

**Southern Maryland Regional Library Association
Request for Proposal for Classification, Compensation, & Organizational
Capacity Study**

Responses to Bidder Inquiries

No.	Question	Response
1	Will the pre-bid conference provide more information as to the scope of work?	The scope of work is available at https://smrla.org/rfp/ . The pre-bid conference will be an opportunity for potential consultants to have questions about the proposal answered.
2	Additionally, is there some place (other than eMaryland Marketplace Advantage) that we need to register for the event?	On October 11, 2022, a pre-bid conference will be held with the RFP Committee via Zoom and the log-in information will be posted at https://smrla.org/rfp/ .
3	Is there an announcement or RFP that you can share with me that provides more information?	Yes, please visit https://smrla.org/rfp/ .
4	Can you please provide the required information?	Yes, please visit https://smrla.org/rfp/
5	We understand that there will be a pre-bid conference held via Zoom on October 11, but the RFP does not indicate a time of day. Could you please provide the time at which the conference will be held?	It will be from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
6	Is it necessary for vendors to register to attend the pre-bid?	No registration is necessary.
7	Can you provide any information about when the Zoom login info will be posted?	The Zoom log information will be posted on Tuesday, October 4.
8	Do you have time to talk about the RFP anytime the rest of today (4:30 +) or tomorrow between 9:30 and 10:30 or 11:30 to 1?	Unfortunately I have no availability this week. I would invite you to submit any questions about the RFP in writing so that I may get back to you as soon as possible. Additionally, a pre-bid conference

		has been scheduled for next Tuesday, October 11 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. The Zoom log in for that meeting will be posted on our website at https://smrla.org/rfp/ .
9	Please advise if the following link is correct for joining the conference: https://smrla.org/RFP/	Yes, this is the site where you can find the Zoom log in for the pre-bid conference.
10	Please advise how and where we can access the documents for this solicitation, if in fact you are unable to forward the documents.	The documents for the solicitation can be found at https://smrla.org/RFP/ . Please note that you should follow the instructions outlined on our website for submitting your proposal.
11	What is the period of performance?	SMRLA evaluates all of our staff annually.
12	We would like to utilize a delivery service, such as FedEx or UPS, to submit our proposal to SMRLA. Since these services cannot deliver to a P.O. Box, can you please confirm that the physical address listed on page 6 (37600 New Market Rd, Charlotte Hall, MD 20622) is the most appropriate address for non-USPS delivery, and that it will be staffed and able to accept deliveries during normal business hours (M-F, 8am-5pm)?	37600 New Market Rd, Charlotte Hall, MD is our physical address where we accept non-USPS delivery. Our operating hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
13	Is telework approved for the staff assigned to this contract?	Yes
14	Is there a previous or incumbent contractor? Has this study been conducted previously? If so, please provide details.	The previous contractor was Hendricks & Associates, Inc. Yes, the last study was completed December 2013.
15	Please provide the anticipated Level of Effort to fulfill the SMRLA's requirements.	I'm not sure what you mean by this. Please see our website at https://smrla.org/rfp/ for the details of our request.

16	Please provide the anticipated numbers of classifications and compensation categories. Also, how many employees does SMRLA currently have?	We are hopeful our selected consultant will help us determine the classification and compensation categories. SMRLA currently has sixteen employees.
17	Will SMRLA consider key personnel experience with nonprofits or libraries, even if that experience was gained outside the company, to count as company experience?	Yes
18	The section Proposal Requirements, I. Certifications references four different Certifications (Attachments I, J, K, and L) that have not been attached to the RFP. The Attachments Checklist only lists the Certificate of Independent Price Determination, included as Attachment G. Are there other certification forms that respondents will need to submit? If so, please provide them.	The proposal requirements are outlined on our website in full at https://smrla.org/rfp-salary/ .
19	What are the licensing requirements for doing business in Maryland referenced in the RFP?	That is an error in the RFP Section I. Certifications. Please include Attachments A, B, C, D, E, F, and G in your response.
Responses to Pre-Bid Conference Questions		
1	What is motivating the study at this time?	Our old study is out of date and we have a new CEO. The previous CEO did some restructuring. We want to do a comprehensive look at how we're classifying and compensating employees.
2	How many employees are we talking about and how many job titles?	We have 16 employees and 14 job titles. Three of the job titles do not currently have staff members, they are place holders for the future.
3	So, you'd want to look at those positions as well and also make sure they are the right ones to be filling next?	Yes, that's correct.
4	Your RFP has a statement about a requirement to being licensed to do business in Maryland. Our state does not require any kind of business	This is to make sure any vendors are legally able to do business with us here in Maryland. I can get some

