



**ARKANSAS  
SCHOOL**  
FOR MATH,  
SCIENCES,  
+ THE ARTS

Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts  
200 Whittington Avenue, Hot Spring, AR 71901  
(501) 622-5100

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

SOLICITATION INFORMATION			
<b>Solicitation Number:</b>	FB-ASMSA-24-002	<b>Solicitation Issued:</b>	09/21/2023
<b>Description:</b>	Container Farm		
SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR RESPONSE			
<b>Bid Opening Date:</b>	10/09/2023	<b>Bid Opening Time:</b>	11:00, AM CST
Per Arkansas Procurement Law and Bid Rules, it is the supplier's responsibility to submit bids at the designated location on or before the bid opening date and time. Submissions received after the designated bid opening date and time may be rejected as untimely. Procurement Services shall return them to the supplier without review. It is not necessary to return "no bids."			
DELIVERY OF RESPONSE DOCUMENTS			
<b>Delivery Address:</b>	Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts Attn: Purchasing 200 Whittington Avenue Hot Springs, AR 71901  <b>The University of Arkansas at Little Rock is conducting this RFP on behalf of the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences &amp; the Arts. Vendors are responsible for delivery of their proposal documents to the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts prior to the scheduled time for opening of the particular RFP. When appropriate, vendors should consult with delivery providers to determine whether the proposal documents will be delivered to the ASMSA street address prior to the scheduled time for RFP opening. Delivery providers, USPS, UPS, and FedEx deliver mail to our street address on a schedule determined by each individual provider. These providers will deliver to our offices based solely on our street address.</b>		
<b>Bid's Outer Packaging:</b>	Seal the outer packaging and mark it with the following information. Solicitation number Date and time of bid opening Prospective supplier's name and return address Improperly marked packages may be opened for identification purposes.		
UA LITTLE ROCK PROCUREMENT SERVICES CONTACT			
<b>Buyer:</b>	Desiree Taggard	<b>Email:</b>	dltaggard@ualr.edu

## Section 1 – General Information

*Do not respond to items in this section unless specifically and expressly required.*

### 1.1. Purpose

The Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts (ASMSA) is soliciting proposals from qualified and experienced suppliers to obtain a Container Farm to be installed at ASMSA between 103 Pine Street and 115 Alumni Lane in Hot Springs, AR 71901.

### 1.2. Virtual Bid Opening

Use the information below to register for access to view the proposal opening virtually, to be held at the time and date listed on page one.

Zoom Registration Link:

<https://asmsa.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUrf-6qqT0tE9QrkuVSvechRA2p0W01gWhL>

Meeting ID: 916 8727 6790

Note: No award will be made at the bid opening, only the announcement of names of respondents and a preliminary determination of proposal responsiveness. Attendance at the solicitation opening is not required

### 1.3. Schedule of Events

Event Description	Date
Release of RFP	September 18,2023
Bid Deadline/ Bid Opening	October 9, 2023 @ 11:00 AM CST
Evaluation complete*	October 2023
Award Commences*	November 2023

Table A

\*Anticipated Dates.

### 1.4. Type of Contract

As a result of this RFP, ASMSA intends to award a contract to a single supplier. By submitting a signed proposal in response to this RFP, the prospective supplier represents and warrants that they will honor their proposal as being held open and irrevocable after this period.

- 1.4.1. The anticipated installation completion date for any resulting contract is May 2024. The school may adjust the contract start date for up to three calendar months.

### 1.5. Technical Response Packet

1.5.1. Printed responses should be formatted no larger than 8.5in x 11in, limited to 10 double-sided pages, fully recyclable (i.e., no plastic covers, plastic tabs, etc.), and bound with glue, staples, or thread (i.e., perfect bound, saddle stitching, etc.). Metal or plastic coil binding is not allowed.

1.5.2. Responses must be submitted in the English language.

1.5.3. The Technical Response Packet should be marked “Original” and include the following:

- Signed Proposal Signature Page
- Signed Proposed Subcontractors Form, if applicable
- Exceptions Page, if applicable
- Response to the Information for Evaluation.
  - Responses to the Information for Evaluation and Exceptions sections must not contain the prospective supplier’s name or any other identifiers, including, without limitation, names of staff members, projects, and addresses.
- Other documents and information expressly required in this solicitation.

