



CITY OF BOSTON WORKER EMPOWERMENT CABINET

Request for Qualifications
Consultant for Boston's DigLit Initiative

ISSUE DATE	May 21, 2024
PROPOSALS DUE	June 24, 2024 BY: 5:00PM EST

Inquiries: tatiana.joyce@boston.gov

*Michelle Wu, Mayor
Trinh Nguyen, Chief of Worker Empowerment*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RFQ Timeline	2
I. Overview	3
II. Project Scope	4
III. Deliverables, Reporting, Timeline	5
Timeline	5
Deliverables	5
Reporting	6
IV. Proposal Guidelines	6
V. Terms of Procurement	7
Application Deadline	7
Submission of Inquiries	8
Proposal Specifications	8
Submission of Proposal	9
Evaluation of Proposals	11
Exhibits	13
Exhibit A: Consultant Fee Proposal Form	13
Exhibit B	15
Exhibit C: Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action	16
Exhibit D: Certification of Compliance with Laws	17

RFQ TIMELINE

Request for Qualifications Issue Website: boston.gov/owd-grantmaking	May 21, 2024
Submittal of Questions E-mail: tatiana.joyce@boston.gov	June 14, 2024 by 5:00 pm
Response to RFQ Due	June 24, 2024, by 5:00 PM
Notification of Selection	July 2, 2024, by 5:00 PM
Anticipated Contract Start Date	July 8, 2024

Section I. OVERVIEW

Since March 2020, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (OWD) has extensively researched the digital infrastructure and digital learning systems of Boston's Adult Basic Education (ABE) and workforce development programs. A 2021 OWD survey of approximately 65 ABE and workforce training programs that provide education and training opportunities to some of the most underserved communities in Boston found that access to digital infrastructure (48%), internet access (48%), and digital literacy skills training (38%) are significant challenges for these programs.¹ Although our survey findings are focused on the workforce development and ABE sectors in Boston, it is crucial to recognize that these sectors play a pivotal role in addressing the digital literacy needs of low-skilled adults. The participants they serve intersect with the broader demographic of approximately 32 million U.S. adults lacking digital literacy skills, as highlighted by the Department of Education in 2018.² Moreover, a recent report from the National Skills Coalition (NSC) emphasizes the critical importance of digital literacy for employment, revealing that, despite 92% of jobs requiring digital skills, one-third of workers lack the foundational digital skills necessary for success in today's job market.³

In response, OWD's strategic priority has been set to invest in digital capabilities, skills delivery, and technological infrastructure of education and training providers. This commitment involves extensive technical assistance, peer support, and resource mobilization, facilitated by the establishment of the Boston Digital Literacy (DigLit) Initiative. DigLit is a multi-component capacity-building project that strives to achieve three key objectives: 1) ensure workforce development programs have the infrastructure and competencies to deliver digital literacy instruction effectively; 2) support the integration of digital technologies into curricula, instructional practices, and service provision; and 3) enhance technology-mediated learning systems, such as blended, hybrid, and remote training program models.

In February 2021, OWD initiated a pilot phase of the DigLit initiative aimed at strengthening digital literacy programs in 25 ABE (Adult Basic Education) programs. This endeavor, supported by ongoing coaching, professional development, and flexible funding, yielded significant positive results for the participating providers. The pilot concluded successfully in October 2023.

In January 2024, the City of Boston Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (OWD) secured \$1,000,000 in Community Project Funding, thanks to Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley's sponsorship. This funding aims to expand the initiative to encompass 15 to 20 occupational training providers within the city. To facilitate this expansion, OWD is issuing a Request for Qualifications to enlist a consultant. The consultant's role will involve working with this new cohort of training providers, offering coaching, facilitating planning sessions, and providing implementation support, with the aim of improving the capacity of training providers to deliver digital literacy skills.

¹ Unpublished OWD Survey of grantees

² Mamedova, S., & Pawlowski, E. (2018, May 29). A description of U.S. adults who are not digitally literate.

