

RESPONSE TO VENDOR QUESTIONS

RFP # 2025-051VF

Strategic Talent Development Services, Including Coaching, Organizational Development, and Training & Instructional Design

Would the Research Foundation for SUNY o/b/o Buffalo State be considered an eligible applicant? Or is the County looking for smaller entities to apply and become pre-qualified for the vendor pool?

Yes — the Research Foundation for SUNY would be an eligible applicant, provided it can meet all RFP requirements.

Are overhead (F&A) costs allowable? If yes, what percentage?

Proposers should submit pricing as flat rates (e.g., hourly rates, per-session fees, or per-engagement fees) that fully incorporate all direct and indirect costs, including any applicable overhead or F&A expenses.

The County will not separately reimburse or negotiate indirect or F&A cost line items. Proposals should reflect the total cost of service delivery to the County.

Cost proposals will be evaluated for reasonableness and value, consistent with the requirements of the RFP.

Can you share any expectations or preferences regarding the size and format of typical engagements (for example, average cohort sizes, preferred session length, and anticipated mix of virtual versus in-person work)?

This RFP is intended to establish a pre-qualified vendor pool, rather than to procure a single, standardized program or engagement model. As such, the size, format, and delivery of engagements are expected to vary widely based on departmental needs, scope of work, and the specific services requested at the time of engagement.

The County anticipates a mix of virtual, in-person, and hybrid delivery models. Virtual delivery may be appropriate for many coaching and training engagements. However, vendors must be capable of providing in-person services within Erie County when required, particularly for organizational development work, team-based engagements, retreats, or other situations where in-person facilitation is determined to be beneficial.

Because this is a vendor pool model, no fixed volume of work, standard engagement size, or prescribed delivery format is guaranteed. Final determinations regarding cohort size, session length, duration, and delivery modality will be made by individual County departments at the time services are requested, based on operational needs, learning objectives, budget considerations, and workforce availability.

The RFP emphasizes equity, inclusion, cultural humility, and psychological safety. Are there specific County initiatives, competency frameworks, or priorities related

to equity-centered leadership or organizational development that selected vendors should align with when designing services?

Erie County does not require vendors to adhere to a specific equity, inclusion, or leadership competency framework, nor does the County expect uniform use of particular terminology, models, or branded language when designing or delivering services.

The County's emphasis is on outcomes and practice, not vocabulary. Vendors should focus on delivering services that, in substance, support inclusive leadership, cultural humility, psychological safety, respectful supervision, and effective organizational functioning within a diverse public-sector workforce.

Vendors are encouraged to describe their own approaches, methodologies, and experience in advancing equitable, inclusive, and effective leadership and organizational development, using terminology that is authentic to their practice and accessible to County departments and employees.

As County priorities evolve over the term of the contract, vendors may be asked to adapt services to align with emerging initiatives or expectations, but flexibility and professional judgment remain core considerations.

For coaching, assessments, and organizational development engagements that collect sensitive employee information, are there preferred County standards or tools for storing, reporting, and aggregating results, or should vendors propose their own secure approaches consistent with the confidentiality and data-security requirements described in the RFP?

For coaching, assessment, and organizational development engagements that involve sensitive employee information, the County does not prescribe specific tools or platforms for data storage, reporting, or aggregation.

Vendors should propose approaches that rely on industry-standard confidentiality and data-security practices, and that are fully consistent with the confidentiality, data-use, and data-protection requirements described in the RFP.

Any collection, use, or reporting of information must protect individual-level confidentiality and comply with all applicable contractual requirements. The County may provide additional direction regarding reporting or deliverables at the time of engagement, as appropriate to the scope of work.

In relation to the coaching delivery, please may I check whether you plan for coaching sessions to be delivered on site and therefore whether this delivery method is a requirement of vendors or whether virtual delivery alone would be acceptable.

Coaching services may be delivered virtually, in person, or through a hybrid model, depending on the needs of the County and the department engaging the vendor.

Vendors must demonstrate the capacity to provide at least a portion of coaching services in person within Erie County when required. Proposals that rely exclusively on virtual delivery do not meet the requirements of this RFP.

Vendors may propose different pricing structures for virtual, in-person, and hybrid coaching engagements. Any such pricing distinctions should be clearly identified in the Cost Proposal.

How many courses would you like us to create?

