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| **BUREAU OF FISCAL SERVICES**  **Procurement Unit** |  |  |

**Request for Information (RFI) 19-601**

**Data Visualization Solution for Complex Ownership Structures**

The New York State Department of Taxation and Finance (the “Department” or “DTF”) is requesting qualified vendors to supply information which may be used when considering a program or solution that can visually represent complex data and ownership structures for tax filers and use intelligence to draw relationships and discover connections between the datasets to create those visualizations.

This is a request for information only. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes – it does not constitute a Request for Proposals (RFP) or a promise to issue an RFP in the future. Responders are advised that the Department will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI. All costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the responders’ expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP, if issued.

**Timeline**

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| **Event** | **Date** |
| Issuance of RFI | January 21, 2020 |
| Deadline for Submission of Vendor Questions | February 4, 2020 |
| Department’s Response to Vendor Questions | February 18, 2020 |
| Vendor Response Due | March 10, 2020 |

**RFI Questions and Responses**

The vendor community will have one opportunity to submit written questions regarding this RFI. All questions regarding this RFI should be submitted via e-mail (preferred), fax or mail and should be received by the date specified in the timeline. Questions received after this date may not be responded to.

The Department will provide a written response to all questions received by the date specified in the timeline. Responses to vendor questions will be posted on the Department’s procurement website at: <http://www.tax.ny.gov/about/procure/>.

**New York State Department of Taxation and Finance**

The New York State Department of Taxation and Finance collects tax revenue and provides associated services in support of New York State government operations. In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Department collects and accounts for about $76 billion in State taxes and about $40 billion in local taxes; administers over 40 tax types; and processes about 26 million returns.

**Description of the Audit Division**

The Audit Division of the Department is responsible for auditing, investigating, and collecting taxes from individuals and businesses. These enforcement activities help ensure that all New Yorkers pay their fair share of taxes. Auditors conduct a fair and unbiased review of books and records to determine if a taxpayer paid the proper tax due.  An audit may result in a bill for additional tax, penalties, and interest; a refund based on overpayments; the denial of a refund or credit claimed; or no change at all. The Audit Division also strives to minimize the impact of the audit on taxpayers; and encourages open communications throughout the audit.

**Objective**

The Department is interested in a system that will allow Department staff to see visual representations of complex filing and ownership structures, and look at any associated return data filed by the individuals and business entities included in those structures. The system must be able to use intelligence to discover connections between datasets and quickly visualize any relationships. Being able to view and evaluate these relationships will give the Department better insight to the filing trends of complex filings, and how to better administer the Tax Law.

The Department has about 300-400 users, which include auditors, management, ITS staff, and data analysts. Approximately 70 users will be average non-data users who will use this software for their Audit work and who work from both the office and remote locations. An additional 20-30 users will be power users who will use this software for more advanced analysis. The remaining staff will be secondary users, who may benefit indirectly from the software as well.

The average non-data users include auditors, management, and other employees with a strong knowledge of tax law and audit procedures. They will use the tool to discover and visualize data related to their audits, but may have only a limited amount of experience working with data and queries.

The power-users will have development and analysis responsibilities with this software. They will typically have either a strong ITS or data analysis background, or many years of experience in one of those fields. This includes data analysts, ITS staff, programmers, front-end developers, and back-end developers. Data analysts create queries and analyze large volumes of data to draw meaningful conclusions from the results. They will also report on key performance indicators and evaluate filing trends. ITS staff, programmers, and developers will be responsible for customizing the software, both visually and functionally, to fit the needs of all users. They will be engineering and relating datasets, customizing front-end views, developing the back-end structure, maintaining the data, troubleshooting issues, and creating search fields or other elements that the user can interact with.

All users will use the software to help visualize complex organizational structures in an easily understandable and communicable way, and to discover previously unknown connections within the data. They will be evaluating organizational structures that span many tiers of ownership across many types of tax filings, and reviewing the transactions that occur between those related entities.

It is the objective of this solicitation to obtain additional information concerning solutions which could be used for this initiative. Responses may be used to assist the Department in a development of any future bid document.

