

EARTHSCOPE CONSORTIUM INC.
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) #2026-PEO-01A
PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYER ORGANIZATION (PEO) SERVICES

Issue Date: July 17, 2026

Phase 1 Qualification Proposal Due: August 7, 2026

Phase 2 Final Proposal Due: October 2, 2026

Submit To: F&A Department/Marlo Swanson, Pamela Walker, EarthScope Consortium Inc. at bidrequests@earthscope.org

This solicitation is converted to a two-phase procurement. Phase 1 evaluates qualifications and capabilities. Phase 2 is limited to shortlisted vendors that execute an NDA and receive confidential workforce information for final pricing and underwriting.

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Background

EarthScope Consortium Inc. ("EarthScope") is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting Earth science through the operation of global geophysical infrastructure. Formed by the merger of IRIS and UNAVCO, EarthScope manages large-scale facilities funded primarily by the National Science Foundation (NSF) under complex Cooperative Agreements.

1.2 Current Environment

EarthScope currently employs approximately 160+ professional and technical staff across a significant number of U.S. states (30+). Our workforce is highly specialized, including engineers, data scientists, and administrative professionals. Following our recent merger and the successful award of the National Geophysical Facility (NGF) contract, we require a PEO partner that provides a sophisticated HRIS environment capable of scaling with our growth.

1.3 Procurement Objective

The objective of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to identify and select a qualified Professional Employer Organization (PEO) capable of entering into a co-employment relationship with EarthScope Consortium, Inc. EarthScope seeks a best-in-class partner that can deliver comprehensive human resources, payroll, benefits administration, compliance, risk management, and workforce technology services while supporting a highly distributed, multi-state workforce operating within a federally funded environment.

To ensure a competitive and efficient procurement process while protecting sensitive workforce and benefits information, EarthScope will conduct this solicitation in two phases.

Phase 1 – Qualification Review: Respondents will demonstrate their organizational qualifications, technical capabilities, compliance expertise, integration capabilities, security controls, service model, and experience supporting nonprofit, research, and federally funded organizations.

Phase 2 – Confidential Proposal Submission: Vendors selected through Phase 1 will be required to execute a mutually acceptable Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) before receiving confidential workforce, compensation, and benefits information necessary to prepare final pricing, underwriting, implementation, and service proposals.

EarthScope seeks a strategic partner that will minimize administrative burden, strengthen regulatory compliance, improve employee experience, provide scalable technology solutions, and support the organization's long-term operational and workforce objectives.

SECTION 2 – DETAILED SCOPE OF SERVICES & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The selected PEO Vendor shall provide a comprehensive, best-in-class suite of services designed to streamline administrative functions, mitigate compliance risks, support a geographically distributed workforce, and provide a scalable, integrated technology solution.

The requirements contained within this Section shall be addressed during Phase 1 of the procurement process to demonstrate the Vendor's qualifications, capabilities, service offerings, and overall ability to meet EarthScope's operational needs. Vendors advancing to Phase 2 will be required to provide additional information, detailed implementation planning, and final pricing based upon confidential workforce and benefits information provided by EarthScope following execution of a mutually acceptable Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).

The following requirements represent the minimum service, technology, compliance, and support capabilities expected by EarthScope.

2.1 Systems Integration and Data Architecture

- **ERP & Retirement Integration:** The PEO platform must support seamless, bi-directional integration with Deltek CostPoint and TIAA 403(b) via modern APIs or secure automated data feeds.
- **Labor Mapping:** Provision for mapping specific PEO pay types directly to CostPoint labor categories to ensure seamless financial reconciliation for federal grant accounting.
- **Data Ownership and Master Data Access:** EarthScope retains 100% ownership of all master data. The Vendor must provide a non-negotiable contractual guarantee of data portability, allowing EarthScope to extract a complete, raw data census and all historical records at any time in a usable format (CSV/Excel).
- **PTO Balance Synchronization:** Provision of templates or automated mapping for PTO balance uploads/syncs to ensure real-time accuracy on employee pay statements with zero manual reentry.