Erie County does not have a predetermined number of courses to be created under this RFP. This procurement is intended to establish a pre-qualified pool of vendors who may be engaged on an as-needed basis by County departments.

Do you prefer content to be in 15-minute segments or micro-learning format?

Erie County does not prescribe a single preferred content length or instructional format. Content format will depend on the needs of the requesting department, the learning objectives, and the delivery method.

As this RFP is intended to establish a pre-qualified vendor pool to serve multiple County departments, respondents should be prepared to design and deliver content in a range of formats and lengths based on departmental needs.

Is your content already developed, or would you need our assistance in creating it?

Content needs will vary by department and by engagement. In some cases, the County may seek assistance with the development of new or customized content; in other cases, the County may engage vendors to deliver, adapt, or update existing materials.

As this RFP is intended to establish a pre-qualified vendor pool to support multiple departments, respondents should be prepared to support a range of scenarios, including new content development, customization of existing content, and delivery of established curricula, based on departmental needs.

Are you open to us making modifications to the existing content?

No. Vendors should not assume that existing County content may be modified. Any modification, adaptation, or revision of existing County materials would occur only at the County's discretion and only if expressly authorized as part of a specific engagement.

Who is the intended audience for this content?

The intended audience will vary by department and by engagement. Depending on departmental needs, content may be developed for a range of audiences, including general staff, supervisors, managers, senior leaders, teams, or emerging leaders.

As this RFP is intended to establish a pre-qualified vendor pool to serve multiple County departments, respondents should be prepared to design and deliver content appropriate for different audiences and organizational levels.

How is your content currently delivered? Is it in PPT, videos, or another format?

Content is currently delivered using a mix of in-person instruction and the County's learning management system (LMS). The LMS supports SCORM-compliant content, including slide-based materials, videos, and other digital learning assets.

Are you comfortable with content that includes animations?

Yes. Erie County is comfortable with content that includes animations, where appropriate. The use of animations should support learning objectives, accessibility, and usability, and be compatible with the County's LMS and SCORM requirements.

What is your budget for this project?

Erie County does not have a single, consolidated budget associated with this RFP. Each County department maintains its own training and education budget, and the use of vendors selected through this RFP will be determined at the departmental level.

This RFP is intended to establish a pre-qualified vendor pool. The County cannot guarantee any minimum level of work or spending, and the amount of work awarded under this RFP will vary based on departmental needs, priorities, and available funding.

What is your desired go-live date?

The County anticipates entering into contracts with selected vendors in early 2026. Vendors may be utilized shortly thereafter, subject to departmental needs and available funding.

Do you have an internal project manager assigned to this project?

The County does not have a single, centralized project manager assigned to this RFP. Oversight and coordination will vary by department and by engagement. The Department of Personnel will administer the vendor pool and overall contractual framework.

The vendor pool format used in this RFP is new for these services. This procurement is intended to establish a pre-qualified pool of vendors that can be accessed by multiple County departments on an as-needed basis.

Is this a new requirement? If so, what circumstances led to this RFP? If not, what is the name of the incumbent or incumbents?

There is no single incumbent for these services. Departments have historically engaged vendors independently for training, coaching, and organizational development needs. This RFP is intended to streamline procurement, expand access to qualified providers, and improve consistency and efficiency across departments.

In Section IV(e) of the RFP on Staffing and Qualifications, states that “Resumes may be included in an appendix and do not count toward the page limit.” We were unable to find another reference to a page limit in the document. Is there a page limit for the proposal?

There is no formal page limit for proposals submitted in response to this RFP. However, the County encourages proposers to submit clear, concise, and efficient responses that provide sufficient detail to allow for evaluation.

If Section V(b) of the RFP on Evaluation criteria, the RFP states that an evaluation criteria is “the proposer’s financial ability to provide the services.” How would the County like the proposer to demonstrate its financial stability, and what section of the proposal should that go in?

Proposers may demonstrate financial ability and stability through information included in the Organizational Profile or a comparable section of the proposal, such as a brief description of the firm’s operational history, scale, and capacity to perform the proposed services.

In Section V(b) of the RFP on Evaluation criteria, the RFP states that “proposers MUST sign the Proposal Certification attached,” referring to Schedule A. Where in the proposal would the County like the proposer to attach the signed Schedule A?

The signed Proposal Certification (Schedule A) should be included with the proposal submission. Proposers may include the signed Schedule A as part of the main proposal or as an appendix.