The following items, which must be submitted before a contract award to the prospective supplier, may also be included with the prospective supplier's proposal.

1. EO 98-04: Contract and Grant Disclosure Form
2. Copy of prospective supplier's Equal Opportunity Policy
3. Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT), if applicable.

**1.6. Financial Proposal Packet**

- 1.6.1. The Financial Proposal Packet, including the hard copy and electronic copy, must be submitted separately from the Technical Proposal Packet and should be clearly marked.
- 1.6.2. All pricing must be proposed in U.S. dollars and cents.
- 1.6.3. Failure to submit Financial Proposal Packet in a separate, clearly marked, and sealed envelope may result in disqualification.

**1.7. Additional Submission Requirements and Recommendations**

- 1.7.1. In addition to the original Technical Proposal Packet and the Financial Proposal Packet, the following items should be submitted:
  - One (1) complete hard copy (marked "COPY") of the Technical Proposal Packet.
  - One (1) PDF copy of the Technical Proposal Packet on a flash drive.
  
  - One (1) PDF copy of the Financial Proposal Packet on a flash drive.
  - If the school requests additional copies, they must be delivered within twenty-four (24) hours of the request.
    - All additional copies must be identical to the original hard copy. In case of a discrepancy, the original hard copy shall govern.
  - One (1) redacted (marked "REDACTED") copy of the original Technical Proposal Packet, preferably on a flash drive. (See Proprietary Information in Standard Terms and Conditions.)

Do not include any other documents or ancillary information, such as a cover letter or promotional/marketing information.

## Section 2 - Specifications

*Do not provide responses to items in this section unless specifically and expressly required.*

### 2.1. Introduction and Background

The Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts is soliciting proposals from qualified and experienced suppliers for a Hydroponic Container Farm.

### 2.2. Product Requirements

- The following description of requirements should be considered the minimum functionality required. Respondents should submit a detailed description of all the possible functions of the equipment and software, even if they exceed the following descriptions.

### 2.3. General Equipment Requirements & Specifications

#### 2.3.1. Technical Architecture

- Describe the technical architecture of the proposed system, including the recommended hardware and software environment for the unit. Include such information as growing rack size, growing process and procedures, lighting equipment and functionality, nutrient solution descriptions, water tank maintenance, and general maintenance of the equipment/units. A high-level illustration of the work-flow schema for the proposed system should also be provided.

#### 2.3.2. Security

- Describe security features of the proposed system to mitigate theft and/or vandalism to the equipment.

#### 2.3.3. Interface Capabilities

- Describe the proposed software's methods for interfacing with other information systems and limitations such as the Microsoft Office 365 suite (Sharepoint, Onedrive, Onenote, Excel, Word, etc.).

#### 2.3.4. Hardware Specifications

- Provide the recommended spacing requirements for proper functionality of the said equipment to operate as a system and any other recommended hardware peripheral. Detail the number of people required to operate, the number of labor hours per week, total production capacity, energy consumption, water consumption, fertilizer and other consumables consumption rate, and finally the total cost to operate.

#### 2.3.5. Server Software Specification

- Provide the recommended system software configuration required to operate the proposed software. Specifications should include product name and version/service pack requirements for:
  - Operating system
  - Database management system
  - Reporting tools
  - Networking software
  - Any other required or recommended server software

### 2.4. General Hydroponic Equipment Requirements & Specifications

#### 2.4.1. Hydroponic Equipment Hardware Specifications

- Provide both the recommended configuration and the minimum supported configuration for proposed hardware to:
  - Enable fresh food production under any external weather conditions

- Climate control system to regulate temperature, ph levels, nutrient levels, and humidity
- Allow for the most efficient use of space
- Allow for the ability to scale up or scale down as needed
- Grow a wide variety of leafy greens, herbs, fruits and flowers
- Be practical to be installed in or near a school cafeteria building
- Provide the proper light wavelengths for optimum plant growth
- Produce enough vegetables to outweigh the equipment costs in a short amount of time
- Be able to recycle the water to minimize input and maintain a clean environment
- Be intuitive enough to allow students with no prior farming experience to operate with minimal training and oversight.