2.2 Recruiting and Talent Acquisition

- **Strategic ATS Workflow:** A modern Applicant Tracking System (ATS) that maintains "Live" job postings on a single, branded career page until positions are officially closed.
- **Candidate Experience:** An "Easy Apply" experience allowing candidates to upload portfolios and cover letters, edit their profiles/resumes, and self-report University education and professional Certifications.

- **Integrated Onboarding:** Ability to push EarthScope-specific new hire docs in the system to send out straight from there via "DocuSign" style digital signatures.
- **Background Checks:** Full integration of background check triggers, tracking, and results within the same recruitment platform.
- **OFCCP Compliance and Job Distribution Requirements**
- Given EarthScope's receipt of federal funding and potential federal contractor obligations, the Vendor must provide recruitment, distribution and documentation services that support OFCCP compliance and demonstrate good faith outreach efforts.
- The Vendor shall:
 - Provide access to, or partner with, an OFCCP-compliant job distribution vendor comparable in functionality to JobTarget or an equivalent provider.
 - Ensure job postings are automatically distributed to:
 - State Workforce Agencies (SWAs), as required by federal contractor regulations.
 - Appropriate local employment service delivery systems.
 - Diversity-focused job boards and underrepresented community networks.
 - Maintain documentation sufficient to demonstrate:
 - Good faith outreach efforts.
 - Broad-based recruitment activity.
 - Diversity-focused outreach efforts.
 - Recruitment source tracking.
 - Provide centralized reporting and recordkeeping capable of supporting:
 - OFCCP audits.
 - Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) documentation.
 - EEO-1 reporting data support.
 - Applicant flow logs.
 - Disposition code tracking consistent with Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures.
 - Provide recruitment advertising analytics, including:
 - Source effectiveness reporting.
 - Diversity outreach metrics.
 - Applicant demographic tracking (where voluntarily provided and legally permissible).
 - Documentation retention consistent with federal recordkeeping requirements.
 - Reduce administrative burden on EarthScope's internal HR team by providing automated posting, tracking, and documentation functionality.
- The Vendor shall demonstrate in its Proposal its experience supporting federal contractors or federally funded organizations in meeting OFCCP requirements and shall describe the specific tools, partnerships, and compliance controls used to ensure defensible, audit-ready recruitment practices.

- Failure to demonstrate adequate OFCCP compliance capability may render a proposal non-responsive.

2.3 Comprehensive Payroll and Tax Administration

- **Full-Cycle Processing:** Calculation of gross pay, net pay, deductions, and withholdings for a multi-state workforce.
- **Multi-State Tax Liability:** Management of all federal, state, and local tax filings, including W-2 issuance and tax deposits across all 50 states.
- **Technical Support:** Access to full-service technical support for standard and off-cycle payroll that is not limited to the availability of a single account manager.
- **Self-Service Approvals:** Employees must be able to update direct deposit and tax withholding via self-service, subject to EarthScope administrative approval.

2.4 Benefits Administration and Managed Care

- **Health & Welfare Management:** Full management of Medical, Dental, Vision, employer sponsored Life, short and long-term disability with carrier integrations via EDI feeds, automated eligibility tracking, and digital Open Enrollment.
- **Retirement Integration (TIAA):** Automated integration with TIAA 403(b) to eliminate manual entry for contribution changes, employer match administration, and Form 5500 support.
- **Tax-Advantaged Accounts:** Centralized administration of full and limited FSA, and HSA, with automated IRS contribution tracking.
- **Voluntary Benefits:** Support for wellness programs, EAP, and supplemental insurance (Life, Disability, Pet, or Legal) including Evidence of Insurability (EOI) tracking.
- **Plan Design Parameters, Eligibility Rules, and COBRA Administration:** In addition to the requirements outlined above, the Vendor must support the following plan design parameters and administrative standards:
 - **Plan Year Structure:** The Vendor must support a standardized benefit plan year of January 1 through December 31 for all applicable health and welfare plans, unless otherwise directed by EarthScope. The Vendor shall coordinate carrier negotiations, renewals, open enrollment timing, and compliance filings consistent with this plan year structure.
 - **Eligibility and Effective Dates:** The Vendor must administer benefit eligibility under the following parameters:
 - Benefits shall become effective on the first day of the month following the date of hire, unless otherwise required by law.
 - Coverage for terminating employees shall remain active through the last day of the month in which employment terminates, unless otherwise required by law.
 - The Vendor shall ensure accurate carrier feeds reflecting these eligibility rules and shall prevent premature termination or delayed activation of coverage.

