

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
#CAP 2012-002**

**APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM DIAGNOSTIC:
ATLANTIC PROVINCES**



Council of Atlantic Premiers' Secretariat

SECTION 1: SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMATION

ISSUE DATE: October 15, 2012

**CLOSING DATE FOR VENDOR RESPONSE:
November 5, 2012 at 4:30 p.m., Atlantic Standard Time**

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PLEASE READ THE RFP VERY CAREFULLY TO ENSURE ALL REQUIREMENTS ARE MET.

2.0 ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The following terms will apply to this Request for Proposals and to any subsequent contract.

2.1 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL TERMINOLOGY

BUSINESS DAY	Any day other than Saturday, Sunday or statutory holiday.
CONTRACTOR/SUPPLIER	The successful proponent to this RFP who enters into a written contract with the Council of Atlantic Premiers' Secretariat acting on behalf of the Atlantic Workforce Partnership.
AWP	Atlantic Workforce Partnership.
RFP	Request for Proposals.
SECRETARIAT	Council of Atlantic Premiers' (CAP) Secretariat (acting on behalf of the Atlantic Workforce Partnership).
PROPONENT/VENDOR	An individual or a company that submits, or intends to submit, a proposal in response to this Request for Proposals.
MUST/REQUIRED/ SHALL/WILL	A requirement which must be met in order for the Proposal to receive consideration.
SHOULD/DESIRABLE/MAY	A requirement having a significant degree of importance to the objectives of the Request for Proposals.

3.0 GENERAL CONDITIONS

3.1 STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This Request for Proposals is subject to the Procurement Practices (April 2010) of the Council of Atlantic Premiers' (CAP) Secretariat, who is operating on behalf of the Atlantic Workforce Partnership.

This RFP will be conducted in accordance with the Atlantic Procurement Agreement.

3.2 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

This Request for Proposals may contain mandatory requirements. **Proposals not meeting all mandatory requirements will be rejected without further consideration.**

3.3 CONDITIONS RIGHT TO AMEND

The Secretariat reserves the right to amend or supplement the RFP, giving equal information and cooperation by way of issued addendum to all proponents as a result of any such amendment.

3.4 ADDITIONAL PHASES OF WORK

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to obtain solicitations from researchers on performing the necessary work of delivering an apprenticeship diagnostic (high level overview) paper describing the system. If additional phases of work are required, the Council of Atlantic Premiers' (CAP) Secretariat reserves the right to amend any contract that may emerge from this RFP to complete these phases of

the project. The Secretariat also reserves the right to issue a subsequent tender to address any of these additional phases. The decision whether to amend an existing contract and/or to issue a subsequent tender is at the sole discretion of the Secretariat.

3.5 PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Material, data and information accessed or provided by the Secretariat and used in the preparation of the proposals is confidential and the property of the Secretariat.

3.6 CHANGES TO PROPOSAL WORDING

There will be no changes in the wording of the proposal after submission and no words or comments shall be added to the general conditions or detailed specifications unless requested by the Secretariat for purposes of clarification.

3.7 VENDOR INCURRED COSTS

All costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of proposals in any way whatsoever shall be wholly absorbed by the Vendor.

3.8 INDEMNITY

The vendor will indemnify and save harmless the Secretariat from and against all claims, demands, losses, damages, costs and expenses made against or incurred, suffered or sustained by the Secretariat at any time or times (either before or after the expiration or sooner termination of this agreement) where the same or any of them are based upon or arise out of or from anything done or omitted to be done by the vendor or by any servant, employee, officer, director or subcontractor of the vendor pursuant to the contract.

3.9 ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSALS

The Council of Atlantic Premiers' (CAP) Secretariat, acting on behalf of the Atlantic Workforce Partnership, is not bound to accept the lowest price or any proposal of those submitted. Proposals will be assessed in light of the evaluation criteria.

Subsequent to the submission of Statements for Proposals, interviews and negotiations may be conducted with some of the proponents, but there shall be no obligation to receive further information, whether in writing or oral, from any proponent. The Secretariat shall not be obligated in any manner to any proponent whatsoever until a written agreement has been duly executed relating to an approved proposal.

3.10 EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

A committee formed for that purpose will evaluate all acceptable proposals. The right is reserved to make an award based directly on the proposals submitted or to negotiate further with one or more proponents.

