TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS
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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Introduction

The Teachers' Retirement System of the State of Illinois (TRS) is conducting an information-gathering process to learn more about commercial off the shelf (COTS) pension administration system (PAS) software solutions and services. This Request for Information ("RFI") is being issued to invite Respondents to submit information about the Respondents' pension administration solutions and services.

This RFI is for information-gathering purposes and does not obligate TRS to select any vendor. TRS reserves the right to take any further action in its sole discretion as determined to be appropriate, including selecting a solution, issuing a formal solicitation, gathering more information, or pursuing no further action at all.

This Request for Information (RFI) invites participants to submit information about the availability of software solutions for pension administration. The RFI is not a procurement method and will not result in a participant receiving a contract. Responding to the RFI is not a prerequisite to participate in a future procurement(s) and does not obligate the TRS to conduct a future procurement. All information received in a participant's response will be available for public review.

You are invited to provide non-proprietary, non-price related information within the RFI's scope. You are prohibited from providing pricing, the details of customized solutions, sample procurement specifications, or any other information outside the scope of the RFI because it could disqualify your organization from participating in future procurements, if any. However, you may provide general information about industry trends and innovations, products, services, or industry best practices that are not specifically tailored to meet the needs of TRS.

Summary Description of TRS

The General Assembly created the Teachers' Retirement System of the State of Illinois (TRS or the System) in 1939. TRS administers a cost-sharing, defined benefit pension plan and a 457(b) deferred compensation plan to provide its members with retirement, disability, and death benefits. Membership is mandatory for all full-time, part-time, and substitute Illinois public school personnel employed outside the city of Chicago in positions requiring certification by the Illinois State Board of Education. Persons employed at certain state agencies relating to education are also TRS members. The System serves over 434,000 members and had over $63 billion in assets held in trust for its membership as of August 31, 2022.

The defined benefit paln is administered as a qualified plan under the Internal Revenue Code. TRS benefits and investments are governed by Articles 1, 16, and 20 of the Illinois Pension Code, 40 ILCS 5. Funding comes from member contributions, contributions by TRS-covered employers, the state of Illinois, and investment income. The System's most recent Annual Comprehensive

Financial Report, as well as, a variety of other information about TRS is available on the *TRS website at https://www.trsil.org.*

A Board of Trustees (the Board) is responsible for the general administration of the System, including the duties granted to it under Article 16 of the Illinois Pension Code, 40 ILCS 5/16. Under the direction of the Executive Director employed by the Board, the day-to-day administration of the System is delegated to the System's staff. The main office is in Springfield, Illinois and there is a satellite office in Lisle, Illinois.

Description of TRS's Current Pension Administration System

TRS is in the process of replacing its current proprietary Pension Administration System (which was custom built in-house and put into production in 2003 and is known as STAR). STAR provides TRS with the functionality necessary for TRS to provide for the following responsibilities:

- Collection of contributions and reports of earnings from approximately 1,000 employers each year
- Tracking member earnings and service credit
- Providing for the purchase of optional service credit
- Responding to member telephone inquiries and in house counseling requests
- Calculation and payroll for monthly pension and disability benefit payments including those calculated per reciprocity with other Illinois pension systems
- Processing refunds of contributions to members who terminate service prior to eligibility for a pension
- All aspects of member benefits administration including benefits under the Illinois Reciprocal Act and those subject to Qualified Illinois Domestic Relations Orders (QILDROs)
- Annuitant payroll and accounting

The primary objectives for replacing STAR include:

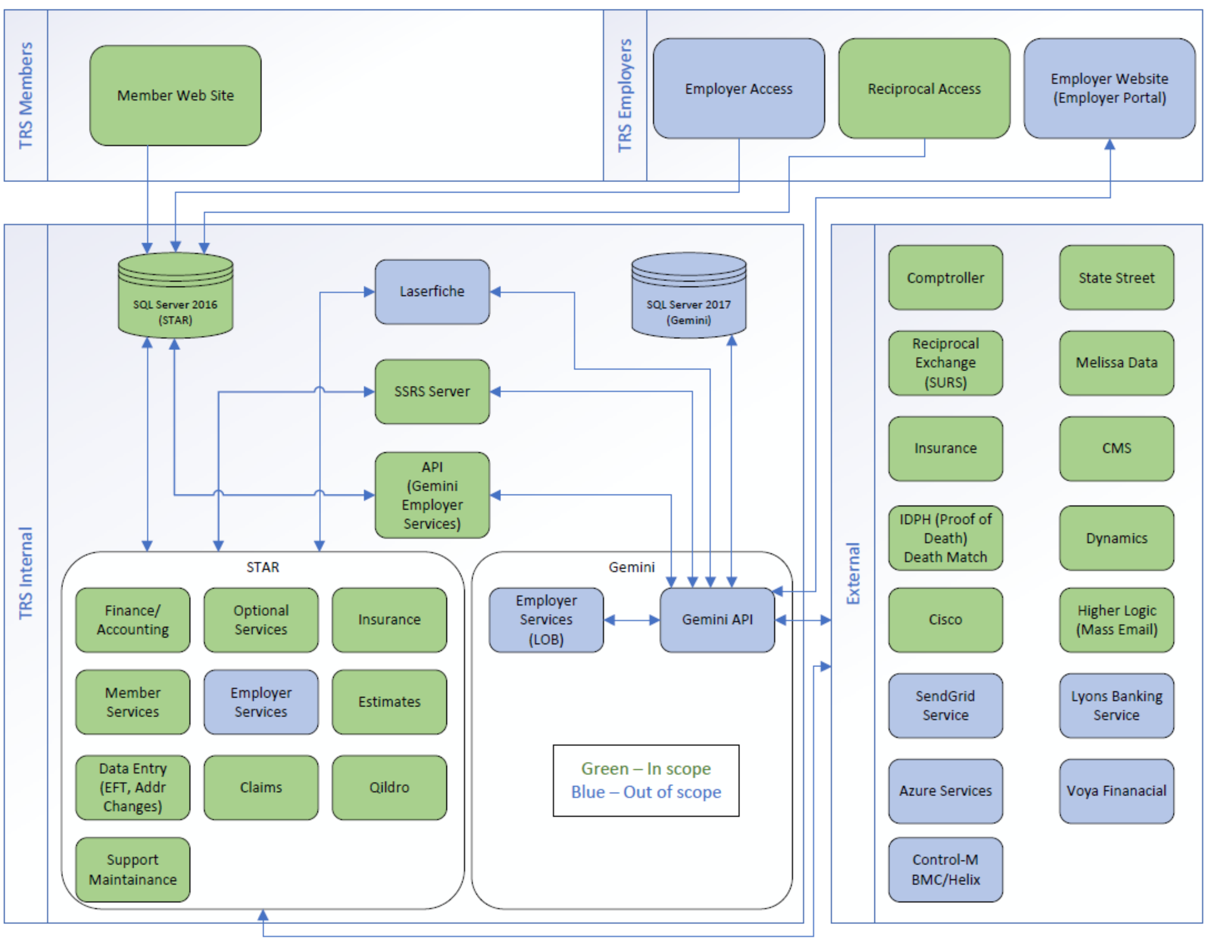
- Utilization of modern, web-based architecture and technologies
- Configurability to respond to business rule changes
- Alignment with industry standards and best practices

Specifically, TRS wants:
- user-driven reporting
- Business Intelligence (BI)
- increased automation and workflow
- increased secure online self-service
- improved user engagement
- user-driven database changes
- agility to accommodate new legislation and mandates.