³ National Skills Coalition. (2023, March 22). Closing the digital skill divide.

<https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/closing-the-digital-skill-divide/#:~:text=The%20analysis%20finds%20that%2092,a%20significant%20digital%20skill%20divid>

The City of Boston will provide up to a maximum of \$305,000 in funding for the execution of this project.

Section II. OBJECTIVES

The Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development (OWD) is seeking a consultant with significant expertise in implementing education technology and digital literacy capacity-building initiatives to complete the following deliverables:

- 1) Collaborate with OWD to identify and select 15-20 occupational training programs for participation in the initiative via a competitive procurement process.
- 2) Assign a coach to each program and foster professional peer learning through a community of practice.
- 3) Utilize coaching to deploy a validated Digital Needs Assessment (DNA) tool, enabling programs to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, and requirements in technology integration, digital infrastructure, staff digital literacy, and practices for enhancing students’ digital skills.
- 4) Assist programs in developing and executing action plans, with the guidance of a dedicated coach, to address their priority needs and implement strategies effectively.
- 5) Implement a validated and streamlined approach to integrating digital literacy skills, with a focus on incorporating innovative practices in digital literacy instruction.

Section III. DELIVERABLES, REPORTING, TIMELINE

The consultant will work in close partnership with the Office of Workforce Development on this project. Funded projects should start on or about July 8, 2024, and conclude on June 8, 2026.

RFQ Released	May 21, 2024
Responses Due	June 24, 2024
Project Start	July 8, 2024
Project End	June 8, 2026

Awarded grantees will work with OWD during the contracting phase to determine specific deliverables and outcome indicators based on the amount awarded and the scope of work. OWD will monitor and evaluate selected consultant to ensure program compliance and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the deliverables.

Section IV: PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Please respond to the following in your technical narrative:

1. Organizational Background (including the documents provided and the following details). In 1-2 pages, please describe:

- Organization's Mission and Vision
- Areas of Specialization
- Organizational History
- Honors and Awards
- Names of the principal officers and key staff of the organization. Describe their area of expertise and what role they will perform in the project.
- Identification of the major consultants, if used
- Description of connections and collaborations of partners

2. Technical Proposal. In 1-2 pages, please describe how you would implement the defined scope of work. Please include:

- The plan for working with OWD on recruiting, monitoring, supporting, evaluating, and coaching programs.
- The process by which coaches will work with training provider throughout the engagement.
- The process for implementing a validated digital literacy/digitally-supported learning based needs assessment action plan tool.
- The process and approach for implementing an evidence and standards-based approach for integrating technology and digital literacy into training programs.
- A timeline for project activities
- Bidders are expected to monitor progress on the proposed activities and evaluate outcomes. This should include specific processes and outcome indicators to measure progress toward the delivery of activities and achievement of outcomes. Indicators that could be monitored include:
 - *Individual:* Staff familiarity with the purpose and process of developing EdTech routines as a method for integrating digital skill building.
 - *Individual:* Increased knowledge and self-efficacy in delivering digital literacy skills.
 - *Organizational:* Achievement of planned milestones (percentage of planned milestones or actions rated high or complete).
 - *Organizational:* Increased capacity to institutionalize digital literacy skills into training
 - *Organizational:* Increased competitiveness for grant funding
 - *Organizational:* Greater standardization and uniform integration of technology and digital-supported learning practices across instructors within the program
 - *Community-Level:* Strengthened connections between grantees due to community of practice participation.

3. Organization's Capacity: In 1-2 pages, please provide:

- A description of prior experience with non-profit clients and processes for projects of similar scale and complexity in implementing education technology and digital literacy capacity-

building initiatives; the capacity to function and operate all aspects of providing services to the programs; and the professional qualifications of individuals assigned to the project as demonstrated in the Technical Proposal.

Note: Please cite Massachusetts specific experience, including experience with state and local agencies and their funding standards as possible.