3.11 DEMONSTRATED EXPERTISE

The proponent must possess inherent knowledge of, and clearly demonstrate significant experience working with, the apprenticeship system in the Atlantic provinces or another apprenticeship system in another Canadian jurisdiction.

3.12 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Proponents may be requested to demonstrate financial stability during the evaluation process.

3.13 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Proposals may contain additional information. If alternative solutions are offered, submit the information in the same format as a separate proposal.

3.14 ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Unless otherwise stated by the proponent, all terms and conditions of this RFP document are assumed to be accepted and incorporated in the proponent's submission.

3.15 VALIDITY PERIOD

Proposals **must** be open for acceptance for at least 90 days after the closing date. Upon acceptance, prices will be firm for the entire contract period unless otherwise specified.

3.16 PROPOSAL SELECTION

Once a decision has been made, the successful vendor will be notified by the Secretariat. The committee will treat all proposals with strict confidentiality.

3.17 NEWS RELEASES

Vendors shall not make news releases concerning the RFP or the awarding of the same without the written consent of the Secretariat and then only in coordination with the Secretariat.

3.18 CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY

3.18.1 This document, or any portion thereof, may not be used for any purpose other than the submission of proposals.

3.18.2 The vendor must agree to maintain security standards consistent with security policies of the Secretariat. These include strict control of access to data and maintaining confidentiality of information gained while carrying out their duties.

3.18.3 Information obtained by the vendor as a result of participation in this project is confidential and must not be disclosed without written authorization from the Secretariat.

3.19 CONTRACT CANCELLATION

The contract may be cancelled for, but not limited to, the following reasons.

If the contractor:

- defaults in the observance of any of the conditions contained in the contract or specifications;
- has become insolvent;
- has committed an act of bankruptcy.

If the Secretariat (AWP):

- cancels the budget allocation for this particular project.

3.20 NEGOTIATION DELAY

If a written contract cannot be negotiated within thirty (30) days of notification to the designated vendor, the Secretariat may, in its sole discretion at any time thereafter, terminate negotiations with that vendor and either negotiate a contract with another vendor of its choice or choose to terminate the RFP process and not enter into a contract with any of the vendors.

3.21 CONTRACT FOR SERVICES

Written notice of acceptance of a proposal by the Secretariat, and the subsequent full execution of a written contract, will constitute a contract for the services. No proponent will acquire any legal or equitable rights or privileges relative to the services until the occurrence of both such events.

3.22 COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

The vendor shall give all the notices and obtain all the licenses and permits required to perform the work. The vendor shall comply with all the laws applicable to the work or the performance of the contract.

3.23 CONFLICT OF INTREST

The Council of Atlantic Premiers' (CAP) Secretariat reserves the right to disqualify any proponent that in the Secretariat's sole opinion has an actual or potential conflict of interest or an unfair advantage, whether existing now or is likely to arise in the future, or may permit the proponent to continue and impose such terms and conditions, as the Secretariat in its sole discretion may require.

Proponents are required to disclose, to the RFP contacts, any potential or perceived conflict of interest issues prior to RFP closing date and time.

3.24 SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Any intellectual property arising from the performance of the work under the contract will vest with the Council of Atlantic Premiers' (CAP) Secretariat.

The Council of Atlantic Premiers' (CAP) Secretariat will **not** provide an office for the completion of this project.

3.25 DEBRIEFING

Unsuccessful proponents may request a debriefing meeting with the evaluation committee following execution of a contract with the successful proponent.

4.0 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

4.1 ELECTRONIC COPY

Each proponent can submit a copy of their proposal by electronic mail to Brad Hodgins, Regional Coordinator, CAP Secretariat at bhodgins@cap-cpma.ca on or before November 5, 2012, 4:30 p.m., Atlantic Standard Time. Proposals will only be accepted via electronic mail, and not by fax or hard copy.

Late proposals will not be accepted and will be returned to the proponent.

The proponent will not change the wording of its proposal after closing and no words or comments will be added unless requested by the Secretariat for purposes of clarification.

5.0 QUESTIONS AND INQUIRIES

All inquiries related to this RFP are to be directed by electronic mail to the Atlantic Workforce Partnership, c/o Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education, at the following address:

Karen K Stone
Director of Strategic Initiatives
STONEKK@gov.ns.ca

All responses to inquiries made to the Atlantic Workforce Partnership will be made in writing, therefore the proponent must include a contact name, email address (if available) or fax number on all correspondence.