In Section II(b)5, the County states that the “proposers may be required to an oral presentation to the County.” Will the oral presentations be held virtually or in-person?

If oral presentations are required, the County anticipates that they would be conducted virtually. The County reserves the right to determine the format and logistics of any oral presentations, as appropriate.

For virtual coaching, what platforms (e.g. Teams, Google Meets, Zoom, etc.) are acceptable to the county or does the county have preferences?

For virtual coaching and other virtual engagements, Erie County utilizes WebEx as its standard platform.

In Section V(c), the County states that “The term of the contract shall be for a three (3) year period commencing March 1, 2026, and terminating March 1, 2029. The County, in its sole discretion may extend the agreement beyond its initial term for up to two (2) additional one (1)-year periods at the same prices and conditions.” In the interest of providing lower rates during the base period of three years, would the County be open price escalations per year or for the extensions or would the County like a blended rate for the entire five-year period? No. Proposers should submit rates that remain fixed for the duration of the base contract term and any extensions, consistent with the terms of the RFP.

In Sections II(b)2 and II(b)3 of the RFP, the County directs submission of hard copies of the proposal. Given the holidays and the proposal deadline being January 5, 2026, would the County be open to setting a date where the hard

copies of the proposals should be postmarked given the delays in mail service during this time period?

No. Proposals must be received by the County by the stated deadline in accordance with the RFP requirements. Postmark dates will not be accepted in lieu of timely delivery.

If the County is not open to a postmark deadline, are there specific addresses that are different to utilize for overnight delivery services such as FedEx, UPS or DHL?

Proposals delivered by overnight or courier services (e.g., FedEx, UPS, DHL) must be sent to the following address, as identified in the RFP:

Brian C. Bray, Commissioner
Erie County Department of Personnel
95 Franklin Street, Room 604
Buffalo, NY 14202

Are there any specific assessment tools that the County is currently using (or prefers)? (360, EQ, MTBI, DISC, CliftonStrengths, StrengthsFinder). Should proposed pricing include licensing and participant materials, or will the county obtain them directly?

Erie County does not mandate or exclusively use a single assessment tool. As this RFP establishes a pre-qualified vendor pool, the specific assessment tools used may be determined by the nature of the engagement and the needs of the requesting department.

Proposers should clearly identify any assessment tools they propose to use and indicate whether such tools are proprietary or licensed. Proposed pricing should include all associated licensing, administration, scoring, interpretation, and participant materials, unless otherwise specified in the proposal.

Of the three service categories (Coaching, OD, Training/ID), which does the County anticipate the highest demand for in the first year?

The County does not anticipate or prioritize a higher level of demand for any single service category in the first year. As this RFP establishes a pre-qualified vendor pool to be utilized by multiple departments, demand for coaching, organizational development, and training/instructional design services will be driven by departmental needs, priorities, and available funding, and may vary over time.

Will County departments request services directly from the vendor pool, or will requests be centralized through Personnel? Or will task orders be competitive bids?

County departments will engage vendors from the pre-qualified pool in consultation with the Department of Personnel. The County anticipates using a best-fit selection approach for individual engagements; however, the County reserves discretion to use additional selection steps (including requests for quotes or other processes) when appropriate.

How will the County allocate work across the vendor pool? Rotation? Best fit? Competitive bid?

The County expects to select vendors based on best fit for the engagement (scope, expertise, availability, cost, and departmental needs). The County is not committing to any single allocation method (e.g., rotation), and the selection process may vary by engagement.

How many vendors does the County anticipate selecting per category?

The County has not established a predetermined number of vendors to be selected in each service category. The number of vendors selected may vary by category and will be based on the evaluation of proposals and the County's determination of qualified respondents.

Will vendors be expected to collaborate or co-deliver with one another?

No. Vendors will not be expected to collaborate or co-deliver services with other vendors unless expressly authorized by the County as part of a specific engagement.

Will the County allow vendors to update or expand offerings during the 3-year term?

The County may, at its discretion, allow vendors to update or expand their offerings during the term of the agreement, provided that such updates do not materially change the scope, nature, or pricing structure of the original proposal and are approved by the County in advance.

Would the County consider removing the hard copy requirement as you also requested an electronic copy of the submission?

No. Proposers must submit hard copies and an electronic copy in accordance with the requirements set forth in the RFP.