	license. Can you tell us a little about what that is in Maryland?	additional clarification from our attorney if we specifically require any type of licensing.
5	Is your organization classified as a nonprofit or are you a public agency?	We are a 5013C, so we are considered a nonprofit that receives state funding.
6	By when do you need the findings?	Ideally, we hope by the end of our fiscal year which is June 30, 2023.
7	When we talk about the compensation aspect of this study, were you seeking a custom survey or published data or results of the survey that were recently done? How were you envisioning that aspect of the project?	The public libraries across the state recently did a joint salary study. I purposely didn't request for SMRLA to join in because as a regional library we do have some positions that are significantly different than what you might find in the public library space. We have more of a regional scope, so we are looking for something that's tailored specifically to us as the regional library.
8	Who do you see as your market?	I'm hoping a vendor can help us identify this. My understanding is our last study looked at some private employers. We would want to do that again, but not looking strictly at libraries. There may be some difficulty finding a match for what we are as a regional and the region we serve. We are located close to Washington D.C. and Patuxent Naval Air Station. These are the two big employing markets, with lots of federal contractors in this region. This is our competition when it comes to talent. For communities of our size we also have the typical additional employers such as hospitals and the educational system.
9	Are you having any difficulty recruiting or retaining?	I have been here since October 2020 and yes, we have had some

		<p>turnover. It's not an unusual amount. We are very intentional about reviewing our job postings and job descriptions before making a post. We really take our time to get the best candidate. I would also argue that it depends on the position. Our technical services department, which processes new materials, has seen the most turnover recently. This is in part due to retirements vs. someone resigning for a higher paid position. Where I'd want to be prepared to remain competitive is with some of our key positions: communications manager, Debra's position (office manager/HR generalist) which needs a complete review since it has really evolved over time, and my position (CEO). Knowing what the professional environment in libraries is shifting toward, I would want to make sure we're able to remain competitive so that SMRLA always has quality candidates. Overall, we do okay, but I think coming out of the pandemic we want to make sure we keep our competitive edge. Historically we have had retention issues due to pay because our surrounding competitors can pay a much higher salary. We have had several staff leave for a higher paying position, and that's been across the board in various positions. We would like our salaries to be more competitive. They've never truly been competitive and that does hinder us in the talent that we can attract and retain.</p>
10	Is it possible to receive either your organizational chart or a list of those job titles that you currently have?	Yes. We can post that to our RFP page.

11	<p>Would you say that your job descriptions, with few exceptions, are up to date or do they need an overhaul; and if so all of them? It would be important in terms of the organizational part of the study, but going into the study, to what extent do you think they're up to date?</p>	<p>I have mixed feelings about it, again because I think the pandemic has affected how we work, i.e. losing a key position, like my predecessor, and then myself coming in and not having an opportunity to really evaluate us from an organizational perspective. I would argue the job descriptions are okay. As part of our annual review we do ask staff to let us know if they think there are changes required to their job description. I know there's a few people that have made changes or proposed changes. I'm holding off until we can go through this process. In light of COVID, which has been so impactful, I would want to have a really thorough review of those job descriptions to make sure they're still in line with how we are working now.</p>
12	<p>Approximately what would you say is the budget for this project?</p>	<p>I have not set a firm budget. Our goal is to collect the proposals and make our best analysis based on what we've outlined in the RFP. Also, to see who closest aligns with those needs and ideally that's the candidate we would go with. This may be something I will need to request the board vote to approve.</p>
13	<p>Ashley, anything you want to share with us about the context of the organization and what is going on with SMRLA and the libraries in your region at this time?</p>	<p>We are what Maryland calls a regional resource center in our current law. I consider us a public library that serves public library partners. Our service areas are Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's counties. We've seen libraries growing and expanding either through addition of staff, facilities, or service vehicles that do outreach in all three of these regions. We</p>

		<p>really want to capture all the changes that COVID has put on libraries. As well as trying to be more forward thinking about what ways SMRLA needs to be prepared staffing wise to continue to meet the demands of a growing population. Our core mission is available on our website. We still focus heavily on supporting the libraries with technology projects, our core services such as delivering materials across the region, and offering professional development to staff in the region. All of these for the most part have remained the same. One position that we've added since I've been here is our digital resources analyst.</p>
14	<p>Would you say that it would be sufficient to use published data, which would give us information to federal salary scales, private sector, educational institutions, and so forth, without having to do a custom survey? And where we wanted other library specific positions we could use the statewide salary study. Is that fair to say? Or would you prefer custom surveys with some of your peers or some of the other regional libraries in the state?</p>	<p>I think a custom survey would be the way. Even if you compared us to other regional libraries, the employment opportunities and demographics are so different in those areas. I feel like we're really unique in that there is so much competition there could be a danger in strictly comparing published data and not really taking a holistic view of the employment market in the region. For SMRLA I feel its critical for us, we have a great mix of people and I don't want to lose them because we couldn't rise to the occasion as far as a competitive salary.</p>
15	<p>Is it ok to contact you or Debra if we have any questions in writing a response to your RFP?</p>	<p>Yes. The respondent question deadline is coming up this Friday. If you could, get your questions to us then. Our hard deadline to make sure all our answers are posted on the website will be Thursday October 27.</p>

