



FirstLine Schools
Request for Qualifications: Marketing Services
November 18, 2021

300 North Broad St – Suite 207
New Orleans, LA 70119

RFQ Announcement: Thursday, November 18, 2021

RFQ Questions Due: Monday, November 29th at 2:00PM
Questions directed to Claudia Barker, cbarker@firstlineschools.org

Proposal Submittal Deadline: Monday, December 13, 2021 at 2pm

FirstLine Schools
300 N. Broad Street - Suite 207, New Orleans, LA 70119
RFP Solicitation Number: 2021-004

Background

FirstLine Schools, a public charter school management organization that operates five Pre-K - 8th grade open-admissions public schools, requests proposals from marketing professionals / firms to provide services in support of our mission to create and inspire great open admissions public schools in New Orleans.

Specifically, we seek expertise in strategic marketing of the FirstLine brand in order to increase student enrollment in an environment that is becoming increasingly competitive due to decreased demand for public school spots in New Orleans. Overall, New Orleans Public Schools' applications through its Common Application Process (NCAP) decreased from 13,200 in 19-20 to 9,201 in 21-22, a [30% reduction in demand over the past two years](#). The nearly 13% reduction from 19-20 to 20-21 predated the pandemic, as the NCAP's main round began in fall 2019 and ended before the pandemic started in March 2020. This could be due to the increased cost of living in New Orleans, which has forced many low-income public school families out of the city limits. In addition, the pandemic's uncertainty has caused some public school parents to keep their rising 1st-7th grade children at their current schools rather than seek better placements, thus reducing applications. Also, many families chose to keep their youngest children home instead of sending them to school during the pandemic: across the state of Louisiana public school enrollment dropped 2.3% during the pandemic, primarily due to a decrease in Pre-K and kindergarten enrollment.

Despite these challenges, FirstLine, whose founders created the city's first open admissions charter school in 1998, has much to offer. Our staff is diverse: over 65% of our teachers are African American / Latinx, reflecting the culture and community of our students, who are 88% African American and 11% Latinx. We have a strong commitment to ongoing diversity and inclusion work, as evidenced by the creation of a new position in our C-Suite, a Chief Equity Officer, and five years of work on diversity training for staff.

FirstLine also has a strong commitment to whole child development - educating students in mind, body, and spirit. All of our leaders and teaching staff have been trained in trauma-informed practices and we offer social / emotional learning for all students, including regular, facilitated student "circles," which deepen students' relationships with caring adults and their peers. In addition, four of our five schools offer the nationally known Edible Schoolyard New Orleans program, a signature program of FirstLine Schools, which teaches children to make healthy connections through food and the natural world, expanding students' knowledge of how to nourish themselves and one another, and respect for life.

Scope of Service

FirstLine is seeking marketing expertise that will deliver:

- A plan for family and student recruitment for the 22-23 school year and help implementing it - with the goal of families ranking all five of our schools among their first choices on the NOLA-PS centralized application, with a particular focus on FirstLine Live Oak, our newest turnaround school, which is currently under enrolled (at 326, with full enrollment at 600+). Live Oak also has our largest percentage of Spanish-speaking students (27%), so a marketing firm with bilingual capacity and expertise in marketing to Spanish-speaking families is a plus. **The plan should take into account the declining**

enrollment in Pre-K - 8 public schools across the city and perhaps include market research about what families prioritize in selecting a school and what barriers they may perceive in school selection. Round One of the NCAP ends January 21, 2022. Round Two typically begins in the spring.

- Specific advice on how best to allocate marketing resources - whether it is through printed collateral distributed in neighborhoods, advertising, digital media, event production, etc. to reach our target families most effectively.
- Analysis and advice on how best to build our base of enrollment by expanding Pre-K and K across our network of schools, including timing by school site.
- A responsive marketing professional who is assigned to FirstLine for the duration of this project and who can help build capacity on our existing team to carry the work into the future.

Proposal Expectations

Interested individuals / firms may respond with a brief proposal including:

- The firm's qualifications (including current and former clients)
- Firm's experience working with K-12 schools (public and private) in New Orleans
- The approach you propose for service delivery to FirstLine
- Clear language about responsibilities, specifically what you will do and what you expect FirstLine to do
- The fee for services for a 12-month period, starting in January 2022.
- A timeline for deliverables.
- Attachment A
- The resume of the marketing professional(s) who would be assigned to FirstLine for this project and how many hours/week or hours/month are reserved for FirstLine.

As Round One of the NCAP has just opened, so we encourage interested parties to send proposals to FirstLine as soon as possible, but on or before December 13, 2021.

RFQ Bid Process:

Submission: The Proposer will submit the following by **Monday, December 13, 2021, at 2:00 PM CT: One electronic copy of the proposal, with costs outlined, relevant resumes, and a signed Attachment A (via email is preferred, USB will be accepted).**

Submission should be delivered via email or USB to cbarker@firstlineschools.org.

Claudia Barker
Chief Development Officer
FirstLine Schools
300 N. Broad St., Suite 207
New Orleans, LA 70119

Any questions regarding this RFP should be directed to Claudia Barker, cbarker@firstlineschools.org, by **Monday, November 29th at 2:00PM**, Questions will be answered via a document on the [RFP page of the FirstLine Schools website](#) by 5pm on Thursday, December 2, 2021.