What levels of staff most frequently seek coaching now? (executives, supervisors, frontline)

The County does not track or prioritize coaching demand by a single staff level. Coaching needs may arise across all levels of the organization, including executives, managers, supervisors, and frontline staff, and will vary based on departmental needs and specific circumstances.

Does Erie County anticipate long-term OD engagements (multi-month) or primarily short, tactical engagements?

The County does not anticipate or prioritize a specific type or duration of organizational development engagement. OD engagements may range from short, tactical efforts to longer-term, multi-phase initiatives, depending on departmental needs, scope, and available funding.

Are there County-wide change initiatives already underway that vendors need to align to (e.g., culture, DEI, technology transformation)?

There are no single, County-wide organizational development initiatives that vendors must align to at this time. Organizational development efforts will be driven by departmental needs and priorities, and alignment requirements, if any, will be defined as part of individual engagements.

Does Erie County have a Learning Management System (LMS) and is it able to host SCORM-compliant e-Learning modules?

Yes. Erie County utilizes a Learning Management System (LMS) that is capable of hosting SCORM-compliant e-learning modules.

Are County facilities equipped for hybrid and virtual training (technology, Zoom/WebEx licenses, etc.)?

Yes. County facilities are equipped to support hybrid and virtual training, and Erie County utilizes WebEx as its standard virtual meeting and training platform.

Will the County provide expected annual utilization (also: What would be the annual budget)?

No. The County will not provide expected annual utilization or an annual budget estimate. As this RFP establishes a pre-qualified vendor pool, utilization and spending will vary by department based on needs, priorities, and available funding. No minimum level of work or spending is guaranteed.

What is the total number of employees in the County of Erie? Supervisors? Executives?

The County is not providing staffing counts or breakdowns by role for the purposes of this RFP. Departments vary significantly in size, structure, and staffing composition, and workforce data may change over time.

What are the expected participant numbers for the Coaching services and the Instructor-Led Training?

The County does not have predetermined or expected participant numbers for coaching or instructor-led training services. Participation levels will vary by department, engagement type, and scope of work.

Could you please confirm whether providing instructional design services is mandatory under the 'Training and Instructional Design Services' section?

Yes. Proposers seeking consideration under the Training and Instructional Design Services category must demonstrate the ability to provide instructional design services. Proposers are not required to apply to this category and may apply only to Coaching and/or Organizational Development if preferred.

What are the primary goals/objectives you hope to achieve through this engagement?

This RFP is intended to establish a pre-qualified vendor pool to support a broad range of talent development, organizational development, and training needs across multiple County departments. Objectives will vary by department and by engagement and may

include strengthening leadership capacity, supporting organizational effectiveness, and addressing department-specific workforce development needs.

Are there specific performance, culture, or leadership outcomes you're targeting?

There are no single, County-wide performance, culture, or leadership outcomes being targeted through this RFP. Outcomes will be defined at the departmental level and may vary depending on the nature and scope of individual engagements.

How will success be measured, both in the short term and long term?

Measures of success will be determined as part of individual engagements. As this RFP establishes a vendor pool, success metrics will be engagement-specific rather than standardized across all services.

Are there any organizational priorities or strategic initiatives this work should directly support? Do you have a current vendor that has provided these services? If yes, what has worked well? Could be improved upon?

There are no single, County-wide organizational priorities or strategic initiatives that all vendors must support under this RFP. Departments may engage vendors from the pre-qualified vendor pool to support department-specific priorities.

There is no single incumbent vendor for these services. Departments have historically engaged vendors independently, and this RFP is intended to streamline access to qualified providers and improve consistency and efficiency across departments.

Are certain service areas expected to be used more frequently than others?

The County does not anticipate or prioritize more frequent use of any particular service area. As this RFP establishes a pre-qualified vendor pool to serve multiple departments, utilization of coaching, organizational development, and training/instructional design services will be driven by departmental needs and may vary over time.

What skills, behaviors, or leadership capabilities are most critical for this initiative?

As this RFP establishes a pre-qualified vendor pool to support multiple County departments, there is no single set of skills, behaviors, or leadership capabilities identified as most critical across all engagements. Needs will vary by department and by the nature of the engagement.

Are there specific topics you'd like emphasized (e.g., resilience, emotional regulation, inclusive communication, decision-making)?