- The Vendor shall clearly describe any system limitations or carrier constraints that would prevent compliance with these eligibility requirements.
- **COBRA Administration:** The Vendor shall provide full-service Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) administration, including but not limited to:
 - Timely issuance of COBRA election notices in compliance with federal and state continuation laws;
 - Premium billing, collection, and remittance;
 - Management of qualifying events and eligibility determinations;
 - Tracking of coverage periods and payment deadlines;
 - Administration of state continuation requirements where applicable;
 - Maintenance of audit-ready documentation and records retention.
- The Vendor must demonstrate experience administering COBRA for multi-state employers and ensuring compliance with all federal notice timing requirements and state-specific continuation laws.
- Failure to demonstrate the capability to administer the above plan parameters and COBRA requirements may render a proposal non-responsive.

2.5 Compliance, Reporting, and Risk Management

- **Federal Reporting:** Full tracking and filing of Forms 1094-C/1095-C (ACA), OSHA 300/300A/301 logs.
- **Workers' Compensation:** Policy renewal, state-specific compliance, claims tracking, and audit management under the PEO's master policy.
- **Custom Analytics:** Ability to build ad-hoc reports and dashboards for turnover, diversity, and labor costs beyond standard "canned" reports.
- **Proactive Law Tracking:** Guidance on changing federal and state-level wage, leave, and employment laws across all states of operation.
- **Employment Policy Documentation and Workplace Posting Compliance:** In addition to the compliance and reporting requirements set forth above, the Vendor shall provide comprehensive support for employment policy documentation and workplace notice compliance across all states in which EarthScope operates.
- **Employee Handbook Development and Maintenance:** The Vendor shall:
 - Assist in the creation, review, and ongoing maintenance of EarthScope's Employee Handbook;
 - Provide legally compliant, state-specific policy language updates reflecting changes in federal, state, and local employment laws;
 - Maintain multi-state addenda as necessary to address jurisdiction-specific requirements;
 - Provide guidance on policy revisions related to wage and hour laws, leave entitlements, anti-discrimination protections, workplace conduct, and remote work arrangements;

- Support periodic legal updates and recommended policy revisions on at least an annual basis, or more frequently as required by regulatory changes;
 - Maintain documentation reflecting version control and distribution acknowledgment tracking;
 - Provide electronic acknowledgment functionality within the HRIS platform.
 - The Vendor shall demonstrate experience maintaining multi-state employee handbooks for nonprofit or federally funded organizations.
- **Federal and State Workplace Poster Compliance:** The Vendor shall:
 - Provide all required federal, state, and local labor law postings applicable to EarthScope's physical worksites and remote employees.
 - Ensure all postings remain current and compliant with applicable federal, state, and local regulatory requirements.
 - Provide digital posting solutions suitable for remote and hybrid work environments.
 - Monitor federal, state, and local regulatory changes and promptly notify EarthScope of any required posting updates.
 - Supply updated physical and digital labor law posters within ten (10) business days of a regulatory change or official release requiring a revised posting, or sooner where required by applicable law.
 - Maintain documentation demonstrating posting compliance, including records of regulatory changes, posting update dates, and distribution of revised posters, sufficient to support audit and compliance requirements.
- The Vendor shall describe its process for tracking posting updates across multiple jurisdictions and ensuring timely distribution of revised notices.
- Failure to demonstrate the capability to provide handbook maintenance and workplace posting compliance support may render a proposal non-responsive.
- **Employment Practices Liability Insurance (EPLI) and Legal Support:** In addition to the foregoing compliance and risk management services, the Vendor shall provide Employment Practices Liability Insurance ("EPLI") coverage under the PEO master policy or an equivalent structure. The Vendor shall clearly describe:
 - **Coverage Structure**
 - Whether EPLI coverage is included within the PEO master policy or provided separately;
 - Applicable policy limits (per claim and aggregate);
 - Retention or deductible amounts;
 - Claims-made vs. occurrence-based coverage structure;
 - Retroactive date provisions and tail coverage options.
 - **Scope of Coverage**

