

# REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

## OITRFI003

*by*

Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS)

for

Ohio Business Gateway Modernization

**Release Date:** 10/21/2014  
**Inquiries Start Date:** 10/21/2014  
**Inquiries End Date:** 11/10/2014 @ 8:00 AM Eastern Standard Time  
**Response Due Date:** 11/12/2014 @ 1:00 PM Eastern Standard Time

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION  
BY THE  
STATE OF OHIO  
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES  
Ohio Business Gateway**

October 21, 2014

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## 1.0 Administrative Information

### 1.1 Purpose

The Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS), in conjunction with the Office of Lt. Governor, is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to obtain information relative to the implementation of a modernization of the Ohio Business Gateway.

In order to provide Ohio business with an online filing and payment system that simplifies business interactions with state government, DAS is interested in engaging in a Project to modernize and expand the scope of the Ohio Business Gateway.

#### **THIS RFI IS NOT A SOLICITATION FOR SUCH PRODUCTS OR SERVICES**

Information that any interested party wishes to submit will be done so voluntarily and with the understanding that this RFI is for information gathering purposes only and is not a formal solicitation. A formal procurement, such as a Request for Proposals (RFP) or Request for Quote (RFQ) may be issued as a result of, and subsequent to, this RFI. The Department of Administrative Services is interested in receiving information from interested vendors or any other interested parties.

Similarly, cost information will be used solely for the purposes of performing a market analysis for the acquisition of the necessary products and services.

The information that follows is intended to provide background information and to help set agency expectations for services to implement a modernization project for the Ohio Business Gateway.

### 1.2 Inquiries

Respondents may make inquiries regarding this RFI anytime during the inquiry period listed in the cover page of the RFI. To make an inquiry, respondents must use the following process:

- Access the State's Procurement Website at <http://procure.ohio.gov/>;
- From the Navigation Bar on the left, select "Find It Fast";
- Select "Doc/Bid/Schedule #" as the Type;
- Enter the RFI number found on the first page of this RFI (OITRFI003);
- Click the "Find It Fast" button;
- On the document information page, click the "Submit Inquiry" button;
- On the document inquiry page, complete the required information by providing:
  - First and last name of the prospective respondent's representative who is responsible for the inquiry,
  - Name of the prospective respondent,

- Representative's business phone number, and
- Representative's email address;
- Type the inquiry in the space provided including:
  - A reference to the relevant part of this RFI,
  - The heading for the provision under question, and
  - The page number of the RFI where the provision can be found; and
- Click the "Submit" button.

A respondent submitting an inquiry will receive an immediate acknowledgement that the State has received the inquiry as well as an email acknowledging receipt. The respondent will not receive a personalized response to the question nor notification when the State has answered the question.

Respondents may view inquiries and responses on the State's Procurement Website by using the "Find It Fast" feature described above and by clicking the "View Q & A" button on the document information page.

The State usually responds to all inquiries within three business days of receipt, excluding weekends and State holidays. But the State will not respond to any inquiries received after 8:00 a.m. on the inquiry end date.

### 1.3 Responses

The agency does not intend to award a contract on the basis of responses, nor otherwise pay for the preparation of any information submitted or for the agency's use of such information. Acknowledgment of receipt of responses will be made, but respondents will not be notified of the agency's evaluation of the information received.

Please send e-mail responses to:

Nychola Richardson  
Ohio Department of Administrative Services  
OIT Business Office  
E-mail: [Nychola.Richardson@das.ohio.gov](mailto:Nychola.Richardson@das.ohio.gov)

Please submit one (1) electronic original Microsoft Word (unprotected) copy and one (1) electronic original Adobe PDF (unprotected) copy of your submission.

E-mail format for responses are the only acceptable format. Include "OITRFI003 Ohio Business Gateway" as the subject line of your e-mail response. Include the company name, address, contact name, contact telephone and e-mail in the body of the e-mail. The deadline for responses is defined on the cover page.

#### 1.4 Disclosure of Responses

Materials submitted in response to this RFI can be publicly disclosed.

#### 1.5 Confidential and Proprietary Information

Materials submitted in response to this RFI will be publicly disclosed upon receipt of a public records request. Please do not submit any proprietary or confidential information with your response.

#### 1.6 Key Action Calendar Dates

Release Date:	10/21/2014
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#### 1.7 Response Questions

**Section 3.0 Submittal Requirements** contains the suggested response questions to this RFI. These questions are intended to minimize the effort of the respondent and structure the responses for ease of analysis by the agency and its stakeholders.

It is specifically understood that any costs or information provided as part of the RFI process are not to be construed as binding upon either the agency or the vendor at such time as the competitive procurement may occur. Information obtained as a result of this RFI will be used for planning purposes only.

The respondent should complete the questions in **Section 3.0 Submittal Requirements**.

Please provide any other materials, suggestions, and discussion deemed appropriate.

#### 1.8 Clarifications and Additional Information

The agency may request clarifications or additional information from any respondent that provides a response to this RFI.

## 2.0 Introduction

### 2.1 Background

The Ohio Business Gateway (OBG) Electronic Filing is a nationally-recognized, collaborative initiative of state and local government agencies and an important part of Ohio's digital government strategy. References to OBG can sometimes also include the state's broader business web portal at [business.ohio.gov](http://business.ohio.gov), which includes several resources as well as links to other business-related state sites. OBG electronic filing services offer Ohio's businesses a time- and money-saving online filing and payment system that helps simplify business' relationship with government agencies.

Ohio businesses can use OBG to access various services and electronically submit transactions and payments with many state agencies. OBG Electronic Filing also partners with local governments to enable businesses to file and pay selected Ohio municipal income taxes.

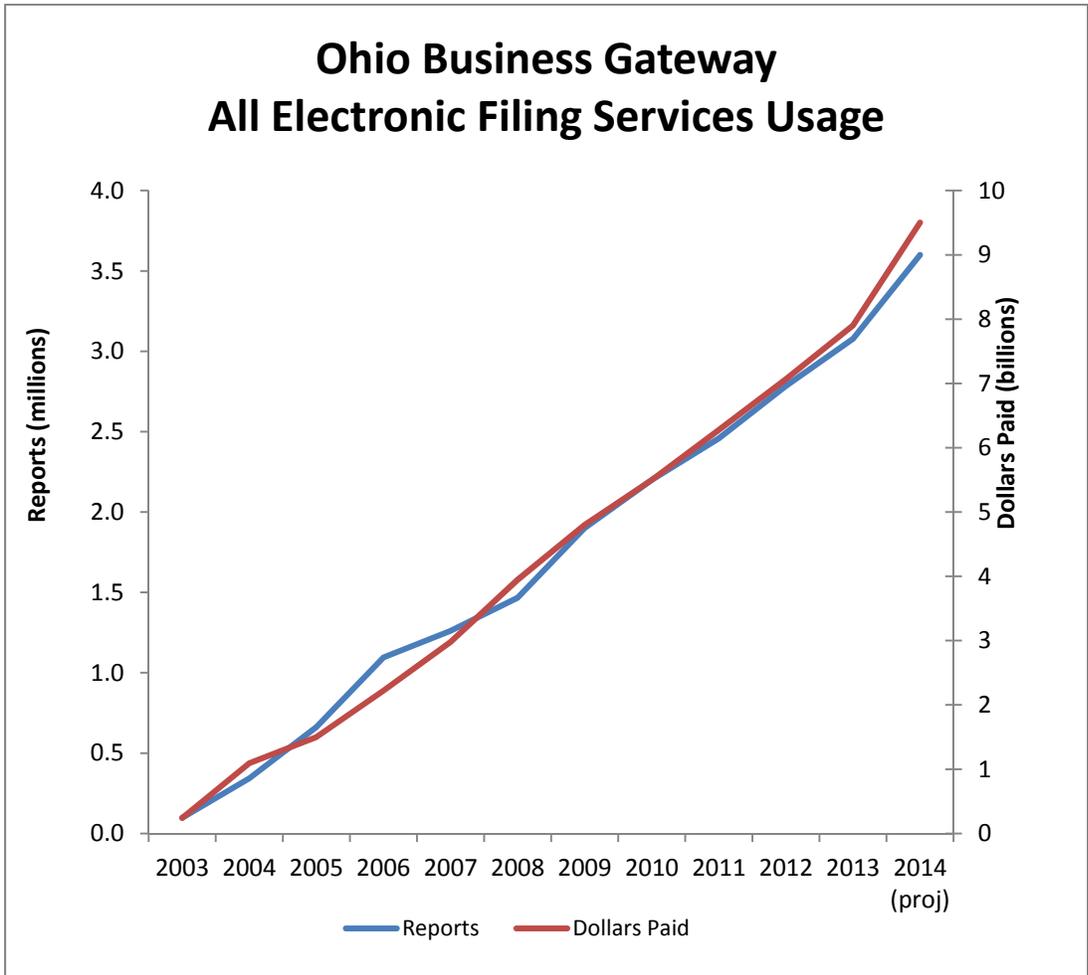
The OBG Electronic Filing currently offers the following Service Areas:

- Business Enterprise Programs
- Commercial Activity Tax
- Deferred Compensation
- Development Services Agency Invoice Payments
- Employer Withholding Tax
- Equal Opportunity Certifications
- Financial Institutions Tax
- InvestOhio
- Municipal Income Taxes
- Petroleum Activity Tax
- Sales and Use Tax
- Severance Tax
- Taxation Department New Registrations
- Unclaimed Funds
- Unemployment Compensation Tax
- Wireless 911 Charges
- Workers' Compensation Payroll Report

The OBG offers services in collaboration with the following agencies:

- Bureau of Workers' Compensation
- Development Services Agency
- Department of Administrative Services
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Job & Family Services
- Department of Taxation
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
- Public Employees Deferred Compensation
- 500+ Municipalities

The OBG Electronic Filing has seen consistent transaction growth since its initial filings that were offered in 2003. The following figure illustrates the growth both in terms of number of filings and the amount of revenue that has been collected.



The OBG essentially operates under a plan developed through the 2004 G2B Assessment Final Report. Although the OBG has seen consistent growth, there are a number of issues with the current electronic filing system and web portal that drive a need to revisit this strategic vision and implement a new plan. Development of the new plan will involve significant outreach to the business customers of the OBG, similar to that conducted in 2004. However, initial observations about the existing system include the following:

- Complex navigation within the electronic filing system. The user experience does not feature the intuitive navigation today's public expects from electronic commerce, banking, and tax/accounting software.
- Lack of integration of relevant web content. The existing business.ohio.gov portal contains a number of links to business-related resources (news, starting a business application, regulatory information, etc.) and relevant state agency web sites. However, there is little integration among these various resources and sites, nor between the portal and the electronic filing application. As a result, although there are a number of electronic resources available to Ohio businesses, there is little consistency or guidance to the business in navigating these resources.
- Duplication. Between the portal and the electronic filing application, there is significant duplication of data entry, multiple registration requirements, and multiple logins.
- Need to modernize. Given the age of the OBG blueprint and the lack of a modern user interface, there is a perception of aging technology. On the back end, the development toolset is also aging and difficult to utilize for staff within the Office of Information Technology and among the participating state agencies.

The current electronic filing system is a custom written application that is written in .NET (C#) and utilizes SQL server as its primary database. The system acts as a front end processor for multiple back end systems that are hosted by other state agencies. Currently the Department of Taxation has the largest volume of transactions. The current system interfaces to back end systems in a variety of methods such as web service calls, file exchanges and custom data exchanges. For the next generation system it is hoped to standardize these interfaces to allow for easier integration of agency systems into the OBG.