- A description of previous collaboration experiences in providing related services and outcomes achieved by the collaboration.
- What are technical resources that the consultant will use to support/provide TA to program?
 - What research underpins these resources, what evidence indicates that the resources are successful, and how have they been deployed in the past?

4. Fee Proposal and Required Forms/Attachments

Provide a detailed fee proposal for all activities, fees, and expenses, including hourly rate, not to exceed **\$305,000** (TO BE SUBMITTED IN A SEPARATE EMAIL TO ABIGAIL CROSS, abigail.cross@boston.gov, MARKED AS EXHIBIT A).

6. Provide project references, including a list of past project examples.

7. Please included resumes of each member of the consultant team as an attachment.

Section V. TERMS OF PROCUREMENT

APPLICATION DEADLINE

OWD must receive responses to this RFQ by **Monday, June 24, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.**

Technical (narrative) proposals must be submitted via Box File Submission to:

Tatiana Joyce, Assistant Deputy Director of Grants and Procurement
Mayor's Office of Workforce Development

tatiana.joyce@boston.gov

Box Link Submission: <https://bit.ly/DigLitRFQ>

Price proposals must be submitted separately via email to:

Abigail Cross
Assistant Deputy Director, Special Initiatives & Grants Management
Office of Workforce Development

abigail.cross@boston.gov

It is the sole responsibility of the responder to ensure their proposal is complete and submitted on time. No responses will be accepted after the due date and time. OWD reserves the right to reject any

or all bids. The award of a contract for services requested by this RFQ shall be subject to the approval of the Board of the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC) of Boston.

SUBMISSION OF INQUIRIES

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be submitted in writing to: Tatiana Joyce, Assistant Deputy Director of Grants and Procurement, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, tatiana.joyce@boston.gov. Phone calls will not be accepted. The deadline to submit questions is **June 14, 2024, by 5:00 PM.**

Responses to questions received during the procurement process will be posted on the OWD website at **boston.gov/owd-grantmaking**. It is the bidders' responsibility to check the website for updates and postings.

OWD is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS

Applicants should ensure their proposals comply with the following requirements:

- A response to each section of the RFQ is required and should follow the guidelines and sequences specified in the Proposal Guidelines section (Section IV). Each section should be labeled.
- Every section of the Request for Qualifications should be completed in full. If funded, the proposal will provide the basis for contract negotiations, and final negotiated terms will be incorporated within the contract as the Statement of Work.
- Proposals should be typewritten, double-spaced, in 12-point Arial font with one-inch margins.
- The proposal narrative may not exceed 6 pages. The page limit does not include the cover sheet, budget forms, or any required attachments like resumes.
- Some sections require appended material. All forms should be completed in full.
- **Fee proposals must be submitted separately from the technical (narrative) proposals.** Absolutely no responses will be accepted after the due date and time. OWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids. The award of a contract for services requested by this RFQ shall be subject to the approval of the EDIC Board.

NOTE: The checkboxes in this section may be used as a tool to ensure each section of the proposal is included and complete.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

This section provides an overview of the process for submitting your proposal in response to this RFQ. Responders are strongly advised to read this section in its entirety since failure to comply with the requirements can result in disqualification.

a. Checklist

This checklist is for your use, to make sure that you are submitting everything that is required in your proposal. You do not need to include the checklist with your proposal, but please use the checklist before submitting your proposal to be sure your proposal is complete.

Sections A and B identify the items that are required to reply to the technical proposal and the price proposal, respectively.

There are three columns for each item listed:

- RFQ Section - this is where you can find details in the RFQ document for each item listed on the checklist.
- Form (Y/N) – this identifies items on the checklist that have a form and those which do not.
- Completed – Use this box to check off the items that have been completed.

The last section, Section C, provides a final check to make sure that you are not making any mistakes that would cause your proposal to be eliminated.