There are no required or universally prioritized topics under this RFP. Topics and areas of emphasis will be determined at the departmental level and defined as part of individual engagements.

Is there a target number of vendors the County anticipates selecting for the pre-qualified pool?

The County has not established a target number of vendors for the pre-qualified pool. The number of vendors selected will be based on the evaluation of proposals and the County's determination of qualified respondents.

Does the County have a preference for delivery (in person or virtual) and would the country be open to hybrid delivery models that blend asynchronous digital learning with live facilitation (in person and/or virtual)?

Erie County does not have a single preferred delivery modality. Delivery method will depend on departmental needs and the nature of the engagement. The County is open to in-person, virtual, and hybrid delivery models, including approaches that blend asynchronous digital learning with live facilitation, where appropriate.

Is the County seeking primarily custom curriculum, off-the-shelf offerings, or a mix?

The County anticipates a mix of custom development, customization of existing vendor curriculum, and delivery of established offerings, depending on departmental needs. Vendors should describe which components are off-the-shelf, configurable, or fully custom, and how they would tailor delivery for a public-sector workforce.

For coaching engagements, what level of reporting does the County expect (e.g., administrative data only, or thematic summaries)?

Reporting expectations will be defined as part of individual coaching engagements. At a minimum, reporting is expected to be limited to administrative or high-level, non-identifying information. Any reporting requirements will respect confidentiality obligations and applicable privacy protections.

Does the qualified vendor need to be located in Erie County and/or New York State?

Vendors are not required to be located in Erie County or New York State. However, vendors must be U.S.-based and must have the ability to provide in-person services within Erie County when required.

Is only one copy of the cost proposal included with the submission (despite three hard copies and one electronic copy)?

Yes. Only one cost proposal should be submitted, in a separate sealed envelope, in accordance with the RFP instructions.

My WBE is through New York State. I don't know if that is considered the same thing as through Erie County. Should I include that certificate in the proposal?

If the proposer is certified as an MBE/WBE by Erie County, include the Erie County certification letter. New York State certification may be provided as supplemental information, but Erie County certification is what the County references for MBE/WBE documentation in this procurement.

The Vendor Qualifications state: “Have the capacity to begin work within a reasonable time after notification.” Can you expand on what the County considers a “reasonable time”?

“Reasonable time” is intended to provide flexibility appropriate to a pre-qualified vendor pool model. The expected start time for any engagement will vary based on the scope of work, the nature of the services requested, and departmental needs.

In general, vendors should be able to initiate work within a timeframe that is customary for professional services of this type, taking into account factors such as scheduling, preparation, and coordination with County staff. Specific start dates and timelines will be discussed and mutually agreed upon at the time of each engagement.

Would a consultant have the right to refuse an engagement if the timing does not fit within existing work commitments?

Yes. Participation in the pre-qualified vendor pool does not obligate a vendor to accept every engagement offered. Vendors may decline specific engagements if the timing, scope, or other conditions do not align with their availability or capacity at that time. The County anticipates working collaboratively with vendors to identify appropriate engagements based on fit, availability, and departmental needs.

The RFP asks the consultant to identify “County competencies the session supports.” Can you provide a list of Erie County competencies that proposers should reference?

Erie County does not maintain or require adherence to a single, formalized County-wide competency framework for the purposes of this RFP.

Proposers should use their professional judgment to describe how proposed services support competencies commonly associated with effective public-sector performance, leadership, supervision, and organizational effectiveness. Examples may include (but are not limited to) communication, supervision, leadership, collaboration, accountability, equity and inclusion, customer service, problem-solving, and change management. The intent is to understand alignment between proposed services and practical workforce needs, rather than to require reference to a prescribed competency model.

The RFP references page limits for the proposal but does not state what the page limits are. Are there page limits, and if so, what are they?

There is no formal page limit for proposals submitted in response to this RFP. However, the County encourages proposers to submit clear, concise, and well-organized proposals that provide sufficient detail to support evaluation without unnecessary length. Resumes may be included in an appendix and do not count toward any implied length expectations.

Can you say more about what consultants should expect from the County in terms of continued use of "proprietary, pre-existing" materials? Would the County have the right to remove the copyright and present as their own? Could they make changes to the materials that still retained the copyright (and therefore not

actually reflect our work)? I produce my materials as intact booklets, printed in color. Would reproduction include the quality of the original materials?