16	Do we have a budget range for the project?	No. I didn't come into it with a firm number in mind.
17	Is this a new opportunity and if not is there an incumbent?	This study is going to be a little different than our previous one completed in December 2013. In our current strategic plan there is specific language about evaluating our organizational capacity. In the RFP there is language about wanting to make sure that we're evaluating capacity and equities in our positions as well as providing recommendations for additional positions to support us.
18	How do you define capacity and equity? What does that mean to you?	It appears to me that some of us have roles where work comfortably happens within the workday, we work hours as assigned and some of our positions do ok. However, there are others where I am aware a lot of hours are being put in. This raises questions if that position has hit their performance capacity and do we need to look at adding positions so we don't lose staff, typically in key roles and positions difficult to fill, due to burnout.
19	Will SMRLA advise of the Final Cost for the previous and similar study of 2013?	No. Releasing this information may unfairly skew our bidding process.
20	Has SMRLA finalized the approved budget parameters for this RFP; 2022 Study? If yes, what are the budget parameters?	As stated during the October 11 pre-bid conference: "I have not set a firm budget. Our goal is to collect the proposals and make our best analysis based on what we've outlined in the RFP. Also, to see who closest aligns with those needs and ideally that's the candidate we would go with. This may be something I will need to request the board vote to approve."

21	How/where can bidders obtain get access to and/or receive copies current position descriptions, job titles and requisite job duties?	We will provide this information once a contract is awarded.
22	What are SMRLA's current staffing levels: Full-Time and Part-time?	All positions are full time.
23	Attachments p. 9, Attachment F, Fee Proposal. May respondents provide pricing for labor on an hourly basis, under Recurring Costs?	Yes.
24	If respondents provide a fixed hourly rate, would it be acceptable to provide the number of hours as a projected figure to be finalized during contract performance?	Yes.
25	Could you provide more information on SMRLA's expectations for the length of the study?	Please let me know how I may further clarify.
26	Would you like respondents to propose a timeframe for completion?	You may include a timeline if it supports your proposal.
27	June 30 was mentioned in the pre-bid conference; are there any other due dates that should be taken into consideration?	Please refer to the Schedule of Events for any other due dates that should be taken into consideration.
28	RFP p. 5, General Instructions for Respondents. Would SMRLA consider removing the requirement for a hard copy submission, and switching to email submission only?	No.
29	Can SMRLA provide a copy of the previous study completed in December 2013?	No. Reviewing a previous vendor's work may unfairly skew the bidding process. Additionally, releasing this information is not necessary in order for your firm to submit a complete proposal.
30	Based upon the Organizational Chart provided, does SMRLA have current position descriptions for each position, and are you looking to have them reviewed, updated, and re-classified?	Yes, we have current position descriptions for each position. Please refer to the Introduction/Purpose of Solicitation section for the expected deliverables for this project.

31	Is SMRLA looking for a comparison in salary from local, State of Maryland, other entities in the geographical area, and/or other government agencies that are similar in their work scope to be evaluated in providing salary data that would be included in the study, or are you relying solely on the contractor to determine which public and private organizations will be used for the comparative analyses? If the latter, do you want this identified in our proposal or after contract award?	SMRLA is relying on the contractor to determine which public and private organizations will be used for the analysis. Please refer to the Introduction/Purpose of Solicitation which notes: “The proposal should clearly outline the methodology of the study and clearly identify the responsibilities of the firm.”
32	Does SMRLA want the salary information to include an average, low range, and high range?	According to the Introduction/Purpose of Solicitation, “Recommend an appropriate salary range for each position based on the classification study.”
33	Does SMRLA want to focus only on state agencies, as that is where you receive your funding?	No.
34	What are SMRLA’s objectives to be included in the study?	Please review the Introduction/Purpose of Solicitation section of the request for proposals.
35	Are any of SMRLA’s positions union?	No.
36	Please confirm that SMRLA does not have any state employees.	No, we do not have any state employees.