



**MSRP**

*Maryland Teachers & State Employees Supplemental Retirement Plans*  
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## **Summary of Pre-Proposal Conference**

Request for Proposals for  
Plan Administrator for Supplemental Retirement Plans (RFP)

Solicitation # G50B8400004

*The following is a summary of the remarks delivered and answers provided to the questions received during the Pre-Proposal Conference held as scheduled and announced in the RFP on Thursday, September 27, 2018 at 1:00 PM at the offices of MSRP, 6 St. Paul Street, Suite 200, Baltimore, MD 21202. Capitalized terms not otherwise defined herein shall have the meanings ascribed to them in the RFP.*

*An electronic copy of this summary will be posted on the MSRP website (<http://MSRP.maryland.gov>) and eMaryland Marketplace (<http://eMarylandMarketplace.com>) and will be sent to all prospective Offerors who were sent a copy of the RFP or who are known by the Procurement Officer to have obtained the RFP.*

The MSRP Executive Director, Michael Halpin, opened the Pre-Proposal Conference referencing the Request for Proposal's title: "Plan Administrator for Supplemental Retirement Plans" offered by the Board of Trustees of the Maryland Teachers and State Employees Supplemental Retirement Plans.

State personnel in attendance were: Mr. Halpin; Lara Hjortsberg, Board Counsel; and Richard Arthur, Procurement Officer and MSRP Director of Operations & Technology. Mr. Halpin asked for confirmation from the attendees present at the Pre-Proposal Conference that each had entered his or her attendance on the sign-in sheet, noting that copies would be made and delivered to those present.

Mr. Halpin next reviewed the following topics and provided the following information with respect to the procurement:

**MSRP Website** - The RFP, notices about the procurement, questions and answers, and any other relevant documents with respect to the procurement will be posted on the MSRP website and eMaryland Marketplace, as well as distributed to every prospective Offeror known by the Procurement Officer to have obtained the RFP.

**Questions** – Mr. Halpin stated that MSRP will attempt to publish every question with a reply as time allows. Mr. Halpin requested questions be made in writing, directed to the Procurement officer as early as possible so staff may give them proper attention and all interested parties will have ample time to make use of the answers. Questions should be submitted in writing by Friday, November 9, 2018 – or five days before the November 15th Proposal due date.

During the Pre-Proposal Conference, Mr. Halpin requested that anyone asking a question should first identify him or herself and the firm he or she was representing.

**MBE Information** – Each representative from a Maryland State certified Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) in attendance at the Pre-Proposal Conference was asked to stand and introduce him or herself and the MBE he or she was representing, including the products and services offered by such MBE. Three such individuals spoke about their firms' capabilities.

Mr. Halpin emphasized that this procurement includes an MBE subcontracting goal of 15%. He explained that MBE subcontracting means a contractual arrangement with a Maryland State certified MBE for meaningful and purposeful services or goods. He noted that MBE documentation is required at the time of the submission of a Proposal as specified in the RFP and will be considered in connection with the evaluation process.

Mr. Halpin further noted that Offerors must submit a properly completed MBE Utilization and Fair Solicitation Affidavit, whereby the Offeror commits to make a good faith effort to meet the MBE goal, or request a waiver, in order to be considered for contract award. Mr. Halpin explained the form and the website link referenced in the RFP. Mr. Halpin also noted that failure to submit a properly completed MBE Utilization and Fair Solicitation Affidavit at the time the Proposal is submitted will result in a Proposal being deemed not responsive and, therefore, not eligible for Contract award. He further explained that once an Offeror receives notice of being **recommended** for award, that Offeror must provide the other MBE documentation listed in the RFP (i.e., Attachment D-2, Attachment D-3A/3B, and any other documentation required by the Procurement Officer to ascertain the Offeror responsibility in connection with the certified MBE subcontractor participation goal) within 10 Business Days of such notice. Those documents were briefly described and displayed for the benefit of the attendees by Mr. Halpin.

**Communications** - Mr. Halpin explained that inquiries regarding the procurement should be directed to the Procurement Officer or the Executive Director. He emphasized that interested parties should not seek to interact directly with MSRP Board members.

**Financial Proposal** - Mr. Halpin noted that the Technical Proposal and the Financial Proposal must be submitted sealed and separate from each other. He also noted that no mention, either direct or indirect, of the Financial Proposal should be included in the Technical Proposal. He explained that the Financial Proposal must include the completed spreadsheet in the form provided in the RFP (Attachment B), and he displayed a copy of the Financial Proposal spreadsheet.