	RFQ Section	Form (Y/N)	Completed (✓)
<i>A. Required Items for Technical Proposal</i>			
1. Organizational Background	IV.1	N	
2. Technical Proposal	IV.2	N	
3. Organization’s Capacity	IV.3	N	
4. Letters of Support (Not Required)	IV.5	N	
5. Project References and Resumes	IV.6 and IV. 7	N	
6. Certification of Non-Collusion	V.	Y	

7. Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action	V.	Y	
8. Certificate of Compliance with Laws	V.	Y	
<i>B. Required Items for Price Proposal</i>			
1. Consultant Fee Proposal Form	V.	Y	
<i>C. Final Review</i>	YES	NO	
1. Did you submit the proposal before the deadline?			
2. Did you submit separate technical and price proposals? Price proposals should be sent to abigail.cross@boston.gov; Technical [narrative] proposals should be submitted via box link - https://bit.ly/DigLitRFQ .			
3. Did you review all standard contract forms? The selected firm will be required to sign all forms at contract award, and should not expect to incorporate changes.			

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

a. Evaluation of Proposals

The criteria we are using for judging the strength of the technical proposal are outlined below. Each proposal will be evaluated in accordance with [M.G.L. c. 30B, sec. 6](#).

b. Minimum Evaluation Criteria

All proposals received by OWD will first be reviewed to determine whether the proposal meets all minimum criteria identified in the RFQ. Minimum criteria are found in the Checklist under 'Submission of Proposal'

For a proposal to meet all minimum criteria, a responder must unconditionally be able to check each item as 'Completed' for Sections A and B and 'Yes' for each item in Section C. Minimum evaluation criteria reflect those standards or attributes that OWD considers essential to the performance of the contract.

c. Comparative Evaluation Criteria

Proposals that have met all minimum evaluation criteria will be evaluated according to the comparative evaluation criteria that follow in this section. After reviewing, the evaluation team will prepare written evaluations for each proposal. The evaluators will assign a rating of 'highly advantageous,' 'advantageous,' or 'not advantageous' to each criterion.

For each section outlined below:

- Evaluators will view a proposal as being 'highly advantageous' if it meets all the listed requirements.
- A proposal will be considered advantageous if it meets most of the listed requirements.
- A proposal will be viewed as 'not advantageous' if it fails to meet most of the listed requirements.

The team will use the comparative evaluation criteria to evaluate each responder's overall qualifications. All comparative evaluation ratings will be determined by the evaluation team. Price proposals will be evaluated separately from the technical proposals. The evaluation team will not see the price proposals until after the technical evaluations are complete. Service and supplier diversity will be a vital part of our procurement process and will be considered when selecting a consultant.

The following criteria will be used to rate the proposals:

1. **Organizational Background, Capacity, and Project References:** The proposal demonstrates that the project team assembled has significant experience with relevant projects. More than 10 years of experience will be considered highly advantageous, five to nine years of experience with project reference will be considered advantageous, less than 5 years of experience will be considered not advantageous.
2. **Technical Proposal:** The project proposal demonstrates an extensive and thorough understanding of the scope of services and provides a creative approach to the requirements of this RFQ; provides a comprehensive and well-organized work plan to deliver on the proposed approach and recommends a well-conceived and/or includes innovative work items which supplement the scope of services as outlined in this RFQ. OWD seeks an applicant that has demonstrated experience

with supporting the needs of the target population with research-based tools within the context of a relevant multi year project the proposal.

3. Fee Proposal (TO BE SUBMITTED IN A SEPARATE EMAIL TO ABIGAIL CROSS, abigail.cross@boston.gov, MARKED AS EXHIBIT A) and Required Forms/Attachments (SEE EXHIBITS B, C, and D): Responder's price proposal meets budget requirements and provides a detailed narrative proposed budget aligns with the value of proposed evaluation.