Coverage shall include, at minimum, protection against claims arising from:

 - Discrimination;
 - Harassment;

- Retaliation;
 - Wrongful termination;
 - Failure to hire or promote;
 - Wage and hour defense (whether defense-only or indemnity);
 - Employment-related misrepresentation.
- **Defense Coverage**
The Vendor shall specify whether legal defense costs are:
 - Included within policy limits or provided in addition to limits;
 - Managed by carrier-appointed counsel or panel counsel;
 - Subject to Vendor or client approval rights.
 - **Legal Inquiry and Pre-Claim Assistance**
The Vendor shall provide proactive risk mitigation support, including:
 - Access to HR/legal advisory services for employment-related inquiries;
 - Assistance responding to demand letters, administrative agency complaints, and regulatory inquiries (e.g., EEOC, DOL, state agencies);
 - Guidance prior to termination decisions or high-risk personnel actions;
 - Template documentation and recommended corrective actions.
 - **Claims Management**
The Vendor shall describe:
 - Claims intake procedures;
 - Average response timelines;
 - Role of the client in defense strategy decisions;
 - Reporting transparency throughout the lifecycle of a claim.

The Vendor shall demonstrate experience managing EPLI coverage for multi-state nonprofit or federally funded organizations and shall disclose any coverage exclusions that may materially limit protection.

Failure to provide adequate EPLI coverage and legal support services may render a proposal non-responsive.

2.6 Employee & Manager Self-Service (ESS/MSS)

- **Mobile Experience:** A high-quality, mobile-first application for all platform functions (pay stubs, leave requests, benefits).
- **Performance Management:** Integrated digital tools for annual reviews and goal setting to eliminate manual processes.
- **Leave Management Sync:** Online leave request/approval workflows that synchronize directly with CostPoint Time & Attendance.

2.7 Vendor Qualifications, Corporate Standing, and Technology Transparency

In addition to the functional service requirements outlined above, the Vendor must demonstrate financial stability, regulatory compliance, and technological transparency sufficient to support EarthScope Consortium Inc.'s operational and federal funding obligations.

2.7.1 Corporate Profile and Industry Standing

The Vendor shall provide:

1. A detailed company biography including:
 - a. Legal corporate name and structure;
 - b. Headquarters location;
 - c. Year established;
 - d. Total years operating as a Professional Employer Organization;
 - e. Ownership structure (public, private equity, privately held, subsidiary, etc.);
 - f. Total number of client organizations currently served;
 - g. Total number of worksite employees currently under management nationwide.
2. Confirmation of current registration and good standing as a Professional Employer Organization in all states where the Vendor operates or intends to operate on behalf of EarthScope.
3. Disclosure of:
 - a. National Association of Professional Employer Organizations (NAPEO) membership number, if applicable;
 - b. ESAC accreditation status, if applicable;
 - c. IRS Certified Professional Employer Organization (CPEO) designation, if applicable.
4. Disclosure of any material litigation, regulatory enforcement actions, license suspensions, consent decrees, or compliance findings within the past five (5) years related to PEO operations, payroll tax administration, benefits administration, or employment compliance.

2.7.2 Client References

The Vendor shall provide a minimum of three (3) client references meeting the following criteria:

- Organizations of comparable employee size to EarthScope;
- Multi-state employers;
- Nonprofit, research, higher education, or federally funded entities preferred;
- Engagement duration of at least two (2) consecutive years.

For each reference, provide:

- Organization name;
- Industry classification;
- Approximate employee count;
- Geographic footprint (number of operating states);
- Length of client relationship;
- Contact name, title, phone number, and email address;
- Summary of services provided.

EarthScope reserves the right to contact references and request additional client examples during the evaluation process.

2.7.3 Artificial Intelligence (AI), Automation, and Data Usage Disclosure

Given the increasing integration of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automated decision-support tools within HR and recruitment platforms, the Vendor must disclose all embedded AI functionality and associated data usage practices.