**RFI Response**

Please respond to this RFI by March 10, 2020. Be sure to provide the name, address, contact person, phone number and e-mail address for your company. Your response to this RFI should be submitted via e-mail (preferred), fax or mail:

E-mail: bfs.contracts@tax.ny.gov

Fax: (518) 435-8413

Written Correspondence:

New York State Department of Taxation and Finance

Attn: Amber Alexander / RFI 19-601

Procurement Services Unit

WA Harriman State Campus

Albany, NY 12227

A response does not bind or obligate the responder or the Department to any agreement of provision or procurement of any products referenced.

The Department may seek additional information or clarification during its review of RFI responses. This may be done through e-mail, phone discussions, meetings, demonstrations, and/or correspondence, and may be with an individual respondent or a group of respondents.

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| **Section I. Requirements**  **Describe how your product, capacity, and process can meet the DTF requirements. Make comments and attach additional information as needed.** |

| **Requirements** | **Solution meets this requirement in its existing form?**  **(Yes/No)** | **Solution requires modification to meet this requirement?**  **(Yes/No)** | **Estimated timeframe for modification** | **Estimated cost for modification** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. The solution searches for and visually represents complex ownership structures by tax filer, with ownership both above and below the filer searched, along with business activities between those filers. | Yes  No | Yes  No |  |  |
| **Describe, comment, attach additional information as needed:** | | | | |
| 1. The solution accommodates the skillsets of two types of users: average non-data users and advanced power-users. See the Objective statement in the section above for more detail. | Yes  No | Yes  No |  |  |
| **Describe, comment, attach additional information as needed:** | | | | |
| 1. The solution displays visualizations in an easily understandable way (e.g. using shapes, lines, colors, and symbols). | Yes  No | Yes  No |  |  |
| **Describe, comment, attach additional information as needed:** | | | | |
| 1. The solution takes in new data as it is discovered or included, then use it to systematically and, at user’s option, to manually update its visualizations and results. | Yes  No | Yes  No |  |  |
| **Describe, comment, attach additional information as needed:** | | | | |
| 1. The solution uses, connects, and displays multiple datasets with varying sources, structures, and representations using advanced intelligence technologies that can draw connections and relationships between data that may or may not currently be known (i.e. known relationships and discovered relationships). | Yes  No | Yes  No |  |  |
| **Describe, comment, attach additional information as needed:** | | | | |
| 1. The solution has a user-friendly and flexible user interface that allows any user to search for filers, display connections and activities, and customize searches and results. Additional options can be added, modified, or removed from the user interface. | Yes  No | Yes  No |  |  |
| **Describe, comment, attach additional information as needed:** | | | | |
| 1. The solution produces visualizations and final work-products that can be stored on a user’s hard drive and shared amongst other users and non-users. | Yes  No | Yes  No |  |  |
| **Describe, comment, attach additional information as needed:** | | | | |
| 1. The solution makes data connections using exact matches and near-matches (fuzzy matches), if needed. It displays confidence rates of each match. | Yes  No | Yes  No |  |  |
| **Describe, comment, attach additional information as needed:** | | | | |
| 1. The solution is reliable and effective when employed on extremely large volumes of data elements (hundreds of millions of rows and columns across multiple databases and datasets). | Yes  No | Yes  No |  |  |
| **Describe, comment, attach additional information as needed:** | | | | |
| 1. The solution is substantially compliant with the provisions of the New York State Tax Law. | Yes  No | Yes  No |  |  |
| **Describe, comment, attach additional information as needed:** | | | | |
| 1. The solution is substantially compliant with the secrecy and confidentiality requirements of the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, New York State Law, and the IRS. This also includes any confidentiality agreements with other parties that provide the Department data through MOUs, including the IRS. | Yes  No | Yes  No |  |  |
| **Describe, comment, attach additional information as needed:** | | | | |
| 1. The solution can be structured to grant various levels of access and permissions to users and admins. The access to federal or sensitive data can be easily toggled on and off based on a user’s need for the information, and flag visualizations as federal or sensitive when it uses that data. | Yes  No | Yes  No |  |  |
| **Describe, comment, attach additional information as needed:** | | | | |
| 1. The solution has ad-hoc reporting capabilities. Please describe the reporting capabilities and provide samples. | Yes  No | Yes  No |  |  |
| **Describe, comment, attach additional information as needed:** | | | | |