The RFP distinguishes clearly between custom materials created specifically for the County under the contract and a consultant's pre-existing or proprietary materials.

For pre-existing or proprietary materials not created specifically under this Agreement:

- The County does not acquire ownership of, nor the right to remove or alter copyright attribution for, a consultant's pre-existing or proprietary materials.
- As described in the RFP, consultants grant the County a perpetual, non-exclusive, royalty-free license to use, reproduce, display, and distribute such materials solely for internal County purposes. This license does not permit the County to represent proprietary materials as its own work or to remove copyright notices.
- The County would not modify, adapt, or revise a consultant's proprietary materials unless such modification is expressly authorized by the consultant or otherwise agreed to as part of a specific engagement. Absent such authorization, proprietary materials should be used as provided.

Following award, may vendors propose additional course offerings, coaching approaches, or organizational development services to be added to the County's catalog over the contract term?

Vendors may propose updates or additions to their offerings during the term of the agreement, subject to County review and approval.

Any proposed additions must be consistent with the scope of services and pricing structure established in the original proposal and may not materially alter the nature of the vendor's submission. The County reserves the right to accept, modify, or decline proposed updates at its discretion.

For offerings that combine facilitation and coaching (e.g., cohort-based leadership development programs), should these be submitted under a single service category or across multiple categories?

Vendors may submit integrated offerings under the service category they believe best represents the primary nature of the engagement. Where an offering spans multiple service areas (such as training, facilitation, and coaching), proposers should clearly describe all components and how they relate to the selected category.

If an offering meaningfully aligns with more than one service category, vendors may reference the offering across multiple categories, provided the description is clear and not duplicative.

For in-person sessions, will the County provide training space and equipment, or should proposals include assumptions related to facilities and materials?

County departments may provide training space and basic equipment for in-person sessions.

Does Schedule B need to be submitted as part of the proposal, or does it exist so that proposers know what will be required if selected?

Schedule B does not need to be submitted as part of the proposal.

Schedule B is included in the RFP for informational purposes to advise proposers of the insurance requirements that will apply if a proposer is selected and enters into a contract with the County. Proof of insurance meeting the requirements outlined in Schedule B will be required prior to contract execution, not at the proposal submission stage.

Proposers are encouraged to review Schedule B carefully to ensure they can meet the insurance requirements if selected.

For e-learning development, does the County require access to editable source files (e.g., Articulate Storyline or Rise)?

No. The County requires delivery of the final, completed version of e-learning content only. Access to editable source files is not required unless expressly requested and authorized as part of a specific engagement.

May bidders propose rate ranges or not-to-exceed pricing where effort may vary by department, engagement scope, or participant group?

No. Proposers must submit set pricing (e.g., hourly rates, per-session fees, or per-engagement fees) as part of their Cost Proposal. Rate ranges or not-to-exceed pricing structures are not acceptable under this RFP.

Are travel expenses reimbursable in accordance with County policy, and if so, what rates or guidelines should vendors follow?

No. Travel expenses are not reimbursable. Proposers should incorporate any anticipated travel costs into their proposed rates and fees.

For clarity, when vendors utilize pre-existing proprietary frameworks, methodologies, or licensed content not created specifically for the County, does the County anticipate these being treated in accordance with Section V.F regarding pre-existing or proprietary materials?

Yes. Pre-existing proprietary frameworks, methodologies, or licensed content not created specifically for the County will be treated in accordance with Section V.F of the RFP regarding pre-existing or proprietary materials.

Will any engagements require vendor access to County systems or employee-level information that involves additional security requirements beyond those described in the RFP?

At this time, the County does not anticipate requiring vendors to access County systems beyond what is described in the RFP.

Engagements that involve employee-level information (such as coaching, assessments, interviews, or organizational development activities) are expected to comply with the

confidentiality and data-security requirements outlined in the RFP. If a specific engagement were to require access to additional systems or involve heightened security requirements, those requirements would be identified and addressed in advance as part of engagement scoping and would be subject to County approval.

Does the County require the use of a specific secure method for transmitting coaching notes, assessment data, or other sensitive information?

The County does not mandate the use of a specific platform or transmission method. Vendors must use secure, industry-standard methods for transmitting and storing confidential or sensitive information, consistent with the confidentiality, data-protection, and data-handling requirements described in the RFP. Any transmission of sensitive information must protect individual confidentiality and prevent unauthorized access or disclosure.