TRS previously decided to pursue a custom solution to replace STAR and, to date, has completed the initial implementation of the Employer Reporting and TRS Supplemental Saving Plan. The newly developed system is a web-based application leveraging JavaScript for the front-end framework and C# for the back end. The team has developed APIs for communication between the front-end and back-end and other internal and external systems (Example: STAR, Laserfiche, etc.) Below are some of the current modules that have developed in the Employer Reporting system:

- Employer Services module – internal use
- Employer Reporting Portal – external use
- TRS Supplemental Savings Plan

TRS is now conducting a comprehensive study that will determine the best course of action for replacing STAR's participant module, which provides for the Member Services functionality (participant module) and accounting. The replacement must integrate with the newly developed modules mentioned above and the Laserfiche document management system currently being implemented. The diagram below outlines some of the current internal and external systems leveraged by TRS to support our members. The items highlighted in green identify the potential scope for the replacing the participant module. These items would either be replaced or need to integrate with a new solution. Items in blue represent those items already part of our new custom solution and items that will be retired because they will be absorbed into the new custom solution.



Request for Information

TRS is gathering information to assess the feasibility of replacing the current participant module within the active pension administration system. The selected option must support the System's administration of the TRS benefit provisions set forth in the Illinois Pension Code, 40 ILCS 5/16, and must integrate with the newly implemented employer services, document management systems, and other internal and external systems.

TRS seeks to gain an understanding of the following:

- Availability of COTS and/or framework solutions that provide: Fully integrated pension and benefits features to support line-of-business activities, including benefits, payroll, accounting, reporting, integration, workflow, and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) components as well as self-service portals for members and annuitants. TRS administers a defined benefit public pension plan which has two tiers and a 457(b) deferred compensation plan.
- The ability of COTS/framework products to integrate with systems we intend to continue to use, specifically:
    - A proprietary employer reporting system that includes both line-of-business (LOB) as well as an employer-facing portal
    - Laserfiche, imaging and record management system
    - MS Dynamics (D365) used for accounting
    - Cisco phone system
    - External systems used for such functions as annuitant payroll and benefits
- Data conversion support provided by vendors such as data cleansing, mapping and data import utilities, as well as the support of data transformation, data loads, and data reconciliation
- Options such as packaged vs. best-of-breed solutions
- On-premises vs. cloud-based solutions
- the level of interest of potential bidders
- the estimated duration required to complete the system development and implementation project
- General pricing structure (DO NOT INCLUDE specific customization or detail pricing) to help the System evaluate the potential costs for the overall project for budgeting purposes. **PLEASE NOTE:** ***This is not a request for a proposal and respondents should not provide a pricing quote or estimate. Doing so may disqualify the respondent from future RFPs. Refer to the Introduction section above.***
- project management methodologies used
- frequency of application releases
- expectations of time and responsibilities required of TRS staff
- Audit logging of changes made within the System, the integrity of the data, and the availability to export the data
- The ability to integrate our current security roles into a COTS solution

Process Overview

Responses to this RFI should be submitted as described in the section below.

All responses are subject to open records statutes, such as the Freedom of Information Act; therefore, no proprietary information should be included in responses.

TRS will review all responses for the purpose of determining the best next course of action to take regarding the PAS participant module replacement.

Respondents may be contacted by TRS after receipt of information to schedule a demonstration or clarify responses. If TRS decides in its discretion to conduct demonstrations, vendors will be given the option to provide in-person or virtual presentations. Notification of this invite will be emailed to the contact person listed in your response.

TRS will not reimburse any expenses incurred in responding to this RFI including the costs of preparing the response, providing any additional information, or conducting a demonstration. TRS will retain all responses submitted. TRS may or may not use information provided in issuing future RFPs.

This RFI is not a procurement method and will not result in a respondent receiving a contract. Responding to the RFI is not a prerequisite to participate in a future procurements and does not obligate TRS to conduct a future procurement. A response to this RFI does not provide any advantages to a respondent in future RFPs. This RFI is for the limited purpose of gathering information regarding systems, services, and providers in the marketplace. This RFI is not a commitment or promise to acquire services or solutions from any respondent, or at all. You are invited to provide non-proprietary, non-price information within the RFI's scope. You are prohibited from providing pricing, sample procurement specifications, or any other information outside the scope of the RFI.