#### 2.4.2. Hydroponic Equipment Software Specifications

- Provide the recommended software configuration (if applicable) to support the proposed solution for hardware to be used at maximum growing capacity. Also, identify any other software products or versions supported. Specifications should include product name(s) and version(s)/service(s) packs supported for the following as applicable:
  - Ability to monitor and regulate temperature, ph levels, CO2 levels, and humidity
  - Ability to track the sensors from remote location
  - Ability to inform the operator when a component is in need of attention
  - Ability to track multiple systems from one interface
  - Ability to track the same system form multiple interfaces
  - Offer option to export to CSV, XML, or Excel file of data
- The system must communicate daily with the operator in a way that is seamless to the end user. The equipment must be able to operate if network connectivity is lost at any time. Appropriate hardware should be identified to provide uninterrupted service in the event of a network outage.
- Describe your policy on software releases including frequency, year-end updates, requirements for system software upgrades, and process for determining what enhancements are included in which release. Provide any costs required to obtain the updates.

#### 2.5. General Growing/Harvesting Requirements & Specifications

2.5.1. Proposals should provide a detailed workflow of the hydroponic growing and harvesting system. Proposals should also address the relationship between the physical growing and the software interface. Respondent shall clearly address how:

- System is set up initially to meet the aforementioned specifications in section 2.2
- Seeds are started to begin growing process
- Seedlings are transplanted (if applicable) to allow for full maturity
- Crops are tended to
- Crops are fertilized and watered
- Succession plantings are scheduled to maximize harvest in the space available
- Harvest is performed to meet the USDA GAP Harmonized Food Safety standards
- Data is uploaded and manipulated to meet our needs
- Equipment maintenance and cleaning is performed (growing racks/towers/shelves, lighting, irrigation lines and tanks, coolant [if applicable], etc.)

#### 2.6. Additional Services

2.6.1. Please indicate a comprehensive list and detailed description with available reports of all additional modules that your

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company offers which can integrate with the aforementioned software specifications. In addition to the list include costs (software, hardware, training, support, etc.) required to implement each of the modules.

- Examples of such modules that would be of interest to the ASMSA include the following:
- The ability to move the system if necessary
- Continued education to refine growing practices
- Allow for the delivery of supplies on a recurring basis
- Automatic climate control adjustment

## 2.7. Training Requirements

2.7.1. ASMSA recognizes the importance of training as the single most important factor for a successful and effective system implementation.

- Describe your company's training program to include all options and associated costs.
- Provide the sufficient levels of training necessary to operate system at its maximum capacity.
- The scope of the system training is to include all functions for set-up, system administration, installation, and on-going operation of the system.
- Training is to be done by a qualified instructor(s) and shall provide for a predominantly "hands-on" type of instruction. Copies of comprehensive reference materials shall be provided by the Contractor to cover the contents of the training session(s) that will become part of ASMSA's documentation for the system.
- Provide recommended seed varieties, consumables, and tools for optimum growth and harvest.

## 2.8. Administration and Staff Qualifications

2.8.1. Describe the qualifications and experience of the partners, managers, and other professional staff that will provide the services to ASMSA. Respondent shall ensure that staff has all required licenses, certifications, and training appropriate for such persons' role and function within the firm. Documentation that describes job qualifications and experience will be acceptable. Provide the name and contact information for the point of contact for these services.