The Vendor shall provide:

1. A comprehensive description of any AI-enabled tools embedded within:
 - a. Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS);
 - b. Resume screening and ranking algorithms;
 - c. Recruitment advertising distribution tools;
 - d. Predictive analytics modules;
 - e. Payroll anomaly detection systems;
 - f. Benefits recommendation engines;
 - g. Performance analytics tools; or
 - h. Any automated employment decision-support system.
2. A clear explanation of how such tools impact:
 - a. Candidate screening and selection processes;
 - b. Recruitment outreach targeting;
 - c. Employment-related decision-making;
 - d. Workforce analytics and reporting outputs.
3. Disclosure of any automated decision-making functionality that materially affects hiring eligibility, ranking, promotion, compensation, or termination decisions.
4. Documentation of safeguards implemented to:
 - a. Prevent discriminatory bias;
 - b. Ensure compliance with federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) requirements;
 - c. Support OFCCP compliance obligations;
 - d. Comply with applicable state and local laws governing automated employment decision tools;

- e. Provide meaningful human oversight and review of automated outputs.
5. A detailed statement regarding:
 - a. Data mining practices;
 - b. Whether client data is used for AI model training or product development;
 - c. Any third-party data sharing arrangements;
 - d. Data anonymization and aggregation practices;
 - e. Data retention policies.
6. Written confirmation that:
 - a. EarthScope retains full ownership of all workforce data;
 - b. No EarthScope data will be used to train AI models without explicit written authorization;
 - c. Vendor systems comply with applicable data privacy and security regulations.

Failure to fully disclose embedded AI tools, automated decision-making functionality, or data usage practices may render a proposal non-responsive.

SECTION 3 – VENDOR EVALUATION CRITERIA

EarthScope will utilize a two-phase evaluation process to identify the Professional Employer Organization (PEO) that provides the best overall value, service capabilities, compliance expertise, technology platform, and long-term strategic fit for the organization.

Selection will not be based solely on cost. EarthScope reserves the right to consider all factors deemed relevant to the successful performance of the resulting agreement.

3.1 Phase 1 – Qualification Evaluation

Phase 1 proposals will be evaluated based upon the Vendor’s demonstrated qualifications, organizational capacity, technology platform, compliance expertise, integration capabilities, security controls, and ability to support EarthScope’s requirements.

The following weighted criteria will be used:

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
● Integration Capabilities (CostPoint, “TIAA/Pentegra”, APIs, Data Architecture)	20%
● Compliance Expertise (Federal funding, etc.)	20%
● Technology Platform & Employee Experience	15%
● Data Ownership & Portability Commitments	15%
● Data Security, Privacy & Business Continuity	10%
● Payroll, Benefits & HR Service Capabilities	10%
● Vendor Qualifications, References & Industry Experience	10%
Total: 100%	

At the conclusion of Phase 1, EarthScope may shortlist one or more Vendors to advance to Phase 2.

3.2 Phase 2 – Final Proposal Evaluation

Following execution of a mutually acceptable Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA), shortlisted Vendors will receive confidential workforce and benefits information necessary to prepare final pricing and implementation proposals.

Phase 2 proposals will be evaluated using the following weighted criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
• Cost Transparency & Final Pricing	35%
• Breadth and Quality of Benefits Programs	20%
• Implementation Plan & Transition Strategy	15%
• Service Team Structure & Ongoing Support Model	10%
• Demonstrations, Interviews & Overall Organizational Fit	10%
• Contract Terms, Service Level Commitments & References	10%
Total: 100%	

3.3 Best Value Determination

Award will be made to the responsible Vendor whose proposal is determined to be most advantageous to EarthScope, considering technical capabilities, service quality, compliance expertise, implementation approach, organizational fit, and total cost of ownership.

EarthScope reserves the right to:

- Request additional information or clarification;
- Conduct reference checks;
- Require demonstrations or interviews;
- Request Best and Final Offers (BAFO);
- Enter into negotiations with one or more Vendors;
- Reject any or all proposals; and
- Make no award if deemed in the best interest of the organization.

SECTION 4 – PROCUREMENT & ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Governing Regulations

This procurement is conducted in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200), including but not limited to §§200.317–200.327. EarthScope Consortium Inc. (“EarthScope”) receives federal funding and is required to ensure that all procurement actions comply with applicable federal standards.

4.2 Procurement Method

This solicitation is issued as a competitive proposal in accordance with 2 CFR 200.320(d). EarthScope will conduct this procurement in a manner providing full and open competition consistent with federal requirements. All responsible sources are permitted to submit proposals.

