

Request for Proposal

IT Recruiting Services

January 2021



SCHOOL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF OHIO

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I. INTRODUCTION

The School Employees Retirement System of Ohio (SERS) is requesting proposals from qualified and experienced recruiting firms that specialize in recruiting information technology (IT) professionals to provide recruitment services in order to source qualified candidates and expedite the hiring process for full-time IT position vacancies. The intent of this request for proposals (RFP) is to partner with one or more recruiting firms to provide qualified candidates for SERS to consider at a competitive cost per hire.

II. BACKGROUND

SERS is a statewide defined benefit retirement system for non-certificated persons employed by the public schools within the state's cities, villages and counties, as well as local districts, vocational and technical schools, community colleges, and The University of Akron. SERS provides service retirement, disability and survivor benefits, and access to healthcare coverage for benefit recipients and their dependents. General administration and management of the plan is vested in the Retirement Board established under [Chapter 3309](#) of the Ohio Revised Code.

SERS' IT Department leads and manages all information technology needs and capabilities at SERS. To provide these services, the department has three sections:

- IT Services supports the SERS business units with business analysis services to help make their processes more efficient and effective using SERS Member Administration Retirement Technology (SMART). They also perform quality assurance services to ensure the quality of impending changes to SMART. This team also manages IT service demands by collaborating with the business partners on the prioritization of IT requests. This section also develops and supports the technical aspects of SERS' intranet.
- Application Development manages and accomplishes projects for enhancing SERS' line of business application for pension administration, resolving issues within or related to SMART. The application developers rely upon Microsoft based software development tools and associated software development methodologies to implement new enhancements and resolve issues.
- IT Operations is responsible for delivering highly reliable, available, and secure technical infrastructure systems. These systems include, but are not limited to, the hardware, software, networking, cloud technology, and other devices needed for SERS employees to conduct SERS business. The section also provides Service Desk support and telecommunication services, administers the databases containing member and retiree

information, and collaborates with the Information Security (IS) team to implement security policies and techniques to protect SERS data.

Links are available for the most recent [SERS Comprehensive Annual Financial Report](#).

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

SERS is seeking a qualified vendor to provide recruitment services in order to source qualified candidates and expedite the hiring process for current and future full-time IT position vacancies. The intent of this RFP is to partner with one or more recruiting firms to provide qualified candidates for SERS to consider at a competitive cost per hire. Direct hire arrangements are preferred. However, SERS will consider contract to hire candidates. During this engagement, when appropriate, SERS reserves the right to conduct its own recruiting efforts including hiring in parallel to this partner or partners.

Services shall include:

- Meeting with SERS to obtain information regarding partnership expectations, responsibilities of the IT Department, team member's roles and salary structure, recruiting challenges, and position requirements.
- Sourcing and screening viable candidates for SERS consideration when SERS has vacant IT positions. Screening should include face to face or video conference with the candidate.
- Providing SERS a diverse pool of viable candidates for SERS consideration after initial screening.
- Coordinating and scheduling candidate interviews with SERS employees.
- SERS may purpose additional tasks or projects as deemed necessary. Any additional services shall be compensated as agreed upon in a contract with SERS.

The term of this engagement shall be for a period of one year, with the possibility of future extensions.

SERS will consider only proposals for the services as described above. **Responses submitted for other services will not be considered.**

IV. PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

A. Intent to Respond

If the vendor intends to respond to this RFP, a Notice of Intent to do so should be sent to SERS by January 13, 2021. The Notice should be sent by email to the SERS contact listed in Paragraph C. below, and contain the vendor's name, its intent to respond, the name of a contact person and the contact person's telephone number, email and fax number. Submitting this Notice will not

obligate a vendor to submit a Response nor be a prerequisite for submitting a Response, but will allow SERS to send out any necessary information to interested vendors.

B. Response Deadline

The completed Response must be received by **January 29, 2021 4:00 p.m., Eastern Time.** Responses received after the Response deadline will not be considered.

C. Delivery

Contact person for all responses, and communications:

Director of Administrative Services
Administrative Services Department
School Employees Retirement System
300 East Broad Street, Suite 100
Columbus, OH 43215
HRProcure@ohsers.org
Telephone: 614-340-2255

Response should be sent via email to the contact person listed above. Faxed transmissions are not acceptable and will not be considered.

