

SECTION A
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF RESPONSES

The instructions for this RFI have been designed to help ensure all responses are reviewed in a consistent manner, as well as to minimize costs and response time. INFORMATION SUBMITTED IN VARIANCE WITH THESE INSTRUCTIONS MAY NOT BE REVIEWED.

- A.1 SOLICITATION NUMBER 21-RFI-002-WM
- A.2 SOLICITATION TYPE CX/UX Mobile-Responsive Software Transformation
- A.3 PROGRAM OFFICE Workforce Services
- A.4 ISSUING OFFICE Winston McGriff/Vincent McKenzie
 GOC III/Purchasing Manager
 107 East Madison Street, B-047
 Tallahassee, Florida 32399
 (850) 245-7467/ 245-7463
 Winston.Mcgriff@deo.myflorida.com
 Vincent.McKenzie@deo.myflorida.com

A.5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Listed below is the calendar of important actions and dates/times by which the actions must be taken or completed. If DEO finds it necessary to change any of these dates/times, it will be accomplished by addendum. All listed times are local in Tallahassee, Florida.

	Estimated Calendar of Events	Date and
1	Date of Issuance and publication on the Florida Vendor Bid System website at: http://vbs.dms.state.fl.us/vbs/main_menu	06/29/2021
2	Technical Questions Regarding this RFI shall be from prospective Respondents. (NOTE: only email inquiries will be accepted.)	07/12/2021 by 3:00 pm (Eastern Standard Time)
3	Anticipated posting of DEO responses to technical questions to the Florida Vendor Bid System website (via addendum) at:	07/16/2021 By 5:00 pm (Eastern Standard Time)
4	Responses Due (via E-mail)	07/27/2021 By 3:00 pm (Eastern Standard Time)
5	Oral Presentations (if scheduled)	08/03/2021

Addenda or clarifications to this RFI Form will be posted on the Florida Vendor Bid System (VBS). **It is the Respondent’s responsibility to monitor the VBS for any updates to this RFI.**

A.6 Questions

Any questions from Respondents concerning this RFI shall be submitted via email, identifying the submitter, to Winston McGriff and Vincent McKenzie at winston.mcgriff@deo.myflorida.com and vincent.mckenzie@deo.myflorida.com by the date and time specified in section A.5, Calendar of Events. All questions and/or changes to the RFI will be posted on the Department of Management Services (DMS) Florida Vendor Bid System VBS as an addendum. It is the prospective Respondent's responsibility to periodically check the VBS for any RFI updates. DEO bears no responsibility for any delays, or resulting impacts, associated with a prospective Respondent's failure to obtain the information made available through the VBS. Respondent's questions should be submitted as an attachment via email in the format included in *Attachment A– Technical Questions Submittal Form*.

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SECTION B – INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

B.1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The State of Florida, Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), Division of Information Technology, is requesting information related to methods and solutions to discover, recommend and implement the reengineering and digital transformation of the Reemployment Assistance (RA) Benefits System. Requested details include tools to automate the redesigned process, while adhering to design principles that make screens consistent and simple to use for the citizens of Florida.

Pursuant to Rule 60A-1.042, F.A.C., an agency may request information by issuing a written Request for Information (RFI). Agencies may use a RFI in circumstances including, but not limited to, determining whether or not to competitively procure particular commodities or contractual services, determining what solicitation process to use for a particular need, or research general, special, and/or technical specifications for a solicitation.

B.2 BACKGROUND

The RA Benefits System has supported the RA program's needs since 2013. The capacity of the RA Benefits System has historically been adjusted manually based on the seasonal demands, while continual enhancements have been made to the customer and user experiences. In March 2020, the RA program began experiencing an unprecedented volume of claims due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Division of Information Technology came to understand the real capacity and digital transformation needs of the RA Benefits System.

DEO is requesting information for a Customer Experience (CX) and User Experience (UX) solution and/or product from potential vendors. The intent of a new CX and UX strategy and solution is to implement a brand new front-end for the existing RA Benefits System, to support the multi device, including mobile-friendly, and multi browser platforms, while ensuring the highest security and enhanced usability.

DEO is seeking information on potential solutions to provide the enhanced customer and user experience. Based on customer feedback and an independent review, DEO believes that there is a need to improve the customer and user experience for the RA Benefits System. The proposed architecture will be an independent building block of the existing RA Benefits System. The ideal solution will include a modular and incremental approach to provide the enhanced experience to users. The proposed system improvements are expected to include business process optimization and digital transformation.