**Section II. Questions**

**Please respond to the following questions in relation to the solution.**

| **Questions** | **Answers** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Can your solution be used on desktop computers, laptops, VDI, and tablets? If so, what are the limitations? | Answer: |
| 1. What technologies are used to analyze, connect, and draw conclusions on the data it ingests? Does the solution provide graph database capabilities or similar technologies? Please provide any examples of how that technology can be used for the requirements listed in this RFI. | Answer: |
| 1. What database connections does your product support natively? If a data loading tool (e.g. ETL tools) is required, what data loading tools does your product support? | Answer: |
| 1. Does your solution require either the use of the cloud or cloud-based technologies? If so, please describe how it’s used. | Answer: |
| 1. What deployment methods are available for your solution? How long does the solution installation take? | Answer: |
| 1. Do you provide support for your solution and any additional products needed to use your solution? If so, what level of support do you provide? | Answer: |
| 1. How are upgrades of the software managed and supported? | Answer: |
| 1. How are changes and enhancements managed? Are there any restrictions on future changes/modifications (e.g., if the Department requires a change due to legislation, can the change be made for the Departments’ licenses only)? | Answer: |
| 1. Would you be willing to hold the source code relating to the solution in escrow? | Answer: |
| 1. Do you offer training for the solution? If so, please describe the training programs. | Answer: |
| 1. What are the required user skillsets in order to use your solution? | Answer: |

**Section III. Cost**

**Please provide information in relation to the costs of the solution.**

| **Cost Items/Questions** | **Cost Amounts/Answers/Comments** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. How are licenses for the software sold? Are numbers of licenses and costs based on data volume, use duration, or number of users? Are there packages that allow for multiple licenses on either a concurrent or individual basis? Are there licensing tiers (e.g. creator, viewer, etc.)? | Answer: |
| 1. Is the solution available through a reseller, or through your company alone? If the purchase is to be done directly, why? | Answer: |
| 1. Do you provide a non-exclusive rights/perpetual license? | Answer: |
| 1. What specific software products are required to be purchased to obtain your solution? Please list each product separately, even if you are providing a bundled solution, and specify its use (e.g. data loading, visualization, etc.). | Please list software titles and the cost for each:  Software item 1 (title), $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Software item 2 (title), $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Software item 3 (title), $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  (expand the list if needed)  Comments: |
| 1. Is there any specific hardware required to support this solution? | Please list hardware titles and the cost for each:  Hardware item 1 (title), $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Hardware item 2 (title), $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Hardware item 3 (title), $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  (expand the list if needed)  Comments: |
| 1. What is the cost of your solution in terms of initial installation? | Installation $ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Comments: |
| 1. What is the cost of maintenance and support? What fees, if any, are associated with upgrades of the software? Are these covered under a general maintenance plan? | Maintenance and support $ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Software upgrades $ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Comments: |
| 1. What are the job titles and hourly rates used for projects of changes and enhancements? | List job titles and hourly rates. Provide a description of the qualification of each job title:  Comments: |
| 1. Are there any other costs? If so, please provide. | List other costs:  Comments: |

**Section IV. Experience and References**

| **Experience** | **Response** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Please describe your firm and your experience in relation to the solution. Please attach additional information if needed. | Describe: |
| 1. Please provide your firm’s contact information for DTF to discuss the solution. | Contact name: Phone:  Title: Email: |
| 1. Does the solution have a proven track record (i.e., multiple year contracts for existing clients)? If so, please provide client name, contract term, client contact information, and a description of the project scope. | Information of contract(s):  Client contact(s): |
| 1. Has your solution been proven to be substantially compliant with the provisions of the New York State Tax Law? If so, where is it currently employed? Please provide client contact information. | Answer: |
| 1. Has your solution been proven to be substantially compliant with the secrecy and confidentiality requirements of the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, New York State Law, and the IRS? If so, where is it currently employed? Please provide client contact information. | Answer: |