D. Response Documents

All of the following documents must be submitted together and in the order listed.

1. A Cover Letter submitting the vendor's Response on the vendor's letterhead signed by at least one individual who is authorized to bind the vendor contractually.
2. The Questionnaire in Appendix A. with the question and/or request duplicated in the Response before the answer or response.

E. Submitted Responses

Any Response submitted will become the property of SERS. SERS reserves the right to retain all Responses submitted, and use any information contained in a Response except as otherwise prohibited by law. **All Responses and the contents thereof will be deemed to be a public record which is open to public inspection after a vendor has been selected and contract has been executed, if any.** A vendor may include one additional copy of its Response with any proprietary trade secret information redacted and marked as such with a brief written basis as to why it believes the information is protected from disclosure. In the event that SERS receives a public records request to which, in SERS' sole discretion, any of a vendor's materials are responsive, SERS

may release the vendor's redacted materials, or in the event no redacted materials are submitted, the vendor's unredacted materials without notice to the vendor. In the event any of the vendor's redactions are challenged, the vendor shall have sole responsibility to defend such redactions at its cost and expense. SERS will not institute any legal action to defend any of vendor's redactions, but will notify the vendor of such challenges.

F. Communications with SERS

Vendors which intend to submit a Response should not contact any member of SERS Staff or members of the Retirement Board. An exception to this rule applies to vendors who currently do business with SERS, but any contact made by such vendor(s) with persons should be limited to that business, and should not relate to this RFP.

G. Questions Relating to this RFP

All questions concerning this RFP must be received in writing by fax or email by the Contact person by **January 13, 2021 , 4:00 p.m., Eastern Time**. Answers to only faxed or emailed questions received by this deadline will be available to all vendors by a posting at www.ohsers.org. Questions submitted after 4 p.m. [date and time] or other than by fax or email will not be considered.

V. SELECTION PROCESS

SERS staff will evaluate all timely and complete Responses. SERS reserves the right to request that any Response be clarified or supplemented.

After evaluation of the submitted Responses, at its sole discretion SERS Staff will select a group of final candidates. SERS will notify vendors not selected as final candidates that they are no longer under consideration.

SERS anticipates that final candidates will be asked to participate in a virtual presentation of their proposal. SERS will determine, based on the submitted responses, whether presentations are necessary and reserves the right to cancel presentations at any time.

SERS staff will evaluate the selected finalists based on their Response and any given presentation, and will select the vendor or vendors for the requested services. Vendors not selected will be notified by SERS that they are no longer under consideration after SERS has contracted with selected vendor(s).

VI. TENTATIVE TIME TABLE

The following is the tentative time schedule for SERS' search for vendors to provide the requested services. All dates are subject to modification by SERS without prior notice.

Issuance of RFP:	January 4, 2021
Question Deadline:	January 13, 2021
Response to Written Questions:	January 15, 2021
RFP Response Deadline:	January 29, 2021
Projected Commencement Date:	February 2021

The vendor(s) selected must enter into a contract.

VII. CRITERIA

SERS will evaluate submitted proposals based on the following considerations:

- Firm's Relevant experience providing technical recruiting services to organizations of similar size and scope with similar public sector and industry considerations
- Evaluation of recruiting methodology and approach to forming partnership
- Qualification of staff members who would be assigned to SERS account
- Recommendations by references
- Proposed fee structure

VIII. QUESTIONNAIRE

Vendors must complete the Questionnaire appearing in Appendix A. Responses to the questions should repeat the question and be answered in order.

IX. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

SERS makes no representations or warranties, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy or completeness of the information in the RFP and nothing contained herein is or shall be relied upon as a promise or representation, whether as to the past or the future. The RFP does not purport to contain all of the information that may be required to evaluate the RFP and any recipient hereof should conduct its own independent analysis of SERS and the data contained or referenced herein. SERS does not anticipate updating or otherwise revising the RFP. However, this RFP may be withdrawn, modified, or re-circulated at any time at the sole discretion of SERS.