B.3 SPECIFICATIONS

DEO is seeking to implement CX/UX design principles that include but are not limited to:

- Customer Service
- Information Architecture
- Interaction Design
- Content Strategy
- Visual Design
- Usability
- Security

The architecture should be designed in accordance with the Florida cloud-first initiative, which is further defined in section 282.206, F.S., and Chapter 60GG-4, F.A.C., and the proposed solution should be cloud-based with inbuilt resilience and elasticity. The proposed enhanced customer experience and user experience solution should work independently of and in tandem with the existing back-office RA Benefits System. Availability of the existing RA Benefits System should not impact the new proposed system and vice versa. Communication between the RA Benefits System and the solution must be real-time, with the ability of queuing the requests and responses to adjust the capacity based on the demands with an Application Programming Interface (API) or integration layer. Proposed architecture should be comprised of following technical stack components, but not limited to:

- Microservice based Architecture
- Enterprise Service Bus
- Messaging Broker
- Multifactor Authentication
- Business Rules Engine
- Workflow Management
- Document Management
- Contact Center as Service
- Master Data Management and interoperability

The RA Benefits System is required to integrate with state and federal systems and the proposed architecture should be able to integrate with the current and future partners with minimal customization via integration layer. Target architecture should have an authentication layer where the customers’ identity and screening will be processed to enable proactive fraud detection.

As part of the business process redesign, the solution integrator is expected to design, develop, and implement the modules below and the underlying business rules and processes by gathering requirement from reemployment assistance program support and other stakeholders. The scope is expected to be finalized during procurement. The proposed modules are to include, but not limited to:

Module	Module Description
Initial Claim	Benefit recipients should be able to submit the initial claim, upon response of successful authentication by various external and internal partners. Initial claim: A claim filed to establish a benefit year.
Maintain Claim	Benefit recipients should be able to modify the account and demographic information. Maintain claim: a modification to an existing claim.
Additional Claim	Benefit recipients should be able to submit the additional claim as per the RA program requirements. Additional claim: A claim filed during an existing benefit year after a break in the claim’s series and intervening work.
Continued Claims	Benefit recipients should be able to submit the Continued claim as per the RA program requirements. Continued claim: A certification for a week of unemployment made pursuant to section 443.111, F.S., and subsequent to the filing of an initial, additional, or reopened claim.
Payments & Overpayment Verification	Benefit recipients should be able to verify the payments and overpayment information

Repayments Submission	Benefit recipients should be able to submit the repayment against the overpayment as per the RA program requirements
Fact-Finding Submission	Benefit recipients should be able to submit the view and submit the factfinding as per the RA program requirements
Document Review & Submission	Benefit recipients should be able to review and submit the documents as per the RA program requirements
Employers & Third-Party Administrators	Employers should be able to have access to inquiries regarding claimants for response and to protest a benefit charge and/or file an appeal. Additionally, employers must be able to grant third-party administrators access to perform specific functions on their behalf.

The Respondent(s) should provide a development and implementation timeline, support timeline, and warranty period timeline for the technical solution. The technical solution should include support for additional enhancements and bug fixes.

The list below contains some of the components necessary for the development of a mobile-friendly application that interfaces with the RA Benefits System:

- Provide customer and user experience strategy by understanding and optimizing the current business processes
- Provide the ability to host the solution in the public cloud and adheres to DEO compliance requirements
- Provide benefit recipients a self-service capability to create an account and complete and submit a claim for RA benefits
- Provide benefit recipients a self-service capability to complete and submit continued claims for RA benefits
- Provide benefit recipients a self-service capability to complete and submit an additional or reopen claim for RA benefits
- Provide benefit recipients a self-service capability to complete claim maintenance functions for RA benefits
- Provide benefit recipients a self-service capability to retrieve certain pertinent information related to their existing or prior claim (predominately based on the most frequently called reasons from the RA Contact Center)
- Provide benefit recipients a self-service capability to retrieve claim payment information for approved or denied weeks
- Provide benefit recipients a self-service capability to respond to fact-finding and upload documents, and verify fact-finding and uploaded documents related to their claim
- Provide benefit recipients the ability to protest and/or appeal benefit determinations
- Provide a push notification feature to inform benefit recipients of an action required of the benefit recipient to perform an action in the RA Benefits System
- Provide employers and third-party administrators (TPAs) self-service capability to review and respond to the agency's notice of claim filed
- Provide employers and TPAs self-service capability to respond to fact-finding and upload documents, and verify fact-finding and uploaded documents related to claim associated to their account
- Provide employers and TPAs the ability to protest and/or appeal benefit determinations
- Provide DEO leadership mobile insights on to be determined core and critical functions