## 2.9. Insurance Coverage

2.9.1. Adequate insurance coverage must be presented in the form of certificate of insurance.

### Section 3 – Pricing

- 3.1. Proposal Pricing
- 3.1.1. The submittal shall include the Respondent's proposed pricing. It is expected that all Respondents offer educational discounted rates. Please itemize all discounts on the quote. ASMSA reserves the right to accept or reject proposed pricing.
- 3.1.2. All fees as quoted shall be held firm for the initial contractual period of one calendar year. Fees shall be clearly summarized in submission, without question whatsoever.
- 3.1.3. Please itemize the proposed fees of each component of your offered products and services. The requested products and services should include all hardware, software, installation, upgrades, technical services, training, and support related to the hydroponic growing system. Any fees for additional products and /or services offered must be clearly indicated.
- 3.1.4. The following information should be included in the fee proposal:
- Item or service
  - Is item or service required or optional for operation of system?
  - Which module does item function with?
  - Unit cost
  - Number needed for proposed configuration.
- 3.2. Total Fees
- 3.2.1. Fees outlined should include:
- Shipping cost from production facility to 200 Whittington Avenue, Hot Springs, AR 71901.
  - Site installation and setup fees
- 3.2.2. Please indicate estimated fees, if any, for acquiring/ licensing updated versions of software. Please indicate which, if any, essential hardware components may be purchased separately and provided by the school and therefore excluded from the vendor's cost proposal.
- 3.2.3. The proposal shall also include annual maintenance/support fees and shall indicate whether or not these fees are fixed and, if so, for what period. Detailed analysis of all fees, itemized by software, hardware, maintenance/support, by location, by module.

## Section 4 - Terms and Conditions

*Do not respond to items in this section unless specifically and expressly required*

### 4.1. Doing Business With ASMSA

- 4.1.1. To conduct business with ASMSA, all suppliers must be registered and approved in PaymentWorks, our secure supplier management system.
- 4.1.2. ASMSA will issue the apparent successful supplier an invitation to PaymentWorks upon completion of the evaluation, release of the Intent to Award letter, and ALC approval.
- 4.1.3. Failure to register in PaymentWorks may result in the cancellation of this award or resulting contract.

### 4.2. Minority Business Policy

Minority participation is encouraged in this and all other procurements by state agencies. Minority is defined by Arkansas Code Annotated § 15-4-303 as a lawful permanent resident of this State who is: African American, Hispanic American, American Indian, Asian American, Pacific Islander American, or a Service Disabled Veteran as designated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The Arkansas Economic Development Commission conducts a certification process for minority businesses. Bidders unable to include minority-owned businesses as subcontractors “may explain the circumstances preventing minority inclusion.”

- 4.2.1. The Arkansas Economic Development Commission conducts a certification process for minority-owned and women-owned businesses.
- 4.2.2. Per Arkansas Code Annotated § 15-4-303, a minority-owned business is defined as a business that is at least fifty-one percent (51%) owned by one (1) or more minority persons, and a minority is defined as a lawful permanent resident of this State who is:

- African American
- American Indian
- Asian American
- Hispanic American
- Pacific Islander American
- A Service Disabled Veteran as designated by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs

- 4.2.3. Per Act 1080 of the 91st General Assembly Regular Session 2017, a women-owned business is defined as a business that is at least fifty-one percent (51%) owned by one (1) or more women who are lawful permanent residents of this State.

### 4.3. Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

In compliance with Arkansas Code Annotated § 19-11-104, ASMSA must have a copy of the supplier’s Equal Opportunity Policy before issuing a contract award. ASMSA will maintain a file of all supplier EO policies submitted in response to solicitations issued by this office.

- 4.3.1. *EO Policies* may be submitted electronically to the following email address: [procurement@ualr.edu](mailto:procurement@ualr.edu) , but a hard copy should also be included with the bid response.
- 4.3.2. Submitting an *EO Policy* to ASMSA is a one-time Requirement. Contractors are responsible for providing updates or changes to their policies and supplying *EO Policies* upon request to other state agencies, which must also comply with this statute.
- 4.3.3. Prospective Contractors who are not required by law to have an *EO Policy* must submit a written statement to that effect.