All information should be provided as described in the Instructions for Submission of Responses of this RFI. Do not provide any proprietary information in response to this RFI. All responses are subject to applicable Illinois public records law, including without limitation, the Illinois Open Meetings and and the Illinois Freedom of Information Act.

TRS 2023 RFI for Pension Administration Solutions & Services Questionnaire

Please complete the following questionnaire, responding to the best of your understanding. TRS is not entertaining any questions about this RFI, and you should not initiate any contact with TRS other than submission of your response.

Respondent's Contact Information:

Name of Vendor		
Mailing address		
City	State	ZIP code
Phone	Fax	
Web site		

Contact Person Name	Phone
Title	Fax
E-mail	
Authorized signature	Date

Reference Number	TRS Question	Vendor Response
	Accounting and Audit	
1	Describe your solution's integration with financial systems, specifically describe the accounting entries provided to the general ledger. Note TRS currently uses Microsoft Dynamics 365 Finance and Operations modules.	

Reference Number	TRS Question	Vendor Response
2	Describe your solution's audit log and audit trail functionality. How is captured audit data accessible? Specifically, can logs be changed/altered? Is a complete history of changes maintained?	
	Project Costs and Budget Considerations	
3	Please provide a typical competitive structure to be considered, i.e. subscription/cost, initial set-up, interoperability, maintenance, support, training, customization; showing us one-time cost elements and recurring cost elements, etc.	
4	Please describe your pricing model (e.g. perpetual, term, subscription) and any additional costs prospective clients should expect to incur. Is each module separately priced? Does the price include implementation and customization costs? Once delivered, what is the anticipated cost for continued maintenance and support? Integration cost? Data conversion? **Do not include actual prices as doing so may render the Respondent prohibited on a future procurement.**	
5	What factors influence the licensing cost of your solution (e.g., by users, carrier assets under management, states, product lines)?	
	Change Management	
6	What approach have you taken with other clients to address organizational change management, to help adoption of a new system and changes in processes?	
	Customer Relationship Management	
7	Do you provide a solution for customer relationship management and/or call center functionality and/or knowledge base? If so, please describe.	
	Customization Impact	
8	Describe how client customizations are maintained when your solution requires an upgrade. Do customizations result in additional costs for solution upgrades?	
9	Based on your implementations, on average how much customization is typically expected, and how is the customization impacted when your product is upgraded? Please describe a project that required	

Reference Number	TRS Question	Vendor Response
	significant customization as well as one that required little to no customization. Include dates and project costs.	
	Data Management	
10	Describe the methods for data cleansing, conversion, reconciliation and quality.	
11	Do you provide a data dictionary?	
12	Are clients granted permission to access and query the database?	
	Forms and Correspondence	
13	What does your solution provide for correspondence and forms management? Can forms be circulated for electronic signature?	
	Integrations	
14	Please briefly describe your approach to integrating with our existing systems, refer to the diagram provided under the Description of TRS's Current Pension Administration System section of this document.	
15	Assuming the use of APIs, what APIs are provided out of the box for communication with the System or with other external systems?	
16	What technologies and methods are used by your solution to integrate with other systems? For example, does your System rely on APIs or other data transfer methods?	
	Key Performance Indicators	
17	What key performance indicators does your solution provide, and how are the metrics obtained? For example, describe the metrics captured to monitor application usage and performance. Does your System provide for client-specific metrics to be added?	
18	Has your application been benchmarked? Who conducted the benchmarking? When was it last completed? What were the results?	
	Maintenance and Support	
19	Describe what service support you would provide for implementing and maintaining the System (s). Should a situation arise that requires customization, what should TRS expect as a response timeline from you as the vendor? What are the core hours by time zone for production support?	
	Project Management	

Reference Number	TRS Question	Vendor Response
20	Describe the methodology followed for software development and implementation. Include a description for each phase of the software lifecycle.	
21	Describe the project management methodology and procedures that would be relevant for the solution development, including the transition plan and typical project timeline.	
22	Describe your expectations of TRS staff by business area (IT vs Member Services, for example) for the project. What should the staff expect the impact of the project will be on their daily operations? In a typical engagement, how many business and IT people from the client organization are committed to the project, and what is the level of commitment?	
23	Describe the release and cutover activities that would be expected. What is the frequency of these activities, and how do these activities impact daily operations?	
24	Describe user acceptance activities and their expected impact on TRS staff by business area and daily operations.	
	Quality	
25	Describe your approach to quality.	
26	Describe your approach to training and enabling end users for their acceptance testing.	
	Reporting	
27	Please provide a description of reports provided by your solution. Can users generate ad-hoc reports?	
	Solutions and Services	
28	Please provide a brief overview of your solution for a member services module that would manage members' records including service credit, earnings, optional service purchases, as well as modules for calculating refunds, disability, retirement and survivor benefits, reciprocal benefit calculations, payroll management including benefits and payroll deductions and QILDROs. Note that TRS has a multi-tier benefit structure and is part of a reciprocal systems agreement. Include descriptions of the configurations available, functionality, and necessary technologies. Also provide a description of any member self-	

Reference Number	TRS Question	Vendor Response
	service features. Similarly, provide an overview of the accounting functionality within your solution.	
29	Does your solution have mobile capability for active members? Annuitants? If yes, please describe the functionality available on a mobile app. If no, can this feature be added? How is cost determined?	
30	Is your solution web-based or an installed application? If web-based, please provide hosting details.	
31	Describe key assumptions, design considerations, risks, and issues of the above solution.	
32	Describe what other products, services, and/or vendors you would incorporate into the solution.	
33	Can the user interface of your product be formatted to resemble our current proprietary application to provide the appearance of a single PAS for our users without additional costs?	
34	Describe what features and variables can be configured without the need for customization. Who controls the configurations? Are there features or functionalities that cannot be customized? If so, please describe.	
35	What infrastructure is required for your platform? What additional licenses would TRS need to acquire?	
	System Implementors	
36	Describe your preferences for system implementors.	
37	Please provide a list of authorized System Implementors (SI's) who are certified and/or trained to implement your System, and provide the dates when the SI last provided an implementation of your System.	
	Technology	
38	What technology stack is your System built on? For example, programming language, frameworks, operating systems, etc.?	
39	What are database technologies supported? Do clients have direct access to the database?	
40	Which operating systems and/or web browsers are supported?	
41	Who is responsible for System and infrastructure upgrades?	
42	Does your system support a cloud or SaaS model or just an on-premise solution?	
	Training	

Reference Number	TRS Question	Vendor Response
43	Describe the training services offered for a typical implementation.	
44	Do you provide a product manual and user guide? Do you update it to reflect customizations?	
	Workflow	
45	TRS maintains workflows within Laserfische. Describe how your solution would integrate with Laserfische workflows. If your solution provides for workflow capabilities, please describe, and indicate whether that is included in the cost of the module or is that priced separately?	
	Security	
46	Describe your approach to security, can your application integrate with pre-existing user security? Will it fit in with our pre-determined security roles?	
47	Can security / role reports be easily obtained?	
	Vendor Information and References	
48	Provide the Firm's Background, Qualifications, and Experience Include the following: company overview, history, the total number of staff, locations, strategic partnerships, number of client installations of proposed solution and revenue.	
49	Do you participate in proof of concept with prospective clients? Please describe a recent example.	
50	Provide a statement describing similar Pension Administration System implementations that your firm has performed over the last five years. The statement should include: The name, address, and phone number of the client. The name and phone number of a responsible official who may be contacted as a reference. A summary description of the scope of the project and significant work completed, including the client's type of business and the size of its assets under management, if possible. The start and end date of the projects. Lesson's Learned: Described any lessons learned from these projects, including challenges encountered and how you overcame them.	

Instructions for Submission of Responses

Please return your completed responses and any supplementary attachments via email to Purchasing@trsil.org. The subject line for the submission should include "TRS PAS RFI Response – [Vendor Name]".

Responses must be received on or before 2:30 pm on April 14, 2023 to be considered.