**Evaluation and Process** - Mr. Halpin explained that the Chair of the Board will assemble a procurement evaluation committee, which evaluation committee may include Board members and outside knowledgeable persons and possibly Board staff. He noted that Section 6 of the RFP details the evaluation process, explaining that the evaluation criteria are listed in the RFP from most important to least important. He also explained that the evaluation committee completes its evaluation of the Technical Proposals prior to unsealing the Financial Proposals for evaluation. He also explained that the evaluation of Technical Proposals may include discussions, questions and/or presentations by qualified Offerors.

Mr. Halpin further explained that once an Offeror is selected for Contract award and notice is provided to that Offeror, a 5 Business Day clock begins for the submission by the Offeror of certain documents which are listed on Page 51 of the RFP. Mr. Halpin reviewed those documents, including the Contract (Attachment M), Contract Affidavit (Attachment N), Non-Disclosure Agreement (Attachment I) and Certificate of Insurance, at the Pre-Proposal Conference for the benefit of those in attendance.

**Proposal Deadline** - Mr. Halpin stated that, as indicated in the RFP, the deadline for submission of Proposals is November 15, 2018, at 1:00 PM local time, noting that the deadline is firm and that exceptions are not permitted. Even a late Proposal delayed by the delivery service company or other events will not be accepted.

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*The following are the questions, and the responses provided thereto, received during the Pre-Proposal Conference:*

**Q1 – What are the liquidity restrictions on the fixed account (Investment Contract Pool)?**

*A1 – This is inapplicable to the RFP for Plan Administrator for Supplemental Retirement Plans. The Investment Contract Pool is managed by a separate contractor, currently Galliard Capital Management.*

**Q2 – What is the policy with respect to employer-directed assets?**

*A2 – There is no such policy. The assets in the Plans are entirely Participant-directed. One of the four Plans covered by the RFP is the 401(a) Match Plan. A State match is provided for in MSRP's enabling legislation (Title 35 of the State Personnel and Pensions Article) but the State match has been suspended since 2010 and will not be reinstated unless included in the State budget.*

**Q3 – What is the total number of participants in the Plans?**

*A3 – The number of Participants as of December 31, 2017 is included in Attachment Q to the RFP (Quarterly Plan Administrator Report Excerpts), as are other historical characteristics of the four Plans.*

**Q4 – Please provide some detail as to the optional service of a deemed IRA requested in the RFP?**

*A4 – This is a feature which other defined contribution plans offer as part of their program and which the Board of Trustees of MSRP has discussed but on which it has not made a final decision to implement. Specifics as to implementation would need to be determined before the feature could be approved, added to the Plans, and ultimately introduced to Participants.*

**Q5 – What is the appetite to offer the 403(b) Plan to local school boards?**

*A5 – Although the MSRP enabling legislation permits employees of county boards of education to participate in the 403(b) Plan, there is only one recalled inquiry of such potential participation in the past 25 plus years. The MSRP enabling legislation provides that such county boards are not prohibited from adopting their own 403(b) plans, and it appears that these boards have adopted their own local plans and that the employees of these boards participate in the local plans as opposed to the State-level 403(b) Plan. The State’s higher education employees are eligible participants in the State’s 403(b) Plan, as well as the Optional Retirement Plan (another 403(b) plan administered separately by the State Retirement Agency not part of this procurement).*

**Q6 – How many on-site service representatives are there?**

*A6 – At the request of Mr. Halpin the Nationwide representative in attendance at the Pre-Proposal Conference confirmed that there were a total of fourteen (14) FTEs (full time equivalents), consisting of ten (10) registered representatives in the field, three (3) local office staff and the State Director.*

**Q7 – How is Plan eligibility communicated to employees?**

*A7 – There is a combination of paper materials, face-to-face presentations, and an EZ-enrollment form presented to new employees during the hiring process; however, it should be noted that because enrollment in the Plans is not mandatory, delivery of these forms cannot always be guaranteed. There are also periodic emails to employees, an annual expo in the Baltimore State office building and presentations at state agency locations (approximately 350) around the State.*

**Q8 – Please provide a description of the activity between the agency, the contractor and the provider of banking services.**

*A8 – The banking services provider (currently Wells Fargo) is selected by the State Treasurer’s Office with the participation of the MSRP Board. The Plan Administrator is responsible to pay all banking fees, writes checks and makes other transactions from the Plans’ accounts; there is no custodial account for the Plans other than with respect to the 403(b) Plan. The banking services provider nominally provides custody with respect to the assets in the 403(b) Plan (registered mutual funds and annuities), pursuant to a custodial agreement, as required by the provisions of §403(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.*

**Q9 – What is the timeline for the provision of the SOC 2 report?**

*A9 – The MSRP Board would expect to receive this report within one year of the execution of the Contract.*