILAR SCOPE OF SERVICES/PRODUCTS

4. Provide a detailed description of the web-based system that would be implemented to host this platform, including the mechanisms for creating, managing, and storing IEPs and other types of student records
5. How do you plan to ensure that existing data and system functionality remain intact during migration to your platform? How long will the migration process take to complete?
6. Describe the team that will be assembled and how this team will manage large-scale development tasks, system change requests, training/technical assistance, data queries and reporting, day-to-day maintenance, and on-demand repairs in the event of system errors. How many will be on the team, who will act as the primary liaison(s) to the Department, and what will their background be with this kind of data system?
7. How will you ensure that programming issues that directly affect the provision of services to SWDs are resolved within 24 hours? What structures does the system/platform have in place to ensure that the system runs 24-hours a day, 365 days a year with minimal service interruptions and/or outages?
8. How will you ensure the security and confidentiality of all student records and personally identifiable information?
9. Provide a description of the process that will be in place to address both immediate and low priority support needs as well as long-term planning for upgrades and improvements. What kind of development cycles are in place to support timely development and deployment of both system defects department-requested updates?
10. What type of communication mechanisms does the platform have in place (e.g., chat boxes, embedded messaging) for LEA users to report errors or ask questions? What role will the team play in helping resolve issues reported by LEAs through this communication system?
11. Describe the process for system customization, including updates to processes (e.g., IEP creation), changes to the user interface, creation of reports (both for fulfilling federal requirements and supporting LEAs. Please include any estimates of the amount of time needed for customizations.

12. Describe the platform's capabilities in terms of limiting user access, both at the state and LEA level, and ensuring that all users have appropriate access for their role/responsibilities.

COST INFORMATIONAL FORM

1. Describe what pricing units you typically utilize for similar services or goods (e.g., per hour, each, etc. Include any costs associated with customization:
2. Describe the typical price range for similar services or goods
3. Describe any proposed cost saving measures.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Please provide input on alternative approaches or additional things to consider that might benefit the State: