

State of Louisiana Office of Technology Services

**Request for Information (RFI) related to the
Design, Development & Implementation of a Tax
Filing and Remittance, Delinquent Processing
and Distribution Software System – Louisiana
State and Local Uniform Electronic Return and
Remittance System**

RFI #3000022754

March 21, 2024

Office of Technology Services
Request for Information Related to Tax Filing and Remittance System
RFI # 3000022754

This Request for Information (RFI) is for planning purposes only and should not be construed as a Request for Proposal (RFP). This is not a solicitation for offers. This information will be reviewed and discussed by the State agency and may result in the advertisement of a formal and competitive Request for Proposal for the services included in the RFI.

Overview

1.0 Purpose of the Request for Information

The State of Louisiana, Division of Administration/Office of Technology Services (DOA/OTS), referred to throughout this document as “The State” on behalf of the Louisiana Uniform Local Sales Tax Board (LULSTB), referred to throughout this document as “The Board”, is seeking a solution to meet the requirements of Act 375 of the 2023 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature to design and implement a single return and remittance system for reporting and payment of all state and local sales and use tax in Louisiana.

The goal of this initiative is to employ a single vendor to provide technology solutions and services necessary to support the Louisiana State and Local Uniform Electronic Return and Remittance System in accordance with local, state and federal regulations. The objectives to be achieved through the contract to attain this goal include:

- Provide and support an online Louisiana State and Local Uniform Electronic Return and Remittance System (LURS) capable of:
 - providing business users and tax professionals a secure, efficient and cost-effective means to electronically transmit accurate sales and use tax returns for the State of Louisiana and all political subdivisions within the state on a consolidated electronic return;
 - providing the State of Louisiana and all political subdivisions within the state levying sales and use taxes the necessary detail information by taxing jurisdiction per the returns filed for individual accounts, domicile codes, and payment processing authorization through an electronic download directly into the individual processing systems; and
 - providing a single application/registration portal through which a taxpayer can register with the State of Louisiana and all applicable political subdivisions.
- Migrate historical data from the Parish E-file (PEF) system to the LURS.
- Provide technical support for the filing system including updates for changes in tax, interest and penalty rates, addition/deletion of domicile codes, and deduction changes in a timely manner.
- Provide guidance and validation requirements throughout the system to ensure that taxpayers file correctly and easily understand how to use the system.

2.0 Objectives of the Request for Information

- Understand the level of interest and availability of potential vendors that could provide a solution to the Board.
- Gain a more comprehensive understanding of business models and industry best practices related to solution development and implementation.
- Identify issues, roadblocks, and barriers to successful implementations.

The State and the Board are seeking information regarding vendor interest in and ability to provide services as outlined in this Request for Information (RFI) that seeks information regarding:

- Vendor experience and success with design, development, and implementation of online sales and use tax filing systems at both the state and local levels and the jurisdictions where the vendor gained the experience.
- Vendor experience and success with online sales and use tax system solutions to streamline and consolidate filing for multiple jurisdictions.
- Vendor ability to meet or exceed the requirements set forth in Scope of Services.
- Vendor options for “turnkey” or configurable solutions which can be implemented quickly and efficiently.

3.0 RFI Coordinator

RFI responses must be directed to the RFI coordinator:

Matthew Vince
Office of Technology Services
P.O. Box 94095
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9095
Phone: 225-342-7105
Fax: 225-219-9475
Email: pmo@la.gov

All communications relating to this RFI must be directed to the RFI Coordinator named above. All communications between respondents and State staff members, other than the RFI Coordinator, concerning this RFI are strictly prohibited.

4.0 Schedule of Events

The State reserves the right to revise this Schedule of Events.

Event	Date	Time
Public Notice of RFI	March 27, 2024	
RFI Briefing	N/A	
Deadline for Receipt of Questions/Inquiries	April 3, 2024	4:00 PM CT
Deadline for State's Response to Questions/Inquiries	April 10, 2024	
Deadline for Receipt of RFI Responses	April 24, 2024	4:00 PM CT

5.0 Response Preparation Cost

The State or the Board will not pay for the preparation of any information or response submitted in reference to this RFI, nor will it pay for any use of response information. The respondent assumes sole responsibility for any and all costs and incidental expenses associated with the preparation and reproduction of any materials submitted in response to this RFI. This includes preparations for approved discussions, demonstrations, or vendor marketing materials.

6.0 RFI Addenda/Cancellation

The State and the Board reserves the right to revise any part of the RFI by issuing an addendum to the RFI at any time. Issuance of this RFI, or subsequent addendum (if any), does not constitute a commitment by the State or the Board to issue an RFP or any other process resulting in award of a contract of any type or form. In addition, the State or the Board may cancel this informal process at any time, without penalty or prior notice.

7.0 Proprietary and/or Confidential Information

Pursuant to the Louisiana Public Records Act (La. R.S. 44:1 et. seq.), all public proceedings, records, contracts, and other public documents relating to this RFI shall be open to public

inspection. Respondents should refer to the Louisiana Public Records Act for further clarification, including protections sought for proprietary and/or trade secret information. Respondents are reminded that any material within a response to this RFI identified as confidential or proprietary must be clearly marked. Any response marked as confidential or proprietary in its entirety may be rejected without further consideration or recourse.

8.0 Written Inquiry/State Response Process

Respondents may submit written inquiries to the RFI Coordinator via email according to the Schedule of Events herein.

The State and the Board shall provide responses to all written inquiries, according to the Schedule of Events, in the form of an RFI addendum, posted to the LaPAC at <https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/lapac/pubMain.cfm>.

9.0 Response Submission

All responses to this RFI must be received by the due date and time indicated on the Schedule of Events. Responses received after the due date and time will not be considered. It is the sole responsibility of each respondent to assure that its response is delivered at the specified location prior to the deadline. Responses which, for any reason, are not so delivered will not be considered.

Electronic Submissions

Electronic submissions are the preferred format. Electronic submissions may be made using the Dropbox File Request system via the following link. Electronically submitted responses should be in Microsoft Word and/or PDF format.

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/CHI4itNZ8GoNIC1dXBY>

No submissions will be accepted via email.

Hard Copy Submissions

Hard copy response submissions, which should include at least one (1) hard-copy and one (1) digital (flash drive) copy, may be submitted via the U.S. Mail, courier, or hand-delivered:

If courier mail or hand-delivered

Matthew Vince

Office of Technology Services
Claiborne Building
1201 N. 3rd Street, Suite 2-130
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

If delivered by U.S. Mail

Matthew Vince

Office of Technology Services
P.O. Box 94095
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9095

10.0 Ownership of Responses

All materials submitted become the property of the State and the Board and will not be returned to the respondent. The State and the Board retain the right to use any and all ideas or adaptations of ideas contained in any response received through this RFI process.

11.0 Format of Response

All responses shall be submitted in hard-copy and digital format (PDF or Word is preferred), not to exceed 50 pages, in 10pt. font or larger according to the following outline:

Corporate Background and Experience

Responder shall provide a brief description of the company, including a brief history, corporate structure, and organization and the number of years in business.

Business Model for Contracting of Services

Responder shall describe its approach to a contract for its services should it be awarded a contract, but without providing any cost information in its response.

If a Commercial- Off-the-Shelf or Software-as-a-Service solution is proposed, the responder should indicate if proposed products are available through NASPO ValuePoint or similar purchasing agreements.

Approach and Methodology

Responder shall describe its proposed solution and approach for delivery of services, specifically identifying the use of delivery methodologies, or other methods to address evolving system needs.

Implementation Timeframe of Solution

Responder shall indicate the minimum time frame from contract execution for full implementation of its solution, inclusive of equipment acquisition, configuration, and testing.

No cost and/or marketing information shall be included in this RFI response.

12.0 Optional Discussion

To solicit feedback and ask follow-up questions based upon vendor RFI responses, The State and the Board reserve the right at their sole discretion to conduct a structured discussion for respondents to this RFI only. If the discussions are scheduled to take place, the discussion session may begin with a presentation by the State or the Board. Following the presentation, State and Board representatives and the vendor team will participate in a structured question and answer session. An agenda, specific questions and other expected topics for discussion may be provided prior to the discussion.

Neither the State nor the Board is under any obligation to conduct discussions with any respondent to this RFI.

