



JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE  
— 1901 —

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

#R26005

Employee Benefits Broker and Consulting  
Services



# JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE

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## Joliet Junior College Request for Proposal

### **Background**

Joliet Junior College (hereinafter, "JJC"), the nation's first public community college, is a comprehensive institution offering a wide range of academic and career-focused programs. These include pre-baccalaureate courses for students planning to transfer to four-year universities, career and technical education leading directly to employment, adult education and literacy programs, workforce training, and a variety of student support services aimed at promoting success.

JJC serves approximately 11,500 full-time and part-time students and employs around 1,377 staff members. To meet the needs of its diverse district, JJC operates from multiple sites, including one main campus, two extended campuses, and two education centers. The main campus is located within the city of Joliet, with extension campuses in Romeoville and Morris. Education Centers are located at Weitendorf and the City Center in downtown Joliet.

As the sole public postsecondary institution within the boundaries of the Community College District 525, JJC is located about 45 miles southwest of Chicago, the third-largest city in the United States. The college's 1,442-square-mile district serves a population of more than 700,000 residents across Will, Grundy, Kendall, LaSalle, Kankakee, Livingston, and Cook counties.

Joliet Junior College is guided by its mission to strengthen communities, inspire learning and transform lives, and follows its vision as the first choice for learning, working and cultivating pathways to prosperity.

### **OVERVIEW**

JJC is requesting proposals from Providers for services relating to Employee Benefits Broker and consulting services for day-to-day benefits customer service abilities, including assisting college management with strategic planning, underwriting/actuarial services, vendor management, administrative/communication support, financial reporting, carrier marketing, and negotiations and legislative and corporate compliance support as detailed in the Scope of Services section of the proposal.

Additional scope is discussed in the **SCOPE OF WORK** section of this proposal.



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## I. RFP SCHEDULE & SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Date	Event
Monday, March 9, 2026	Vendors contacted via email / advertised
Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 2:00 PM CST	Last date/time for submission of written questions through the ESM sourcing solutions tool under the Q and A section.
Thursday, March 19, 2026	Responses to questions will be addressed through the ESM sourcing solutions tool under the Q and A section.
Thursday, April 2, 2026, at 2:00 PM CST	Proposals must be submitted electronically through the ESM Solutions electronic sourcing
April 3, 2026 – April 10, 2026	JJC Evaluation Team reviews proposal
April 13-15, 2026	Possible presentations by two top short-listed firms
May 21, 2026	Notification of Award

- A. ADVICE:** The department responsible for this RFP is the Business and Auxiliary Services located at Campus Center, Building A, Room 3100, 1215 Houbolt Rd., Joliet, IL 60431-8938. The JJC contact will be the Senior Director of Business and Auxiliary Services, telephone (815) 280-6640.
- B. SUBMISSION:** The submission of a response shall be prima facie evidence that the supplier has full knowledge of the scope, nature, quality of work to be performed, the detailed requirements of the project, and the conditions under which the work is to be performed.

Faxed and hard copy proposals ARE NOT acceptable. All RFPs must be submitted by the date and time of public opening (see above). All proposals must be submitted electronically through the ESM Solutions electronic sourcing site. Please note that all vendors will have to complete an online registration process prior to submitting your proposal.

A step-by-step [supplier registration guide](#) is posted to the college's website for your reference. [General supplier guides](#) are also available on the ESM website. If you have any questions during the registration process, contact ESM Solutions Customer Support (877) 969-7246 Option 3.

**Registration Link:**

<https://supplier.esmsolutions.com/registration#/registration/contactInformation/>

**General Supplier Guide (ESM Documents):**

<https://support.esmsolutions.com/hc/en-us/sections/115000917048-Supplier-Guides>

**Supplier Registration Guide (JJC Document):**



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<https://www.jjc.edu/sites/default/files/Purchasing/FY2019/Supplier%20Registration%20Screenshots%20Final.pdf>

Please note that the electronic sourcing tool will allow you to attach supporting documentation.

RFPs not submitted in the format as instructed by this RFP will not be accepted.

RFPs received after the date and time specified shall be considered LATE and shall not be opened. While the ESM platform is a reliable tool for electronic submissions, vendors should be aware that, as with any online system, occasional technical issues may occur. To mitigate any risk of delayed submissions, vendors are strongly encouraged to complete their bid submissions well in advance of the deadline. Please note that all proposals are electronically sealed and remain confidential until the official bid opening, at which time they become accessible to JJC.

Accuracy of Proposals / Withdrawal of Proposals prior to RFP Opening: Proposals will represent a true and correct statement and shall contain no cause for claim of omission or error. Proposals may be withdrawn in writing or by facsimile (provided that the facsimile is signed and dated by the vendor's authorized representative) at any time prior to the opening hour. However, no proposal may be withdrawn for a period of one hundred twenty (120) days subsequent to the opening of the RFP without the prior written approval of the Senior Director of Business and Auxiliary Services or Joliet Junior College.

- C. **ADDENDA:** The only method by which any requirement of this solicitation may be modified is by written addendum.
- D. **BLACKOUT PERIOD:** After the College has advertised for proposals, no pre-proposal vendor shall contact any College officer(s) or employee(s) involved in the solicitation process, except for interpretation of specifications, clarification of proposal submission requirements, or any information pertaining to pre-proposal conferences. Such vendors making such a request shall email the Senior Director of Business and Auxiliary Services at [purchasing@jjc.edu](mailto:purchasing@jjc.edu). No vendor shall visit or contact any College officers or employees until after the proposal is awarded, except in those instances when site inspection is a prerequisite for the submission of a proposal. During the blackout period, any such visitation, solicitation, or sales call by any representative of a prospective vendor in violation of this provision may cause the disqualification of such response.

## II. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

See Appendix A – These terms and conditions will become part of the final awarded contract. Please note any of the terms that your firm wants to consider for negotiation.

## III. FORMAT FOR RESPONSE

To achieve a uniform review process and obtain the maximum degree of comparability, it is required that the proposal be organized in the format specified. All proposals must be submitted



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via email through the ESM Solutions electronic sourcing site. Please note that all vendors will have to complete an online registration process prior to submitting your proposal. See item I.B above for more information.

**A. TITLE PAGE:** Show the RFP subject, the name of the vendor's firm, address, telephone number, name of contact person, and date.

**B. TABLE OF CONTENTS:** Clearly identify the materials by sections and page number(s).

**C. LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL:** Limit to one or two pages.

1. Briefly state the vendor's understanding of the scope of services to be provided and make a commitment to provide the services within the time period.
2. **Team Structure**
  - a. Description of the team assigned to JJC.
  - b. Total number of employees in the organization.
  - c. Qualifications and experience of assigned personnel.
  - d. Percentage of time each key team member will dedicate to JJC.
3. Vendor shall note any and all relationships that might be a conflict of interest and include such information with the proposal.

**D. PROFILE OF VENDOR:** Indicate the number of people in the organization, their level of experience and qualification, and the percentage of their time that will be dedicated to this process.

1. Provide a list of the vendor's top five current and prior two-year clients, indicating the type of services the organization has performed for each client.
2. Submit independently audited financial statements (one copy only). Such information will be considered in strict confidence.
3. Indicate any third-party firms involved with your program and state their role(s).
4. Provide contact information (name, phone number, and email address of at least three (3) references for projects of similar size and scope. Preference is given for institutions of higher education, particularly community colleges.

**E. SCOPE SECTION:** Clearly describe the scope of services to be provided based upon the information in the scope section. Respond to each item listed.

**F. RESPONSES TO ADDENDUM**

**G. PRICES RESPONSES**

**H. INVOICING PROCEDURE**

1. Describe the firm's invoicing procedures.
2. Include documentation identifying all of the vendor's fees.



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3. JJC requires minimum payment terms of Net 45.

**I. PROPOSED CONTRACT:** Please submit a draft contract for the services being offered.

**J. CERTIFICATION OF CONTRACT/BIDDER**

**IV. SCOPE OF WORK**

See Appendix B

**V. SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS**

If the proposed product/service involves the usage, storage, or transmission of Joliet Junior College's stakeholder data, please respond to the following:

- A. Describe your organization's approach to the management of information security and to securely managing client information.
- B. Does your organization have an information security management policy?
- C. How do you safeguard client information at your organization?
- D. Does your organization have a comprehensive risk management structure for the management of client information?
- E. Do you utilize an independent third party to conduct annual information security penetration tests of your IT systems?
- F. List the type of documented information security policies that your firm has in place.
- G. Has your organization implemented any ISO27001 (or similar) principles or requirements?
- H. Has your organization experienced any information security breaches, ransomware, phishing, or malware incidents?

**VI. PROPOSED PRICING**

The vendor should furnish a list of proposed prices for all services and materials to be used during the term of the contract. The list of proposed prices should be structured to allow for the calculation of unit cost analyses. The prices included herein are to be firm through the contract term, unless noted otherwise by the vendor. See Appendix B- Scope of Work for more information.

**VII. EVALUATION**

In evaluating the proposals submitted, JJC will apply the "Best Value" standard in selecting the supplier to be awarded a contract for this project. Purchase price is not the only criteria that will be used in the evaluation process. Any award resulting from this RFP will be made to that vendor whose offer conforms to the RFP, and it is determined to be the most advantageous, of "best value" to JJC, in the sole judgment of JJC. The selection process will include the following considerations through a weighted scoring system:



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	DESCRIPTION	WEIGHT
1	The quality of equipment and services the firm proposes to provide and the extent to which they meet RFP criteria, including knowledge transfer to the client.	20%
2	The firm's overall experience, reputation, expertise, stability, and financial responsibility.	20%
3	The experience and qualifications of the staff assigned to service JJC's account, and the firm's ability to provide service expediently and efficiently.	10%
4	Vendor's financial terms offered to JJC.	25%
5	Commitment to diversity*	20%
6	Any other relevant factor a business entity would consider in selecting a supplier.	5%

\*Commitment to diversity considerations may include:

- Business Enterprise Program (BEP) certification or utilization that meets or exceeds the college's 30% goal
- Assistance to BEP firms in obtaining lines of credit, insurance, equipment, supplies, or related services
- Percentage of prior year revenues for projects that incorporate the involvement of BEP firms
- Existence of a written supplier diversity plan or training/mentoring program for BEP firms
- Percentage of members serving the firm's governing board, senior executive, and managers who are women, minorities, or persons with a disability
- The following guide is used to score this category. 0 = No mention of diversity within the proposal 1 = Minimal mention of diversity within the proposal 2 = Company follows basic equal opportunity hiring practices only 3 = Beyond the mention of basic equal opportunity hiring practices, the company only briefly touches on its commitment to diversity 4 = Company demonstrates commitment to diversity in detail OR company is certified by CEI 5 = Company goes above and beyond to demonstrate commitment to diversity OR company goes above & beyond to demonstrate commitment to diversity AND is certified by CEI B26003



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## CERTIFICATION OF CONTRACT/BIDDER

The below signed contractor/bidder hereby certifies that it is not barred from bidding on or responding to this or any other contract due to any violation of either Section 33E-3 or 33E-4 of Article 33E, Public Contracts, of the Illinois Criminal Code of 1961, as amended. This certification is required by Public Act 85-1295. This Act relates to interference with public contracting, bid rigging and rotating, kickbacks and bribery.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF CONTRACTOR/BIDDER

\_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

THIS FORM **MUST** BE ATTACHED WITH YOUR PROPOSAL



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## Appendix A

### General Terms and Conditions

**Applicability:** These general terms and conditions will be observed in preparing the proposal to be submitted.

**Purchase:** After execution of the contract, purchases will be put into effect by means of purchase orders or suitable contract documents executed by the Senior Director of Business and Auxiliary Services.

**Right to Cancel:** JJC may cancel contracts resulting from this RFP at any time for a breach of any contractual obligation by providing the contractor with thirty (30) calendar days' written notice of such cancellation. Should JJC exercise its right to cancel, such cancellation shall become effective on the date specified in the notice to cancel.

**Governing Law and Venue:** This contract shall be construed in and governed under and by the laws of the State of Illinois. Any actions or remedies pursued by either party shall be pursued in the State and Federal Courts of Will County, Illinois, only after Alternate Dispute resolution (ADR) has been exhausted.

**Dispute Resolution:** JJC and the contractor shall attempt to resolve any controversy or claim arising from any contractual matter by mediation. The parties will agree on a mediator and shall share in the mediation costs equally.

**Costs:** All costs directly or indirectly related to preparation of a response or oral presentation, if any, required to supplement and/or clarify a proposal shall be the sole responsibility of and shall be borne by the vendor.

**Proprietary Information:** Vendor should be aware that the contents of all submitted proposals are subject to public review and will be subject to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. All information submitted with your proposal will be considered public information unless vendor identifies all proprietary information in the proposal by clearly marking on the top of each page so considered, "Proprietary Information." The Illinois Attorney General shall make a final determination of what constitutes proprietary information or trade secrets. While JJC will endeavor to maintain all submitted information deemed proprietary within JJC, JJC will not be liable for the release of such information.

### Illinois Department of Human Rights Act

The parties to any contract (inclusive of subcontractors) resulting from this RFP hereto shall abide by the requirements of Executive Order 11246, 42 U.S.C. Section 2000d and the regulations thereto, as may be amended from time to time, the Illinois Human Rights Act, and the Rules and Regulations of the Illinois Department of Human Rights. Any vendor awarded a contract as a result of this RFP must comply with the Illinois Department of Human Rights Equal Opportunity Act/Rules Sections 750.5 and 5/2-105.



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## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Pursuant to Section 50-80 of the Illinois Procurement Code, each bidder/respondent who submits a bid, proposal, or offer for a State of Illinois contract under this Code shall have a sexual harassment policy in accordance with paragraph (4) of subsection (A) of Section 2-105 of the Illinois Human Rights Act. A copy of the policy shall be provided to the college entering into the contract upon request.

## **Illinois Criminal Code of 1961**

Responding vendors must not be barred from bidding on/responding to this or any other contract due to any violation of either Section 33E-3 or 33E-4 of Article 33E, Public Contracts, of the Illinois Criminal Code of 1961, as amended. This certification is required by Public Act 85-1295. This Act relates to interference with public contracting, bid rigging and rotating, kickbacks and bribery.

## **Business Enterprise Program (BEP):**

Joliet Junior College will make every effort to use local business firms and contract with small, minority-owned, women-owned, and/or persons with a disability-owned business in the procurement process. This solicitation strives to meet the 30% aspirational goal established for businesses owned and controlled by minorities, females, and persons with disabilities in the College's procurement and contracting processes in accordance with the State of Illinois' Business Enterprise for Minorities, Females, and Persons with Disabilities Act [30 ILCS 575] as outlined below. Because these goals vary by business ownership status and category of procurement, we urge interested businesses to visit the Department of Central Management Services (CMS), [Business Enterprise Program \(BEP\)](#) web site to obtain additional details. To qualify, prime vendors or subcontractors must be certified by the CMS as BEP vendors prior to contract award. Go to [https://www2.illinois.gov/cms/business/sell2/bep/Pages/Vendor\\_Registration.aspx](https://www2.illinois.gov/cms/business/sell2/bep/Pages/Vendor_Registration.aspx) for complete requirements for BEP certification. BEP certified firms and firms utilizing subcontractors for the project shall submit a [utilization plan](#) and [letter of intent](#) that meets or exceeds the college's goal. If a vendor cannot meet the goal, documentation and explanation of good faith efforts to meet the specified goal may be required within the utilization plan.

**Negotiation:** JJC reserves the right to negotiate all elements that comprise the vendor's proposal to ensure the best possible consideration is afforded to all concerned. JJC further reserves the right to waive any and all minor irregularities in the proposal, waive any defect, and/or reject any and all proposals, and to seek new proposals when such an action would be deemed in the best interest of JJC.

**Award:** The successful vendor, as determined by JJC, shall be required to execute a contract for the furnishing of all services and other deliverables required for the successful completion of the proposed project. The supplier may not assign, sell, or otherwise transfer its interest in the contract award or any part thereof without written permission from JJC.

**Retention of Documentation:** All proposal materials and supporting documentation that are submitted in response to this proposal become the permanent property of JJC.

**Opening of Proposals:** Proposals will be opened in a manner that avoids disclosure of the



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contents to competing vendors. Contents for proposals will remain confidential during the negotiation period. Only the proposal number and the identity of the vendor submitting the proposal response will be made available to the public.

**Quantity:** There is no guaranteed amount of services intended either expressly or implied to be purchased or contracted for by JJC. However, the supplier awarded the contract shall furnish all required services to JJC at the stated price, when and if required.

**Insurance:** The supplier performing services for JJC shall:

Maintain workers' compensation insurance as required by Illinois statutes for all employees engaged in the work.

Maintain commercial liability, bodily injury, and property damage insurance against any claim(s) that might occur in carrying out the services referenced in this RFP. Minimum coverage will be TWO MILLION DOLLARS (\$2,000,000) liability for bodily injury and property damage, including product liability and completed operations.

Provide motor vehicle insurance for all owned, non-owned, and hired vehicles that are used in carrying out the services described in this RFP. Minimum coverage shall be TWO MILLION DOLLARS (\$2,000,000) per occurrence combined single limit for automobile liability and property damage.