To move the OBG towards the future, a project has been launched to modernize the OBG to better position it to provide services to the businesses of Ohio. This effort is to broaden the reach of the current system, provide a more consistent user experience for businesses, and allow for a more streamlined delivery of services for the State of Ohio. Specifically, the next generation of the OBG could provide features including but not limited to the following:

- "THE PORTAL" for Businesses
  - Better integration of business.ohio.gov and other relevant state resources
- Centralized Business Registration

- User Experience – “Banking Experience”
  - Ease of Use – Update of application flow and style
  - Wizard-based guidance
  - Single Sign-On
  - Self Service Password Reset
  - Proactive Communication
  - Robust Search Capabilities
  - Provide a menu of services
- New Development Tools and Approach
  - Quicker from Concept to Production
  - More efficient maintenance by agencies
  - Distributed content maintenance
- Strategic Roadmap
  - Plan for the Future
  - Continuous Evolution
  - Remain Current with Business Demands

The purpose of this Request for Information is to reach out to the vendor community to research development techniques that companies have provided to other states or corporate environments to solve similar problems or projects in the past. The specific questions pertaining to this development are contained in Section 3.0 of this document. We have also developed a demonstration system that illustrates some of the concepts we are looking for in our next generation system. This system can be accessed at the following location:

<http://obg.test.ohio.gov/demo/obg3/> .

### 3.0 Submittal Requirements

The agency is seeking responses to the following questions related to vendors' products and service offerings. The agency has attempted to limit the number of questions in an effort to reduce the burden on vendors responding to the RFI. Vendors' responses should provide information about their capability for performing the agency's objectives and elaborate on any requirements. The agency realizes there may be other pertinent information that has not been solicited and encourages vendors to provide additional information as deemed appropriate. As all information received by the State will be considered public information, vendors are advised to not submit any proprietary or confidential information as part of their RFI response.

#### Detailed Questions by Category

1. Project Approach
  - a. Based on the information provided, please provide a high level approach you would take with the OBG modernization project.
  - b. The business community is expected to play a role in the OBG modernization effort. Please provide an approach for their participation and describe your experience with this type of "customer" interaction in the planning and development effort.
  - c. How would/do you partner with other vendors to accomplish this?
  - d. How would you break this into phases?
  - e. What is your experience with:
    - i. Central Registry?
    - ii. Transaction-based systems?
    - iii. Messaging / Service Oriented Architecture?
2. Project Integrator Capabilities and Experience:
  - a. What is your experience as a prime system integrator, managing sub-contractors with responsibility for such things as overall delivery, task orders and deliverables? What are the types of systems and scale of these systems where you have acted as the prime integrator?
  - b. What is your approach to gathering and managing requirements as a system integrator?
  - c. What is your approach to testing and quality assurance as a system integrator?
  - d. As the prime integrator, how large would your proposed team need to be and what skill sets would be provided to support this effort
3. Development Approach:
  - a. What is your experience in developing a large scale system utilizing agile methodologies? Can you provide an example?

- b. What toolsets/languages does your methodology support?
- 4. Similar projects:
  - a. Does your company have any experiences in developing a Business One Stop for any other state or Federal Agency?
  - b. Please describe your company's experience in developing Web Portals that includes integration points and transaction management with multiple divisions/subsidiaries within a private sector company.
  - c. Does your company have any experiences in developing a centralized front end for multiple back end systems?
  - d. Does your company have any experience in developing a system to share authentication between multiple back end systems from an application gateway?
  - e. Has your company developed a shared shopping cart application for multiple back end systems?
  - f. What is your experience in developing large scale web portals?
  - g. What is your experience in developing large scale transaction based systems? What if any transaction standards have you had experience with?
- 5. Company Size / Characteristics
  - a. What is the size of your company, including number of employee and annual revenue?
  - b. Who are your government customers, if any?
  - c. How many years has your company been in existence?
  - d. Are you willing to give us customer references that we may call to ask questions about your products, services and support? May we call them directly and speak to them candidly?