EarthScope will not place unreasonable requirements on vendors, require unnecessary experience, or engage in practices that restrict competition. Organizational conflicts of interest will be evaluated and mitigated as necessary.

4.3 Standards of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest

EarthScope maintains written standards of conduct governing the performance of employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts in accordance with 2 CFR 200.318(c).

No employee, officer, or agent of EarthScope shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by federal funds if a real or apparent conflict of interest exists. Such conflicts arise when the individual, any member of their immediate family, their partner, or an organization employing or about to employ any of the above has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for contract award.

All individuals involved in this procurement must disclose any potential conflicts of interest. Violations of these standards may result in disciplinary action.

4.4 Vendor Eligibility Requirements

To be considered for award, vendors must:

- Be actively registered in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov);
- Not be suspended, debarred, or otherwise excluded from federal contracting;
- Comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations;
- Provide all required certifications included in this RFP.

EarthScope reserves the right to verify vendor eligibility through SAM.gov and other federal databases.

4.5 Socioeconomic and Small Business Participation

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.321, EarthScope encourages participation from small businesses, minority-owned firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms. Vendors are encouraged to describe any subcontracting or partnership strategies that support these objectives.

4.6 Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposals must be submitted by the applicable date and time specified in this RFP. Late submissions may be rejected at EarthScope's sole discretion.

This procurement will be conducted in two phases. Vendors must submit all information required for the applicable phase of the procurement process.

Proposals shall include all information requested in this RFP and be organized in a clear, logical, and complete manner that enables efficient evaluation. Vendors are expected to present responses in a structured format that directly corresponds to the sections and requirements outlined in this RFP.

Phase 1 – Qualification Proposal Requirements

Phase 1 proposals shall include, at a minimum:

Volume I – Executive Summary

- Overview of the proposed solution
- Organizational qualifications
- Key differentiators
- Understanding of EarthScope's requirements

Volume II – Corporate Qualifications and References

- Corporate profile
- Industry experience
- PEO registrations and certifications
- Client references
- Financial stability information

Volume III – Technical and Service Response

- Responses to all requirements contained in Section 2
- HRIS capabilities
- Payroll services
- Benefits administration services
- Compliance services
- Integration capabilities
- Security and privacy controls

Volume IV – Implementation and Support

- Proposed implementation methodology
- Service delivery model
- Account management structure
- Training and change management approach

Volume V – Preliminary Pricing Methodology

- Description of pricing structure
- Pricing assumptions
- Administrative fee methodology
- General pricing model

Vendors shall not submit final pricing during Phase 1.

Phase 2 – Final Proposal Requirements

Only Vendors selected to advance from Phase 1 will be invited to participate in Phase 2.

Prior to receiving confidential workforce and benefits information, selected Vendors must execute a mutually acceptable Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).

Phase 2 proposals shall include:

- Final pricing proposal
- Detailed implementation plan
- Service-level commitments
- Proposed service team structure
- Benefits administration strategy
- Underwriting assumptions
- Contract exceptions and proposed terms
- Additional information requested by EarthScope

Proposal Format Requirements

At a minimum, all submissions shall:

- Follow the order and numbering of this RFP, with responses clearly labeled to match each section and subsection;
- Include a table of contents and, where appropriate, section dividers for ease of navigation;
- Provide concise yet sufficiently detailed responses that fully address each requirement;
- Clearly identify any exceptions, assumptions, limitations, or alternative approaches associated with the proposed solution;
- Include all required attachments, exhibits, certifications, and supporting documentation referenced in the proposal;
- Use consistent formatting, including standard business fonts, page numbering, and clearly defined headings.

Failure to follow the prescribed format may result in reduced evaluation scores or determination that the proposal is non-responsive.

All costs associated with proposal preparation, submission, interviews, demonstrations, negotiations, or other activities related to this procurement shall be the sole responsibility of the Vendor and will not be reimbursed by EarthScope.

4.7 Evaluation and Selection Process

Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria set forth in Section 3 of this RFP. EarthScope will utilize a structured evaluation process that may include a technical review, cost analysis, and reference checks.