**Taxes:** JJC is exempt from all federal excise, state, and local taxes unless otherwise stated in this document. In the event taxes are imposed on the services purchased, JJC will not be responsible for payment of the taxes. The supplier shall absorb the taxes entirely. Upon request, JJC's Tax Exemption Certificate will be furnished.

**Indemnification:** The supplier shall protect, indemnify and hold JJC harmless against any liability claims and costs of whatsoever kind and nature for injury to or death of any person or persons and for loss or damage to any property occurring in connection with or in any incident to or arising out of occupancy, use, service, operations or performance of work in connection with the contract, resulting in whole or in part from the negligent acts, falsification of information, or omissions of the supplier.

In the event the supplier breaches its Business Enterprise Program (BEP) obligation as described within the State of Illinois' Business Enterprise for Minorities, Females, and Persons with Disabilities Act (30 ILCS 575) and pledged within the supplier's submitted utilization plan, the supplier is required to pay liquidated damages to Joliet Junior College equal to 20% of the award amount for college-funded projects. For projects involving state or federal funds, the supplier is required to pay liquidated damages to Joliet Junior College equal to the full amount of the award amount.



## Appendix B

### Scope of Work

#### Contract Term

Any contract resulting from this RFP shall be for a three (3) year term from the date of award. Subject to continued funding availability, JJC may, at its sole discretion and with supplier consent, renew the contract for up to two (2) additional one-year terms.

Proposers shall provide pricing for a full five (5) year term (three-year base plus two optional one-year renewals).

#### Overview

JJC seeks a qualified firm to provide comprehensive employee benefits consulting services, including strategic planning, actuarial analysis, vendor management, reporting, compliance, and employee communication support.

#### 1. Strategic Planning & Advisory Services

The selected firm shall:

- Provide ongoing strategic guidance supported by trend analysis, forecasting, and benchmarking against peer institutions.
- Advise on benefit plan design, funding strategies, cost-containment initiatives, and value-added programs.
- Support development and management of a measurable wellness strategy.
- Assist with the implementation and integration of online benefits enrollment systems with JJC's ERP and vendors.
- Participate in Insurance Committee, leadership, and Board meetings as requested.
- Maintain comparative analyses of benefit offerings and costs.
- Develop and execute an annual service plan to ensure compliance with all benefits-related deadlines.

#### 2. Underwriting & Actuarial Services

The selected firm shall:

- Provide actuarial services, including rate, premium, and administrative fee analysis and recommendations.
- Analyze claims experience, large claims, funding levels, and plan liabilities.
- Project financial impact of plan design changes and legislative mandates.
- Review carrier underwriting assumptions and cost projections.
- Support negotiations with health and welfare vendors, including rates, guarantees, performance



standards, and reporting.

### **3. Utilization & Financial Reporting**

The selected firm shall:

- Deliver quarterly utilization and financial reports, including claims experience, loss ratios, participation metrics, and cost analysis.
- Provide medical and dental utilization summaries and cost-per-claim reporting.
- Prepare financial exhibits supporting renewal, funding, and plan design decisions.

### **4. Vendor & Contract Management**

The selected firm shall:

- Provide day-to-day vendor management and issue resolution (billing, claims, administrative matters).
- Assist with RFP development, vendor selection, contract negotiation, renewals, and performance guarantees.
- Negotiate insurance contracts and renewals as directed, including direct engagement with underwriters.
- Review contracts and service agreements for accuracy, compliance, and adherence to negotiated terms.
- Evaluate vendor performance and address service or compliance deficiencies.

### **5. Administration & Communications Support**

The selected firm shall:

- Support HR and Financial Services with plan administration and employee inquiries; respond directly to employees when requested.
- Develop and implement communication strategies for new and existing benefit programs.
- Support annual open enrollment planning, materials, and meetings.
- Develop employee communications, educational materials, and engagement surveys.
- Provide employee advocacy for benefit disputes and provider issues.
- Support benefits websites, wellness initiatives, vendor fairs, and committee meetings.
- Participate in regular planning and status meetings with JJC.

### **6. Compliance & Regulatory Support**

The selected firm shall:

- Monitor federal and state benefits regulations (e.g., PPACA, HIPAA, COBRA) and advise JJC of required actions.
- Assist with preparation and review of plan documents, SPDs, and related materials.



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- Review contracts and documents for regulatory compliance.
- Monitor insurer and vendor financial stability and relevant industry trends.

This Scope of Work defines the minimum services required. Proposers may recommend additional value-added services relevant to JJC's employee benefits program.