SERS reserves the right, at its sole discretion and without giving reasons or notice, at any time and in any respect, to alter these procedures, to change and alter any and all criteria, to terminate discussions, to accept or reject any Response, in whole or in part, to negotiate modifications or revisions to a Response and to negotiate with any one or more respondents to the RFP.

SERS is not and will not be under any obligation to accept, review or consider any Response to the RFP, and is not and will not be under any obligation to accept the lowest offer submitted or any offer at all. SERS is not and will not be under any obligation to any recipient of, or any respondent to, the RFP except as expressly stated in any binding agreement ultimately entered into with one or more parties, either as part of this RFP process, or otherwise. Any decision to enter into a binding agreement with a respondent to this RFP is in SERS' sole discretion.

This RFP is not an offer but a request to receive a Response. SERS will consider a Response as an offer to develop an agreement based upon the contents of the Response. Respondents agree that the contents of their Responses are valid for one year from the date of submission. SERS will not be liable for any cost incurred in the preparation of a Response and will not reimburse any respondents for their submission. Expenses related to the production of a Response are the sole responsibility of the respondent.

Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Responses to the following questions should repeat the question and be answered in order.

A. Vendor

1. Name of the principal(s) of the firm.
2. Name, telephone number, and email address of a representative of the firm authorized to discuss the proposal.
3. Addresses of all offices of the firm. Identify the office that will fulfill this agreement.
4. Number of employees of the firm.
5. Number of years in business under current name and any past corporate names or affiliations.
6. Describe your firm and its capabilities and experience providing technical recruiting services. List any qualities that distinguish your firm from competitors.
7. Provide a minimum of two (2) client references for similar services performed, preferably services performed for public sector clients.

B. Personnel

1. Provide professional profiles of the firm's principals and all proposed team members who would be assigned to SERS.

C. Proposed Service

1. Describe the firm's methodology and approach to sourcing a diverse pool of qualified IT candidates.
2. Describe the firm's candidate screening process.
3. Describe the firm's approach to building a long-term recruiting partnership with SERS.
4. Provide a sample contract that your firm intends to submit if selected for this engagement.

D. Standards of Conduct

1. Does the firm have a firm written code of conduct or set of standards for professional behavior? If so, attach a copy and state how they are monitored and enforced.
2. Does the firm have a written anti-discrimination policy? If so, attach a copy and state how the policy is monitored and enforced.
3. How does the firm identify and manage conflicts of interest?
4. Are there any potential conflicts of interest that the firm would have in providing the requested services to SERS? If yes, explain.
5. List and describe any relationships and/or contacts the firm or its officers or employees have had with any SERS Retirement Board member and/or staff member within the last 12 months.
6. Has the firm or any officer or employee given any remuneration or anything of value directly or indirectly to SERS or any of its Retirement Board members, officers, or employees? If yes, identify the recipient and remuneration or thing of value. Additional information on the Ohio ethics law in this area may be found at: http://ethics.ohio.gov/education/factsheets/doing_business_with_retirement_systems_in_ohio.pdf.
7. Has the firm or any officer, principal or employee given any remuneration or anything of value such as a finder's fee, cash solicitation fee, or fee for consulting, lobbying or otherwise, in connection with this RFP? If yes, identify the recipient and remuneration or thing of value.
8. Within the last five (5) years:
 - a. Has the firm, or any officer or employee of the firm been a defending party in a legal proceeding before a court related to the provision of services?
 - b. Has the firm, or any officer or employee been the subject of a governmental regulatory agency inquiry, investigation, or charge?
 - c. Has the firm submitted a claim to the firm liability insurance carrier involving the type of services sought under this RFP?

If yes to any of the above, describe the event and the current status or resolution; include any case citation.

E. FEES

1. Provide the vendor's fee for the proposed contingent recruiting services that includes exercising option to directly hire a candidate as an employee of SERS. If contract to hire services are also available, please provide the associated fee information.
2. Include any travel expenses associated with the fee.
3. Once finalists are selected, fees may be subject to a "best and final" offer process to be determined at the discretion of SERS. The fee proposal must expressly state that the proposed fees are guaranteed for the term of any resulting contract.