Scope of Services

1.0 Background

The Louisiana Uniform Local Sales Tax Board, "The Board," was created by Act 274 of the 2017 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. Its primary purpose is to provide uniformity and efficiency in the imposition, collection, and administration of local sales and use taxes. It will accomplish its goal through the issuance of policy advice, adopting model procedures and uniform forms, and providing other support to local sales and use tax collectors in Louisiana.

There is currently an online filing system maintained by the Louisiana Department of Revenue (LDR), Parish E-file (PEF), which allows for filing in all taxing jurisdictions in Louisiana, but requires the return for the State of Louisiana and for each parish to be separately filed. This system allows individual downloads of return information and payment files (NACHA) by account directly into the 64 separate systems. Individual column information for each jurisdiction is maintained through a domicile code system which represents a specific column on a parish sales and use tax return.

Through Act 375 of the 2023 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Board was tasked with designing, implementing, managing, maintaining, and supervising a single filing and remittance system whereby each taxpayer can file and remit state and local sales and use taxes through a single transaction.

The Board is seeking solutions via this RFI which will fully replace the existing Parish E-File system in order to meet the requirements of Act 375 of the 2023 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature while still maintaining the ability to segregate the return detail information and corresponding payment into separate downloadable files by taxing jurisdiction.

2.0 System Functionality and Responsibilities

Primary Functions, Processes, and Services

The Louisiana State and Local Uniform Electronic Return and Remittance System (LURS) should provide functions, processes, and services to enable efficient registration, filing and remittance of sales and use taxes by taxpayers and tax professional users for all taxing

jurisdictions within the state and provide timely, accurate, electronically accessible specific tax and payment information to all taxing jurisdictions. The primary functions, processes, and services of the LURS are described below:

Account Registration

- Applicants should complete a single application/registration for all state and local taxing jurisdictions.
- Each business entity should have a master account number (LDR) with independent local account number attachment for separate business locations.
- A Taxpayer or Tax Professional user should have the ability to easily register new legal entities/accounts/tax types leveraging on-file data from currently established entities/accounts/tax types.
- A Taxpayer or Tax Professional user should have the ability to easily update contact information for taxpayer, including ability to mass update for selected organizations/accounts filing in the state.
- As a Taxpayer or Tax Professional user, assignment of user roles should be available to:
 - enable different users to access or not access specific account information on business accounts;
 - enable different users to access on an account-by-account basis as well as define the user role for those specific tax accounts (read only, payment only, filing only, etc.);
 - designate a master account admin; and
 - assign third parties, such as tax filing service providers or payment processors, with access to certain functionality on the portal such as filing original and amended returns, accessing notices, payment processing, etc.
- A Taxpayer should have the ability to extend or revoke a tax professional user's access on an account-by-account (legal entity) and tax type basis.
- Tax Professionals should have the ability to maintain a single user account that lets them access the accounts of all of their clients and carry out the filing and payment of all necessary returns.

System Access and Navigation

- Taxpayers or Tax Professional users should have the ability to access the system using a personal computer (PC or Mac) and any current, popular web browser (e.g., Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge, Apple Safari).

- Taxpayers or Tax Professional users should have the ability to navigate a user interface that doesn't require a significant learning curve and is intuitive, with many explanatory popups and hover boxes.
- Taxpayers and Tax Professional users should have a summary landing page with key options and notifications (dashboard view).
- The system should have compatibility to file types currently used on PEF: xml, NACHA, import template.
- The system should have the ability to connect to the State system of record to confirm State Account Numbers automatically. Data such as state filing frequency shall also be able to be processed via automated data connectivity with state system. (Dependency on State System API capabilities).
- The system should have the ability to connect to all political subdivision (Local) systems of record to confirm Local Account Numbers automatically. Data such as Local filing frequency shall also be able to be processed via automated data connectivity with Local systems. (Dependency on Local System API capabilities).
- The system should have the ability to Upload Documents.