All questions and responses will be made available to all by end of day October 22, 2012. Therefore, further questions will not be accepted after this date.

All other information obtained from alternate sources cannot be considered official and/or accurate.

6.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

Council of Atlantic Premiers

The Council of Atlantic Premiers was formally established in 2000. The goal of CAP is expressed as identifying and pursuing regional opportunities and the joint promotion of the Atlantic region, nationally and internationally. The predecessor of the CAP was the Council of Maritime Premiers, which continues to administer initiatives that are Maritime in scope.

CAP created the Atlantic Workforce Partnership in June 2012.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to obtain solicitations from researchers on performing the necessary work in order to meet the objectives of conducting a diagnostic (high level overview) of the apprenticeship training programs in the Atlantic provinces.

The project will be undertaken in collaboration with the Atlantic Workforce Partnership (hereafter referred to as AWP). The primary function of the AWP is to take responsibility for the achievement of the outcomes of the project – apprenticeship diagnostic (high level overview). The AWP will monitor and review the project status, as well as provide oversight of the project deliverables.

6.3 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The apprenticeship system has always been a major contributor to the economic development of the provinces. Participation in the apprenticeship program provides social and economic benefits to participants, their communities, and the Atlantic provinces. Apprenticeship's economic value is apparent to the program completers and, by extension, to the economy. The work of apprentices and trades people is visible in every aspect of Canadian society. The necessity of goods and services provided through the skilled trades mean they form a basis for economic growth in virtually all other sectors of the economy. Thus, a strong skilled trades sector is one prerequisite to strong, sustainable economic development for the provinces.

Moreover, to the extent that the skilled trades and the services they provide form a crucial backbone for economic growth and development across all sectors of the economy, mitigating any issues/challenges within the four provincial apprenticeship programs is of the utmost importance to ensure a strong and prosperous future for Atlantic Canada.

To this extent, the Atlantic Workforce Partnership has identified the strategic policy objective of conducting a diagnostic (high level overview) of the apprenticeship training programs within the Atlantic provinces with a goal of developing an action plan as a move forward.

6.4 SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

SUMMARY

The proponent will conduct the necessary work in order to meet the objectives of conducting a diagnostic (high level overview) of the apprenticeship training programs within the Atlantic provinces. The main activities of the proponent will be to:

- a) Become intimately knowledgeable with the project requirements, the proposed approach and data sources and statement of work.

Deliverable: After reviewing the research deliverables, the proponent will make recommendations to the AWP on a proposed methodology or revision to the approach as identified in their proposal. The proponent will also identify any possible areas of risk in the proposed plan (e.g., data availability).

- b) Meet with AWP Committee to establish timelines, ensure a common understanding of the research and objectives, and discuss a proposed methodology.

Deliverable: After meeting with the AWP, the proponent will develop a project plan and project timeline and will identify any resource issues.

- c) Apprenticeship Diagnostic (High Level Overview) – Final Report

Deliverable: The deliverable resulting from this contracted service will be a report containing the appropriate information on the identified tasks. The final report should be provided in the context of how the current system works with the apprenticeship training program of other jurisdictions across Canada, as well as how recommendations for next steps would impact existing relationships.

- d) As part of the research and fact finding for this initiative, it is expected that the provincial apprenticeship board chairs and the staff directors would be interviewed in depth. As well, data for the past five years and projections for the next five would be reviewed.

The professional consultant will be responsible to identify and assess the following:

- what works well within each provincial apprenticeship training program
- what needs to work better
- issues common to more than one province
- outcome of regional collaboration to date and further areas for regional collaboration
- benefits and shortcomings of four provincial programs
- benefits and shortcomings of one regional program

In addressing the above items, the following subject areas should be considered:

- completion rates
- recruitment
- participation of underrepresented groups
- employer participation
- apprentice/journeyperson ratio
- direct entry vs. pre-employment
- mobility of apprentices
- accelerated apprenticeship programs
- common curriculum
- flexibility of programs
- common IT solution
- training opportunities – suitability, design and delivery

- e) Remain in contact with the AWP representatives throughout the duration of the project via conference calls as necessary.

Deliverable: Provide ongoing updates on progress.

6.5 PROJECT SCHEDULE AND CONTRACT PERIOD

Below is the approximate schedule that is expected to be followed for this RFP. However, this may be subject to change and is therefore presented primarily for guidance:

- Preferred work start date: November 13, 2012
- Preferred work completion date: December 11, 2012

Note: The dates in the RFP are for guidance only. A firm schedule will be negotiated at the time of contract.