OWD reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive or modify any requirement contained in this RFQ, to amend without consultation any proposal, and to affect any agreement deemed to be in the best interest of the City of Boston and its residents. OWD will determine the most advantageous proposal from a responsible and responsive proposer, taking into consideration the price and all evaluation criteria set forth in the RFQ.

Exhibits

EXHIBIT A: CONSULTANT FEE PROPOSAL FORM

EXHIBIT A: CONSULTANT FEE PROPOSAL FORM	
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This form must be submitted in a separate email labeled FEE PROPOSAL and sent to the following OWD staff person:

Abigail Cross
Assistant Deputy Director, Special Initiatives & Grants Management
Office of Workforce Development
abigail.cross@boston.gov

SUBMITTED BY:

NAME	
FIRM	
ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE / FAX	

Under the conditions set forth by the OWD, the accompanying proposal is submitted to provide Consultant Services.

The total fee proposal is \$ _____

FEE PROPOSAL FORM (cont.)

Consultant Level	Staff	Name/Job	Hourly Rate	Billing	Estimated Number of Hours

Total Estimated Expenses \$ _____

EXHIBIT B

CERTIFICATION OF NON-COLLUSION

The undersigned certifies under penalties of perjury that this bid, or proposal has been made and submitted in good faith and without collusion or fraud with any other person. As used in this certification, the word "person" shall mean any natural person, business, partnership, corporation, union, committee, club, or other organization, entity, or group of individuals.

(Signature of the individual submitting proposal)

(Name of business)

EXHIBIT C
NONDISCRIMINATION AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action

The Consultant agrees:

1. The Consultant shall not, in connection with the services under this Contract, discriminate by segregation or otherwise against any employee or applicant for employment based on race, color, creed, national origin, age, sex or sexual preference and shall undertake affirmative action measures designed to guarantee and effectuate equal employment opportunity for all persons.
2. The Consultant shall provide information and reports requested by OWD pertaining to its obligations hereunder and will permit access to its facilities and any books, records, accounts or other sources of information which may be determined by OWD to affect the Consultant's obligations.
3. The Consultant shall comply with all federal and state laws pertaining to civil rights and equal opportunity including executive orders and rules and regulations of appropriate federal and state agencies unless otherwise exempt therein.
4. The Consultant's non-compliance with the provisions hereof shall constitute a material breach of this Contract, for which EDIC may, in its discretion, upon failure to cure said breach within thirty (30) days of written notice thereof, terminate this Contract.
5. The Consultant shall indemnify and save harmless EDIC and OWD from any claims and demands of third persons resulting from the Consultant's non-compliance with any provisions hereof.

Signed

By:

Title:

Date:

EXHIBIT D
CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

Certificate of Compliance with Laws

Massachusetts Employment Security Law

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 151 A, §19A(b), the undersigned hereby certifies under the penalties of perjury the Consultant, with Department of Career Services (DCS) ID Number _____ has complied with all laws of the Commonwealth relating to unemployment compensation contributions and payments in lieu of contributions.

Compliance may be certified if the Consultant has entered into and is complying with a repayment agreement satisfactory to the Commissioner of DET, or if there is a pending adjudicatory proceeding or court action contesting the amount due pursuant to M.G.L. c. 151 A, §19A(c).

Massachusetts Child Care Law

Pursuant to Chapter 521 of the Massachusetts Acts of 1990, as amended by Chapter 329 of the Massachusetts Acts of 1991, the undersigned hereby certifies that the Consultant:

1. _____ employs fewer than fifty (50) full-time employees; or
2. _____ offers either a dependent care assistance program or a cafeteria plans whose benefits include a dependent care assistance program; or
3. _____ offers child care tuition assistance, or on-site or near-site subsidized child care placements.

Revenue Enforcement Protection Program

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 62C, §49A, the undersigned hereby certifies that the Consultant's Social Security or Federal Identification No. is _____, and that to the best of his/her knowledge and belief, the Consultant has filed all state tax returns and paid all state taxes required by law.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2023.

BY: _____