If a particular engagement requires the use of a County-designated system or method, the County will communicate those requirements at the time of engagement.

The RFP notes that evaluation criteria are not listed in order of importance and may be weighted at the County's discretion. Can the County share whether any criteria are expected to carry greater emphasis during the review process?

The County does not assign predetermined weights to individual evaluation criteria for this RFP.

Proposals will be evaluated holistically based on the criteria outlined in the RFP, with emphasis placed on overall responsiveness, demonstrated capability to provide the proposed services, professional qualifications and experience, approach and methodology, and the reasonableness and value of proposed pricing. The County reserves discretion to consider and balance evaluation criteria in a manner that best serves the County's interests.

Is there a preferred or maximum number of courses or offerings vendors should submit, and should submissions include full catalogs or representative samples?

There is no preferred or maximum number of courses or offerings that proposers must submit.

Proposers should submit a set of offerings that reasonably represents the scope, depth, and types of services they are proposing to make available through the pre-qualified vendor pool. Submissions may include representative samples rather than full catalogs, provided that the proposal clearly describes the nature of the services, delivery formats, target audiences, and pricing.

The County encourages proposers to be selective and concise, focusing on offerings that are most relevant to the needs of a public-sector workforce and that demonstrate the proposer's capabilities across the applicable service categories.

How does the County determine whether an engagement is delivered virtually, in person, or in a hybrid format? Is modality typically defined by the requesting department or determined collaboratively with the selected vendor?

The delivery modality for each engagement will be determined based on the needs and preferences of the requesting department, taking into account the nature of the engagement, learning objectives, participant group, and operational considerations. The County anticipates that delivery modality will be determined collaboratively between the requesting department and the selected vendor, with the Department of Personnel involved as appropriate.

For customized or tailored Training and Organizational Development services where the scope may be unknown at this time, does the County prefer to see hourly rates only (with scope negotiated later on a task-order basis), or fixed prices with assumptions that may later be refined?

Proposers should submit set pricing as required by the RFP.

For services where scope may vary by department or engagement, proposers may include hourly rates, per-session fees, or per-engagement fees, along with clear descriptions of what those rates include. Where fixed-price offerings are proposed, any assumptions (e.g., group size, session length, number of sessions) should be clearly stated.

Final scope, pricing application, and engagement details will be discussed and agreed upon at the time of each engagement, based on departmental needs. However, pricing structures must be clearly defined in the proposal and may not rely on rate ranges or open-ended negotiation.

If a vendor provides its proprietary 360-degree assessment tool for Coaching services, does the perpetual, royalty-free license allow the County to use that assessment for additional participants beyond the contracted scope?

No. The license granted to the County for pre-existing or proprietary materials does **not** extend to use beyond the scope of the specific engagement for which those materials are provided.

For proprietary or licensed assessment tools (such as 360-degree assessments), use is limited to the participants, purposes, and scope expressly authorized under the applicable engagement. Any additional use, participants, or administrations would require separate authorization and applicable licensing consistent with the vendor's terms.

Would the County consider making this procurement a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) set-aside?

No. This procurement is not being issued as an SDVOSB set-aside.

The RFP requires submission of the entire proposal (including cost estimate) via mail or courier by the proposal due date (January 5, 2026). Should submissions be organized as “Volume 1 – Proposal” and “Volume 2 – Cost Proposal”?

The County does not require proposals to be labeled or organized as formal volumes (e.g., “Volume 1” and “Volume 2”). However, proposers must clearly separate the Cost Proposal from the remainder of the proposal materials in accordance with the RFP instructions.

Should the proposal and cost proposal be submitted in separate sealed envelopes?

Yes. The Cost Proposal must be submitted in a separate sealed envelope, clearly labeled in accordance with the RFP instructions. All other proposal materials should be submitted together but separate from the sealed Cost Proposal.

Only one sealed Cost Proposal is required.

Do the proposal materials need to be bound?

There is no binding requirement specified in the RFP.

Proposers may choose a binding method that keeps materials organized and secure (e.g., binder clip, comb binding, or similar), provided that the proposal is easy to review and handle. Proposers should avoid bindings that make duplication or review difficult.

Can the section on proposed classes, courses, and assessments be included as an appendix that is not included in the page count?

Yes. Information related to proposed classes, courses, and assessments may be included in an appendix.