The full contract will be for a period of five (5) weeks. The Council of Atlantic Premiers' (CAP) Secretariat reserves the right to extend the contract beyond the initial contract period.

6.6 PROCESS AND REPORTING

The consultant will be contracted by the Council of Atlantic Premiers' Secretariat on behalf of the AWP and will report to the Atlantic Workforce Partnership Committee.

The consultant will work closely with a Committee, consisting of officials from the Atlantic Workforce Partnership.

The Committee will be charged with the following mandate:

1. provide overall direction to the contracted consultant as it relates to the key tasks outlined in this document;
2. provide advice and existing work to the consultant;
3. provide feedback on the various drafts of the report prepared as a result of this work; and
4. recommend final approval of the report prepared by the consultant.

7.0 PROPOSAL CONTENT & REQUIREMENTS

Instructions: Proposals should include a table of contents, be based on the following format and include a response to each requirement/instruction in the order in which it is asked. It is helpful to the evaluation committee if the corresponding section headings are utilized in your submission.

The proposal must include the following:

1. detailed account of the approach and process to be used to fulfill the key tasks set forth in Section 6.4;
2. detailed work plan describing milestones and timelines;
3. total cost of the contract with a description of professional services, administrative and travel costs;
4. brief summary of the history of the consultant, including years in business and past related experience;
5. names and background of all qualified personnel to be involved in this project; and
6. names and contact information of clients and associates for whom similar or relevant work has been performed, and a description of the work completed.

7.1 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

- a) Submissions must be received in their entirety by the time and date indicated.
- b) Submissions must be signed by an official of the company who is authorized to sign on behalf of/and bind the company to statements made in their submission (electronic signature is acceptable).

7.2 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Demonstrate understanding of the project scope and objectives.
- Identify the proposed approach, work plan and detailed project schedule.
- Proposals should include a price table containing a detailed breakdown pertaining to professional service fees.

7.2.1 COMPANY BACKGROUND

Provide a brief summary of the history of yourself and/or your company, including years in business, number of staff, location, etc.

7.2.2 COMPANY REFERENCES

Proposals should include names and contact information of former clients and associates for whom similar or relevant work has been performed, presented as references, as well as a description of the work completed.

7.2.3 PROJECT TEAM

Proposals should include details on the background and experience of all qualified personnel relating to the project management and project team (if applicable).

The proponent must possess inherent knowledge of and clearly demonstrate significant experience with working with the apprenticeship system.

7.2.4 SUBCONTRACTING

Utilizing a subcontractor, or subcontractors (who must clearly be identified), in the prime bidder's response is acceptable. This also includes a joint submission by two or more bidders having no formal corporate links. However, in this case, one of these bidders must be prepared

to take overall responsibility for successful interconnection of the multiple organizations and this must be defined in the Statement of Proposal. Also, one individual or firm must act as the sole interface between the joint partners and the Secretariat.

7.3 APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

This section should contain any additional information pertinent to the proponent’s response.

All materials submitted as appendices/attachments to the proposal should be clearly indicated in the Table of Contents. Material not so documented by the vendor will be considered as extraneous information. This list of attachments should also contain a brief description of the attached material, including what information can be gained by the evaluation team from its examination of the material.

8.0 EVALUATION PROCEDURE

A Committee of officials will evaluate all proposals. The accepted proposals will be used as the basis for selecting the successful proponent(s). The evaluation of proposals will be based on the criteria listed below. The process will include a review and check of the information contained in the proposals and interviewing references familiar with the work of the vendor.

8.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The proposal will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

REPRESENTS 100 POINTS OF TOTAL SCORE		
Understanding of the scope of the work to be executed	35	
Knowledge and experience of the consultant	25	
Work plan	15	
Price	<u>25</u>	
TOTAL	100	Points

A minimum qualifying score of 60 points and no less than 50 per cent in each category is required for the bid to be deemed compliant.

Determination of best value may not result in the lower cost being accepted.

This Request for Proposals does not ensure proceeding to enter into a contract(s). The Secretariat reserves the right to proceed or not to proceed with a contract(s) pursuant to this Request for Proposals.

8.2 PRICING RESPONSE

The maximum budget associated with this project is up to and not to exceed \$25,000 (CDN), excluding HST.