- Provide DEO a responsive user interface application that is cloud-based, serverless-based and scales based on actual usage of the application
- Provide DEO an application that uses a messaging broker and caching capabilities to retrieve and use data on a real-time and incremental basis
- Provide DEO the ability to customize a message on the initial screen of the multi device friendly application, including mobile devices
- Provide the ability to integrate with the back-office RA Benefits System
- Provide the ability to queue requests and responses using a messaging queue, API layer, and messaging broker
- Provide the ability to integrate with external partners , including, but not limited to, the Social Security Administration, Interstate Connection Network, Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Employ Florida, Florida Department of Revenue, the Florida Department of Financial Services, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- Provide the ability to integrate with DEO authentication and user access control systems
- Be available for at least Android and Apple devices via appropriate application download stores
- Solution should have the inbuilt capability of elasticity and resilience

B.4 GOALS

DEO's goal is to gain information on available solutions to decide upon and move forward with procurement of an incremental CX/UX software solution. The solution should transform the front-end of the RA Benefits System into a modular, mobile-friendly, streamlined, easy to navigate, and sustainable system.

B.5 OBJECTIVES

To use the results from this RFI to determine whether or not to competitively procure particular commodities or contractual services, determine what solicitation process to use for this particular need, and to research general, special, and/or technical specifications for a solicitation, per Rule 60A-1.042, F.A.C.

B.6 PROCESS

Responses to this RFI will be reviewed by DEO subject matter experts for informational purposes only and **will not result in the award of a contract**. This is an RFI as defined by section 287.012(22), Florida Statutes. Responses to this RFI are not offers and cannot be accepted by DEO to form a binding contract. §287.012(22), Fla. Stat. Information received in response to this RFI, however, may be used to develop future procurements. Respondents to this RFI will not be prohibited from submitting bids to such future procurements based solely on having responded to this RFI. §287.057(17)(c), Fla. Stat. DEO will review responses received from this RFI to determine the feasibility of issuing a competitive solicitation for services or commodities. Any request for cost information is for budget purposes only.

B.7 INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDENTS

The instructions for this RFI were designed to help ensure all responses are reviewed in a consistent manner. The response must include:

1. Information Acknowledgement Form

Respondents are required to complete, sign, and return the "Information Acknowledgment Form" with their submittal. This form must be completed and signed by a representative who is authorized to provide information on behalf of the Respondent.

If a Respondent fails to submit a signed Information Acknowledgment Form with their reply, DEO reserves the right to contact the Respondent by telephone to inform the Respondent to submit this document by email, which is then followed by a submission through the mail. This right may be exercised when the Respondent has met all other requirements of the RFI.

In the event more than one Respondent submits a joint response, each Respondent of the joint response must complete and sign a separate Information Acknowledgement Form.

2. Details

Interested Respondents must include the following information in their responses:

- Respondent's history with all similar systems, organizational structure, and contact information for each reference: Name, title, phone number, and email address;
- Respondent's experience with contemporary technology that can be applied to the RA program's business processes to create a more flexible and responsive environment; and
- Any other information that Respondent wishes to supply in response to this RFI.

B.8 RESPONSE

It is not necessary to prepare responses using elaborate brochures and artwork, expensive paper and bindings, or other expensive visual presentation aids. Responses should be prepared in accordance with the instructions provided in this RFI. DEO is not responsible for and will not reimburse any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of information in response to this RFI.

This is strictly a RFI, and in no way does this request bind DEO to solicit bids or proposals in the future. However, in no way does submittal of information pursuant to this RFI give any Respondent any advantage in any solicitation if DEO elects to solicit bids/proposals in the future.

B.9 ORAL PRESENTATION AGENDA

Based upon the completeness of the response, DEO, in its sole discretion, may invite Respondents for an oral presentation. Each presentation will be scheduled for one to two hours depending on the response and should include the following:

- A high-level overview of the product highlighting the core agency processes the product addresses, including customer references for the product where it is currently installed;
- The Respondent should be prepared to discuss its experience and competency in the design, development, and support of their solution, training and knowledge transfer activities, operations and maintenance of the proposed solution, and, if applicable, any additional vendors the Respondent partnered with to provide a complete solution;
- A discussion about the approach taken in previous implementations, challenges and risks encountered, and mitigating factors taken into consideration; and

- Opportunities for Questions and Answers.

B.10 RESPONSE DATE

RFI responses are due at the time and date specified in Section A.5, "Calendar of Events" and shall be submitted via email to Winston McGriff and Vincent McKenzie at Winston.McGriff@deo.myflorida.com and Vincent.McKenzie@deo.myflorida.com.

B.11 DISCLOSURE AND OWNERSHIP OF RESPONSES BY DEO

A Respondent's response shall be a public record and subject to production, disclosure, inspection, and copying consistent with the requirements of Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.