Return Filing and Remittance

- The system should provide Taxpayers and Tax Professional users the ability to:
 - file a single return per account location for the state and all 63 parishes which levy local sales tax;
 - make payments on behalf of multiple entities/accounts under a single user log-in and have the payments associated with the appropriate account;
 - file and pay returns from 1-1-20 to present;
 - prepare, submit, and pay a late filed return which will calculate all applicable interest and penalties;
 - separate systematically the functionality of filing of the return from the payment of the amount due on the return through options for ACH credit payments and options to select filing/payment dates in the future for completed returns;
 - register accounts for ACH Credit payments without extra approval steps;
 - make edits to a filing until it is finalized, based upon validation and other warnings in the system to help ensure the filing is accurate. The system should provide guidance through validation and requirements to ensure users file correctly and understand easily how to use the system;
 - prepare a return and save in the system as draft to return later to complete the filing and ability to pick back up where it was left off;

- utilize an upload with a static template for large tabular data sets in order to complete the necessary data fields for the returns (initial or amended);
- amend previously filed returns from 1-1-20 to present *Contingent on the capability of converting history data to an amendable format; and
- see default settings, such as most frequently used exemptions, in each subsequent filing to reduce time preparing each return.
- The system should utilize a control balance to Adjusted Gross Sales for State and Local sales reported.
- Tax Collectors should be able to securely accept payments for sales and use tax from businesses using multiple payment methods to the extent currently available through existing collector systems.

Resources – Audit and History

- The system should maintain an easily navigable history of changes to applicable sales tax rates and exemptions for every domicile code for 3 years plus the current year.
- Users should have access to a domicile code listing for each taxing jurisdiction for reporting purposes.
- The system should provide audit logging, including user data, for changes and creation of account records and system configurations such as within the tax rate and exemption tools.
- There should be a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page on the system which can be edited by the Board.
- The system should provide Taxpayers and Tax Professional users the ability to review user logs detailing activity of designated users, such as logons, changes to user roles, user activities, changes to account information, etc., for 3 prior years plus the current year (excepting periods prior to effective date of this feature).

Reporting

- Taxpayers and Tax Professional users should have the ability to:
 - retrieve, access, and store a payment summary confirming the total amount paid and corresponding amounts by jurisdiction; and
 - download singularly or in bulk a "copy" of the consolidated parish return e-filed with all necessary data fields (mimic the look and feel of paper return) including supporting schedules for all deductions and exemptions.

Information for Tax Collectors

- Tax Collectors should have the ability to:
 - access the information pertinent to the specific collections of their jurisdictions including account specific and domicile specific information;
 - perform independent downloads of return and remittance files per taxing jurisdiction;
 - access only taxpayer information that is related to their jurisdiction and no other jurisdictions or collectors; and
 - approve new or renewal account applications for all domiciles managed by a Collector.

Training Resources

The vendor should provide adequate training resources which should include:

- robust help documentation for all user groups (filers, state users, local government users, etc.);
- professional training services for staff involved in processing returns; and
- staging environments for training by end users (jurisdiction or businesses) and implementation process or new product releases will provide a User Acceptance Testing process.

The Board intends to maintain all historical data in the current system. At the minimum, the Board must have all sales and use tax filing and remittance information from January 2020 forward accessible for reporting and auditing purposes. The Board will collaborate with the vendor to determine the appropriate scope for data conversion needs and alternatives.

Transition and implementation activities may include:

- Inventory existing data tables for data migration.
- Convert and migrate data from the existing Parish E-file database.
- Provide system documentation.
- Perform software testing.

Ongoing Technical Support Services

The vendor is expected to provide technical support after implementation of the system which could include:

- assurance that system outages/upgrades will be conducted after hours or weekends and not coinciding within 5 working days of the tax deadlines, unless a critical update is required;
- compliance with all State mandated standards for system and data security. OTS to supply all technical and security requirements;
- access to contact technical resources to provide feedback on current and future product/feature enhancements; and
- technical support during business hours, as defined as Central Time Zone hours, with acceptable SLA's such as same day business response to business user technical inquiries and possibly 4 hours turn around if within 3 business days of filing deadline.

Software Documentation

Unless otherwise specified, a copy of the software documentation listed below must be provided to the state. The documentation must include, at a minimum, the following:

- Complete program listing(s)
- Functional specifications

3.0 Technical System Implementation Requirements

Respondents should be aware of the following requirements for Contractors:

Contractor shall adhere to the State's Information Security Policy (ISP) - <https://www.doa.la.gov/oa/ots/policies-and-forms/>

The following requirements apply to all systems implementations:

- Contractor shall design the UI to work on all browsers installed on the standard State computer image (Edge, Chrome & Firefox).
- Contractor shall incorporate and test accessibility throughout the design and development processes to remain compliant with Section 508 Amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.