Evaluation: A variety of weighted criteria, given below, will be considered in evaluating proposals. This evaluation will be made based on information provided within the Proposal, by the Proposer during RFQ specific presentations or negotiations, client references, and industry references.

Component	Scoring Scale	Evaluation Criteria
Proposal Quality	0-50 points	Award of a purchase order or contract is based on the best value to FirstLine: quality, availability, delivery, specifications, terms, conditions, and fitness for the particular purpose. When a solicitation requires an oral presentation, submission of test samples, or inspection of facilities, these factors are part of the component evaluation.
Price	0-30 points for each (Price and Professional References) The highest score is 30 points; however, applicants failing to address a Component entirely will receive a score of zero.	Lowest bid(s) receive 30 points; Highest bid(s) receive 0 points; all other bids receive between 29 and 1 points. The total cost may include unit price, delivery and installation, and maintenance and cost of operation as defined in the solicitation. If there is a discrepancy between a unit price and its extension, the unit price will prevail.
Professional References		Consideration is also given to the applicants' potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions and their past performance record.
Headquarter Location	0-20 points each Applicant has provided verifiable evidence of component described by the Evaluation Criteria	20 Points: Principal of Business and Registered Office in Orleans Parish as listed with the Louisiana Secretary of State. 10 Points: Principal of Business and Registered Office in the Greater New Orleans Area (Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, and St. Tammany) as listed with the Louisiana Secretary of State. 5 Points: Principal of Business and Registered Office in Louisiana as listed with the Louisiana Secretary of State.
State & Local Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and/or Minority Owned Business		20 Points: Certified DBE, a certificate issued by the Department of Transportation, City of New Orleans or other certifying agency must be provided with the submission. 15 Points: Principal of Business (owns at least 51% interest and also controls management and daily business operations), as listed with the Louisiana Secretary of State, is a minority- or women-owned business. We will require a copy of the principal business owner(s) driver's license or other state-issued identification.
Executive Resumes	0-10 points for each Applicant can successfully demonstrate the Component as described by the Evaluation Criteria	Relevant professional experience, but no expertise in project subject; between 5 and 10 years of specified expertise in project subject; more than 10 years of expertise in specific project subject.

Community Involvement		Demonstrated organizational commitment to programs or public service initiatives serving the youth of New Orleans community relationships.
Innovation		Proposal demonstrates innovative means and methods.

END OF RFQ NARRATIVE

ATTACHMENT B

Vendor Background Checks at FirstLine Schools

If selected to provide services for FirstLine Schools, we are required to have a background check on all vendors that will work with our students and/or have unsupervised access to our students. [For more information, please go here.](#)

Background checks to be used, according to vendor’s role and level of authority (see below chart for details, custodial staff are considered level “V3”):

- LobbyGuard (See <http://lobbyguard.com/k-12-education-school-safety/>)
 - Sex Offender Registry

Employment Research Services (ERS) online background check

- 7-year Criminal History Search
- Social Security Search (shows past addresses)
- Child Abuse Search
- Sex Offender Search

[Louisiana State Police Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information](#)

- State Criminal History Record
- Federal Criminal History Record- FBI Report
- National Criminal History Record

Background check results remain in effect for 3 years, with the vendor’s written agreement that the vendor will notify FirstLine if criminal status changes for any reason.

Guidelines for Disqualification (includes, but is not limited to)

- Conviction of any of the criminal offenses listed in the [Louisiana Child Protection Act](#)
- Registered sex offenders
- Criminally found guilty of or pled nolo contendere to a charge of child abuse or neglect
 - Pending charge of child abuse on a case-by-case basis

Conviction or a plea of nolo contendere to any felony

Conviction or plea of no contest to any misdemeanor that indicates the individual may pose a threat to the integrity or safety of the school environment

Currently on probation for offenses that indicate the individual may pose a threat to the integrity or safety of the school environment will be further reviewed by HR

A pattern of criminal charges and arrests, even if they were dismissed, which cause concern that the individual may pose a threat to the integrity or safety of the school or school environment

Intentionally falsifying any information or documents submitted during the employment application process

Vendor Type	Background Check Required	Cost to Vendor
V0: No Student Contact , off-site vendors (e.g. works out of office and not in our schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No background check required 	\$0
V1: Assisting- Provides services while a school employee is present, such as in a classroom or school office. Does not handle money and is never left alone with a student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Must provide a state issued id to be scanned by LobbyGuard each time individual enters school building. 	\$0
V2: Limited authority- Vendor who is responsible for a group of children, but is always within eyesight of a school employee and is never in direct or sole supervisory or decision-making authority over students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All of the above, and must be cleared by ERS online background check prior to working with our students (2-3 day process). 	\$30-70 depending on number of past zip codes

<p>V3: Authority- Vendor who will have unsupervised access to or authority over students. Ex: bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodial staff, facilities maintenance staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the above and a fingerprint background check through the Louisiana State Police Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information. Must be cleared by ERS online background check prior to working with our students (2-3 day process). 	<p>\$42.50 + cost of fingerprinting</p>
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NOTE: Vendors are NEVER allowed to transport students in any vehicle other than via a formal contract (school bus or van).

NOTE: Vendors at all tiers are not allowed to be one-on-one with a student without being within eyesight of a school employee. This is why we require cameras on all of our school buses and prefer cameras on all of our vans.

END OF RFQ DOCUMENT