B.12 RESPONDENT'S DUTIES TO ASSERT EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE AS A PUBLIC RECORD

Any response content submitted to DEO which is asserted to be exempted by law from disclosure as a public record shall be set forth on a page or pages separate from the rest of the reply, and clearly marked "exempt," "confidential," or "trade secret" (as applicable), with the statutory basis for such claim of exemption specifically identified in writing on each and every such page. Failure to segregate and so identify any such content shall constitute a waiver of any claimed exemption as applied to the portion of the response or other document in which the content is set forth.

Pursuant to section 215.985(14), F.S., the Department of Financial Services (DFS), has developed a web-based system that provides information and documentation about government contracts called the "Florida Accountability Contract Tracking System" or "FACTS." An important aspect of this system is the posting of contract images on the Internet, including contract attachments, which may include all or part of a Respondent's response to this RFI.

Any claim of exemption from public disclosure is waived upon submission, unless addressed as set forth above. DEO will attempt to afford protection from disclosure of any trade secret as defined in section 812.081(1)(c), Florida Statutes, or section 688.002, Florida Statutes, where identified as such in the response, to the extent permitted under section 815.045, Florida Statutes, or section 288.075, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 119, Florida Statutes. Each Respondent acknowledges that the protection afforded by section 815.045, Florida Statutes, is incomplete, and hereby agrees that no remedy for damages may arise from any disclosure by DEO.

DEO takes its public records responsibilities under Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, and Article I, Section 24 of the Florida Constitution, very seriously. **If a Respondent considers any portion of the documents, data, or record submitted in response to this RFI to be exempted by law from disclosure as a public record, the Respondent must also provide DEO with a separate Redacted Copy of its response, in hard copy and on compact disk, at the time of reply submission.**

This Redacted Copy shall contain DEO's RFI name, number, and the name of the Respondent on the cover, and shall be clearly titled "Redacted Copy." The Redacted Copy shall be provided to DEO at the same time the Respondent submits its reply to the RFI and must only exclude or obliterate those exact portions which are exempted by law from public disclosure. **Each individual portion of the Redacted Copy that Respondent asserts is confidential must contain a citation to the specific law making the content of the redacted portion confidential.**

If it is determined the reply does not contain any information which is exempted by law from public disclosure, Respondent shall provide as part of the response, a written statement to that effect which is executed by an authorized representative of the Respondent's company with legal authority to make this determination on behalf of the Respondent.

Respondent shall protect, defend, and indemnify, save and hold harmless, DEO from any and all claims, demands, liabilities, and suits of any nature arising out of, because of, or due to the failure of, DEO releasing information redacted by the Respondent, and to further indemnify DEO for any other loss DEO incurs due to any claim being made against DEO regarding portions of its Redacted Copy being confidential, proprietary, trade secret, or otherwise not subject to disclosure. DEO expressly retains all rights, benefits, and immunities of sovereign immunity in accordance with Section 768.28 Florida Statutes, and nothing in this RFI shall be deemed a waiver of sovereign immunity or limits of liability beyond any statutory waiver.

B.13 RIGHTS TO DATA AND COPYRIGHT

Writings, publications, films, videos, technical reports, equipment, computer hardware and software, recordings, computer programs, computerized data bases, data processing programs, pictorial reproductions, maps, drawings, specifications, graphical representations, and works of similar nature (whether copyrighted or not copyrighted), which are submitted with a response or specified to be delivered under a project contract shall be maintained by DEO and may be released as public records. Additionally any writings, publications, films, videos, technical reports, equipment, computer hardware and software, recordings, computer programs, computerized data bases, data processing programs, pictorial reproductions, maps, drawings, specifications, graphical representations, and works of similar nature (whether copyrighted or not copyrighted), which are developed or produced and paid for in whole or in part by contract funds become the property of DEO except as may otherwise be provided in the contract.

B.14 ELABORATE RESPONSES

It is not necessary to prepare your response using elaborate brochures and artwork, expensive paper and bindings, or other expensive visual presentation aids. Your response shall be prepared in accordance with the instructions herein.

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**ATTACHMENT A
TECHNICAL QUESTIONS SUBMITTAL FORM**

Respondents shall complete the form provided based on their questions relating to this RFI. The completed form shall be submitted in accordance with the instructions provided in A.6. The electronic response must be submitted as a Microsoft Word file format. This form may be expanded as needed to facilitate responses to this requirement.

Respondent's Name: _____

Respondent Question Number*	RFI Page Number, Section Number, Subsection Reference*	Question*
1		
2		
3		
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*Add rows as necessary.

****Authorized Representative's Signature**

****Typed Name and Title of Authorized Representative**

****This individual must have the authority to provide this Response.**