### 4.4. Prohibition Of Employment Of Illegal Immigrants

- 4.4.1. Pursuant to Arkansas Code Annotated § 19-11-105, Contractor(s) providing services of \$25,000 or greater shall certify with ASMSA that they do not employ or contract with illegal immigrants.
- 4.4.2. By signing and submitting a response to this *Bid Solicitation*, a Prospective Contractor for services of \$25,000 or greater agrees and certifies that they do not employ or contract with illegal immigrants. In addition, if selected, the Prospective Contractor certifies that they will not employ or contract with illegal immigrants during the aggregate term of a contract.



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4.5. Restriction Of Boycott Of Israel

- 4.5.1. Pursuant to Arkansas Code Annotated § 25-1-503, a public entity shall not enter into a contract with a company unless the contract includes a written certification that the person or company is not currently engaged in, and agrees for the duration of the contract not to engage in, a boycott of Israel.
- 4.5.2. This prohibition does not apply to:
- 6.2.1. A company that offers to provide the goods or services for at least twenty percent (20%) less than the lowest certifying business.
- 6.2.2. Contracts with a total potential value of less than \$1,000.

By checking the designated box on the first page of this bid, a Prospective Contractor agrees and certifies that they do not, and will not, for the duration of the contract, boycott Israel.

4.6. Restriction Of Boycott Of Energy, Fossil Fuel, Firearms, and Ammunition Industries

In accordance with Ark. Code Ann. § 25-1-1002, the respondent certifies that it is not currently engaged in a boycott of the energy, fossil fuel, firearms, and ammunition industries and agrees for the duration of its agreement not to engage in a boycott of the energy, fossil fuel, firearms or ammunition industries.

- 4.6.1. The preceding does not apply to:
- A financial services provider as defined at Ark. Code Ann. § 25-1-1001(8)(A),
  - An agreement with a total potential value of less than \$75,000, or
  - A contract under which the supplier's price for the goods or services is at least 20% less than the lowest certifying business.

4.7. Restriction Of Contracts with Scrutinized Companies

- 4.7.1. In accordance with Ark. Code Ann. § 25-1-1001, the respondent certifies that the government of the People's Republic of China ("PRC") does not wholly own the bidder or hold a majority interest in the bidder. Bidder further certifies that the PRC does not own or hold a majority interest in a for-profit parent company, subsidiary, or affiliate of the bidder or in a subcontractor to be employed by the bidder
- 4.7.2. A "scrutinized company" is an entity in which the People's Republic of China holds 51% or greater ownership and includes any for-profit parent, subsidiary, or affiliate of such a company.

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4.7.3. This restriction applies regardless of the source of the funds but does not apply to exempt commodities and services.

4.8. Payment and Provisions

4.8.1. Invoices are accepted by mail or email. Supplier shall send invoices to one of the following:

Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences & the Arts  
Accounts Payable  
200 Whittington Avenue  
Hot Springs, AR 71901

AccountsPayable@asmsa.org

4.8.2. Payment shall be made in accordance with applicable State of Arkansas accounting procedures upon acceptance by the school.

4.8.3. ASMSA may not be invoiced before delivery and acceptance of any equipment, service or commodity.

4.8.4. Payment will be made only after the contractor has successfully satisfied the school as to the goods and/or services purchased.

4.8.5. Suppliers shall provide an itemized invoice for all charges.

4.8.6. The Purchase Order Number should be referenced on each invoice.

## Section 5 - Selection

### 5.1. Evaluation and Scoring

ASMSA will review each Technical Response Packet to verify submission requirements have been met. Submissions that do not meet specified requirements may be disqualified and not evaluated.

The ASMSA Evaluation Committee will evaluate and score qualifying proposals individually and complete an Individual Score Worksheet for each proposal. Evaluations will be based on the prospective supplier's response to the Information for Evaluation section included in the Technical Response Packet.