There is no formal page limit for proposals under this RFP. However, proposers are encouraged to clearly organize materials so that required information is easy to locate and review. Including detailed course descriptions or catalogs in an appendix is acceptable, provided the main proposal clearly references and summarizes those materials.

For off-sites and retreats, does facilitation require vendors to provide event planning, coordination, or location services?

No. Facilitation of off-sites or retreats does not, by default, require vendors to provide event planning, coordination, or location services.

Unless expressly included and approved as part of a specific engagement, vendors should not assume responsibility for venue selection, event logistics, catering, or related coordination. Any proposed event planning or logistical services should be clearly identified and priced separately in the proposal or at the time of engagement.

Do proposers need to provide detailed outlines for all courses offered, or is it acceptable to provide a detailed outline for one course as an example?

Proposers are not required to provide detailed outlines for every course or offering.

Proposers may provide detailed outlines for a representative sample of courses to demonstrate their approach, methodology, and level of detail, provided that sufficient descriptive information is included for all proposed offerings to allow the County to evaluate scope, relevance, and feasibility.

Do proposers need to submit a Certificate of Insurance with the proposal, or will that be required later in the process?

Proposers are not required to submit a Certificate of Insurance with the proposal. Insurance documentation will be required only after selection and prior to contract execution, in accordance with the requirements outlined in Schedule B of the RFP. Proposers should review Schedule B to ensure they are able to meet the insurance requirements if selected.

Regarding proprietary materials, does the ownership language in the RFP apply to: (a) materials submitted as part of the proposal response, (b) new materials developed for Erie County departments after selection as a vendor, or (c) both?

The ownership and intellectual property provisions in the RFP apply differently depending on the type and purpose of the materials.

- Materials submitted as part of the proposal response (including descriptions, sample materials, outlines, or illustrative content) remain the property of the proposer and are used by the County solely for proposal evaluation purposes, subject to applicable public records laws.
- New materials developed specifically for Erie County under a contract (such as customized curricula, training materials, reports, or other deliverables created as part of an engagement) are considered “Deliverables” under the RFP and are treated as works made for hire, with ownership vesting in the County, as described in the RFP.
- Pre-existing or proprietary materials that a vendor brings to an engagement and that were not created specifically for the County remain the property of the vendor. In those cases, the County receives a perpetual, non-exclusive, royalty-free license to use such materials for internal County purposes, consistent with the RFP’s intellectual property provisions.

This distinction is intended to protect vendors’ existing intellectual property while ensuring the County has appropriate rights to use materials created specifically for its operations.

TL;DR — How to Read This RFP

This RFP is not a procurement for a single program, curriculum, or engagement model. Erie County is establishing a pre-qualified vendor pool that departments may draw from on an as-needed, best-fit basis over the contract term.

Key implications for proposers:

- The County is intentionally seeking a range of approaches, formats, and service models that can be tailored to individual departmental needs, rather than a standardized or one-size-fits-all solution.

- Scope, duration, cohort size, delivery method (virtual, in-person, hybrid), and outcomes will be defined at the time of each engagement, based on operational needs and available funding.
- The strongest responses describe how the proposer can adjust content, delivery, and approach across different audiences, service categories, and use cases within a public-sector environment.
- Cost proposals should use clear, set pricing structures (e.g., hourly rates, per-session fees, per-engagement fees) that can be applied to engagements of varying size and complexity.
Pricing should reflect the total cost of service delivery, with no reliance on open-ended negotiation, ranges, or separate reimbursement of overhead or travel.

Email to Informational Meeting Participants:

Dear Registered Informational Meeting Participants,

Thank you for registering for the upcoming informational meeting regarding Erie County's Strategic Talent Development Services RFP.

To ensure alignment with the County's operational needs and contractual requirements, we want to provide an important clarification in advance of the meeting:

- Only U.S.-based vendors will be considered under this RFP.
- Respondents must be able to provide at least a portion of services in person within Erie County. While virtual and hybrid delivery models are acceptable and encouraged where appropriate, proposals must demonstrate the capacity for on-site, in-person service delivery when required.

Vendors who do not meet both of these criteria should carefully evaluate whether participation in this procurement is appropriate.

This clarification is intended to help prospective respondents assess fit early and to support a competitive, efficient procurement process.

We look forward to a productive informational session with those vendors whose capabilities align with these requirements.