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Tender

Ealing Free School Meals Management and Eligibility IT System

London Borough of Ealing

F02: Contract notice

Notice identifier: 2023/S 000-018549

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-03dd8f

Published 29 June 2023, 2:27pm

Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

London Borough of Ealing

London Borough of Ealing, Perceval House, 14-16 Uxbridge Road

Ealing

W5 2HL

Contact

Ms Christine Baker

Email

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Telephone

+44 2088255122

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UK - United Kingdom

Internet address(es)

Main address

<http://www.ealing.gov.uk>

Buyer's address

<http://www.ealing.gov.uk>

I.3) Communication

The procurement documents are available for unrestricted and full direct access, free of charge, at

<https://procontract.due-north.com/>

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

Tenders or requests to participate must be submitted electronically via

<https://procontract.due-north.com/>

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Regional or local Agency/Office

I.5) Main activity

General public services

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Ealing Free School Meals Management and Eligibility IT System

Reference number

DN677087

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 48000000 - Software package and information systems

II.1.3) Type of contract

Supplies

II.1.4) Short description

Ealing Council is planning to re procure our current contract for Free School Meals Management and Eligibility IT System and wishes to carry out market engagement with potential providers.

The current Free School Meals Management and Eligibility IT System contract expires on 31st of March 2024. The approximate value for this contract is £20,000 to £25,000 per annum. The proposed duration of the contract would be for up to five (5) years with one potential two (2) year extension. The proposed total value would be approximately £100,000 - £125,000 if all extensions used.

Section 512 of the Education Act 1996, as amended, places a duty on maintained schools, academies and free schools to provide free school meals to disadvantaged pupils of all ages that meet the criteria.

The London Borough of Ealing maintained school, academies and free schools have a statutory obligation to provide free school meals to disadvantaged pupils. To assist with meeting this duty, the Council provides a Free School Meals (FSM) Management and Eligibility IT System and Pupil Support Team (PST), to provide a supported service to 91 maintained schools, academies, and free schools to enable them to meet their statutory duties to provide free school meals to disadvantaged pupils (currently 14,000 children across Ealing schools)

The existing system consists of an external online application form, an internal officer

portal that has direct access to the DfE benefits data portal and a school facing portal. In addition to a wide range of features, the IT system helps to minimise the workload for schools and support them to maximise the number of children identified, which provides both vital support to families and maximises the national funding formula and Pupil Premium funding received by the school.

The IT System also enables the Council to identify vulnerable households eligible for distribution of Household Support Vouchers (currently funded by the DWP's Household Support Fund) to cover the cost of meals during the school holidays.

Our goal is to implement an efficient and user-friendly solution that streamlines the application, management of Free School Meals, enhances data accuracy, and improves the overall experience for students, parents, and school staff.

II.1.5) Estimated total value

Value excluding VAT: £125,000

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.2) Description

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

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Below are the key requirements we seek in the IT system:

1. Eligibility Verification:

- The system should have a robust mechanism for verifying and validating the eligibility of students for Free School Meals based on established criteria.
- It should allow for easy integration with relevant databases, such as DfE eligibility checking system (ECS), to facilitate automated eligibility checks.

2. Application Management:

- The system should enable an online application process for parents or guardians to apply for Free School Meals on behalf of their children.
- It should include an intuitive interface that guides applicants through the process, capturing necessary information whilst minimising data entry errors.
- The system should be capable of handling bulk volumes of applications and concurrent user access.

- The system should enable schools to make applications on behalf of families, through individual applications and bulk eligibility checking uploads.

3. Real-Time Reporting:

- The system should generate comprehensive and up-to-date reports on Free School Meals eligibility, including enrolment statistics, trends, and demographic analysis and data quality management
- Customisable reporting options and the ability to export data in various formats, such as Excel or PDF, for further analysis or sharing with stakeholders.

5. Communication and Notifications:

- The system should have robust communication features to send notifications and reminders to parents or guardians and between the Council and schools regarding upcoming deadlines, changes in eligibility or attendance status, or other important updates.
- It should offer multi-channel communication options, such as email or SMS, to ensure effective and timely information dissemination.

6. Integration and Data Security:

- The system should have the capability to integrate with existing Council systems, student databases, and finance systems to facilitate data exchange and streamline processes.
- It should adhere to industry best practices for data security, encryption, and comply with relevant data protection regulations to safeguard sensitive information (e.g. GDPR)
- Compatibility with commonly used systems, web browsers and mobile devices.
- Regular automated backups of data to prevent data loss.
- Disaster recovery mechanisms to ensure system availability and data integrity.
- Comprehensive technical support available.

7. User-Friendly Interface:

- The system should feature an intuitive and user-friendly interface that is accessible to Council officers, school staff and parents/guardians with varying levels of technical expertise.

- It should provide clear navigation, well-organised functions, and contextual help features to ensure ease of use and minimise training requirements.

This market research questionnaire is voluntary. It does not form part of any tender or contract. Your response will be confidential and providers are in no way obliged to complete it, or to answer every question within it. However we hope providers will complete it as it will assist us greatly in informing our future strategy to commission and procure a Free School Meal Management and Eligibility IT system.

Your response is not part of any tender or contract, will be confidential and the information you provide will only be used for market research purposes.

Please submit your response to this questionnaire by 5.00pm on 13th July 2023 via Microsoft Forms link

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Q4w6AYeCi0yHixMeMM258yr18p-24EtEgTV6UR8rX4IUNFExSkcyT01MNIUyWURXSIIeQjhRRUxBUS4u>

Individual meetings are likely to be held with commissioners on the 19th and 20th July 2023. Please hold dates in your diary if you wish to attend. Please indicate in MS Forms questionnaire your preference regarding day and time on 19th/20th July

II.2.5) Award criteria

Price is not the only award criterion and all criteria are stated only in the procurement documents

II.2.6) Estimated value

Value excluding VAT: £125,000

II.2.7) Duration of the contract, framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system

End date

31 March 2027

This contract is subject to renewal

Yes

Description of renewals

One potential extension of up to two years

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

II.2.13) Information about European Union Funds

The procurement is related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds: No

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Open procedure

IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: No

IV.2) Administrative information

IV.2.2) Time limit for receipt of tenders or requests to participate

Date

30 September 2023

Local time

11:00am

IV.2.4) Languages in which tenders or requests to participate may be submitted

English

IV.2.7) Conditions for opening of tenders

Date

30 September 2023

Local time

12:00pm

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.1) Information about recurrence

This is a recurrent procurement: No

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

www.ealing.gov.uk

London Borough of Ealing, Perceval House, 14-16 Uxbridge Road

London

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