QUALITY RATING	QUALITY OF RESPONSE	DESCRIPTION	CONFIDENCE IN PROPOSED APPROACH
5	Excellent	When considered in relation to the RFP evaluation factor, the response squarely meets or exceeds the requirements and exhibits outstanding knowledge, creativity, ability or other exceptional characteristics.	Very High
4	Good	When considered in relation to the RFP evaluation factor, the response squarely meets the requirement and is better than merely acceptable.	High
3	Acceptable	When considered in relation to the RFP evaluation factor, the response is of acceptable quality.	Moderate
2	Marginal	When considered in relation to the RFP evaluation factor, the response's acceptability is doubtful.	Low
1	Poor	When considered in relation to the RFP evaluation factor, the response is inferior.	Very Low
0	Unacceptable	When considered in relation to the RFP evaluation factor, the response clearly does not meet the requirement, either because it was left blank or because the response is unresponsive.	No Confidence

*Table B*

After completing individual evaluations, the Evaluation Committee will meet to discuss their ratings. At this consensus scoring meeting, each member will be allowed to discuss his or her rating for each evaluation criterion.

After the committee discusses their individual scores as a group, each member will have the opportunity to change their initial scores if they feel it is appropriate.

The final individual scores of the evaluators will be recorded on the Consensus Score Sheets and averaged to determine the consensus score for each proposal. Other agencies, consultants, and experts may also examine documents at the school's discretion.

The Information for Evaluation section has been divided into subsections. Items and questions have each been assigned a maximum point value of five (5).

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Each subsection is weighted according to its significance as determined by the school. The total point value for each subsection is reflected below as the Maximum Raw Score Possible.

INFORMATION FOR EVALUATION SUBSECTIONS	MAXIMUM RAW POINTS POSSIBLE	SUBSECTION'S WEIGHTED PERCENTAGE	* MAXIMUM WEIGHTED SCORE POSSIBLE
E.1 Quality of Firm's General Information	15	15	105
E.2 Method and Approach	30	30	210
E.3 Relevant Experience and Qualifications	10	10	210
E.4 Overall Quality of Proposal	20	20	140
Total Technical Score	100	100%	700

*Table C*

\*Subsection's Percentage Weight x Total Weighted Score = Maximum Weighted Score Possible for the subsection.

The supplier's weighted score for each sub-section will be determined using the following formula:  $(A/B)*C=D$

A = Actual Raw Points received for subsection in evaluation

B = Maximum Raw Points possible for sub-section

C = Maximum Weighted Score possible for subsection

D = Weighted Score received for subsection

Supplier's weighted scores for subsections will be added to determine the Total Technical Score for the Proposal. Responses that do not receive a minimum weighted score 550 or higher may not move forward in the selection process. The pricing for proposals that do not move forward shall not be scored.

**5.2. Cost Score**

When pricing is opened for scoring, the maximum cost points will be given to the proposal with the lowest price, as shown on the Financial Proposal Packet. (See Grand Total Score for maximum points possible on the Financial Proposal.)

The number of cost points given to the remaining proposals will be allocated by using the following formula:

$(A/B)*C=D$	<p>A = Lowest Total Cost</p> <p>B = Second (third, fourth, etc.) Lowest Total Cost</p> <p>C = Maximum Points for Lowest Total Cost</p> <p>D = Total Cost Points Received</p>
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**5.3. Grand Total Score**

The Technical Score and Presentation Score will be added together to determine the Grand Total Score for the supplier. The supplier with the highest Grand Total Score will be selected as the apparent successful supplier. Based on the ranking of the proposals, the school may move forward in discussions with those responsible prospective suppliers determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award. (See Award Process.)

	MAXIMUM POINTS POSSIBLE
Technical Proposal	700
Cost	300
Maximum Possible Grand Total Score	1,000

*Table D*

**5.4. Discussions**

Arkansas Procurement Law allows discussions with responsible offerors whose proposals have been determined to be reasonably susceptible to being selected for award. ASMSA reserves the discretion and the right to engage in discussions to the fullest extent permitted under Ark. Code Ann. § 19-11-230 and procurement rules. After an initial evaluation, ASMSA may elect to request a best and final offer (BAFO) from a competitive range of responsible Prospective Suppliers determined, based on the ranking of the proposals, to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award.

**5.5. Prospective Supplier's Acceptance of Evaluation Technique**

The submission of a Technical Proposal Packet signifies the prospective supplier's understanding and agreement that subjective judgments will be made during the evaluation and scoring of the responses.