Award will be made to the responsible vendor whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to EarthScope, considering price and other factors.

EarthScope reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals;
- Waive minor informalities or irregularities;
- Request best and final offers (BAFO);
- Enter into negotiations with one or more vendors;
- Cancel this solicitation at any time.

4.8 Cost and Price Analysis

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.324, EarthScope will perform a cost and price analysis as part of this procurement process to determine price reasonableness, cost realism, and overall value.

Phase 1 – Preliminary Pricing Review

As part of the Phase 1 Qualification Proposal, Vendors shall provide a description of their pricing methodology, fee structure, pricing assumptions, and any factors that may impact final pricing.

EarthScope will evaluate the transparency and reasonableness of the proposed pricing approach as part of the Phase 1 review; however, final pricing will not be required at this stage.

Phase 2 – Final Pricing Evaluation

Vendors selected to advance to Phase 2 will receive confidential workforce, compensation, and benefits information following execution of a mutually acceptable Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).

Phase 2 participants shall provide detailed final pricing, including, as applicable:

- Per Employee Per Month (PEPM) fees;
- Administrative service fees;
- Payroll processing fees;
- Benefits administration fees;
- Implementation costs;
- Technology licensing fees;

- Workers' compensation charges;
- Applicable carrier commissions or compensation arrangements;
- Any additional recurring or one-time charges.

EarthScope reserves the right to request supporting cost information, fee schedules, assumptions, and pricing documentation necessary to evaluate price reasonableness and compare proposals on a consistent basis.

EarthScope may request clarification of pricing elements, conduct discussions regarding pricing assumptions, and request Best and Final Offers (BAFO) from one or more Vendors.

Failure to provide sufficient pricing detail may result in a proposal being determined non-responsive.

4.9 Protest Procedures

Vendors may submit a written protest regarding this procurement. Protests must be received within five (5) business days of the event giving rise to the protest.

Protests shall be submitted in writing to:

Tanya Nichols, Contracts and Grants Administrator II

Tanya.Nichols@earthscope.org

The protest must include:

- The name and address of the protestor;
- The solicitation number;
- A detailed statement of the grounds for protest;
- Supporting documentation.

EarthScope will review and respond to protests in a timely and impartial manner. The decision of EarthScope shall be final.

4.10 Contract Type, Term, and Conditions

EarthScope anticipates awarding a contract as a result of this RFP. The anticipated contract type is Cost-Reimbursable, subject to final negotiation.

The initial contract term is expected to be three (3) years, with options for renewal at EarthScope's discretion.

The resulting contract will incorporate all applicable federal provisions required under 2 CFR 200, including those set forth in Appendix II.

4.11 Required Federal Contract Provisions

The contract resulting from this RFP will include all applicable provisions required by federal law, including but not limited to:

- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) provisions;
- Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment (31 U.S.C. 1352);
- Debarment and Suspension (2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 3000);
- Contract provisions addressing remedies for breach;
- Termination for cause and termination for convenience;
- Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401–7671q) and Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251–1387), as applicable;
- Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act, where applicable;
- Rights to Inventions, if applicable;
- Record retention and access requirements.

4.12 Record Retention and Access to Records

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.334, the Vendor shall retain all records related to this contract for a minimum of three (3) years after final payment and closeout of the award.

The Vendor shall provide EarthScope, the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Comptroller General of the United States, and their authorized representatives access to any books, documents, papers, and records directly pertinent to this contract for the purpose of audit, examination, excerpts, and transcription.

4.13 Domestic Preference (as applicable)

To the extent applicable, vendors shall comply with 2 CFR 200.322, which requires a preference for the procurement of goods, products, or materials produced in the United States.

4.14 Rights Reserved by EarthScope

EarthScope reserves the right to:

- Modify or cancel this RFP at any time;
- Issue addenda or clarifications;
- Request additional information from vendors;
- Conduct discussions or negotiations;

- Make no award if deemed in the best interest of the organization.

4.15 No Obligation to Award

Issuance of this RFP does not obligate EarthScope to award a contract. EarthScope reserves the right to award all, part, or none of the services described herein.

4.16 Incorporation by Reference

All applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and requirements are hereby incorporated by reference into this RFP and any resulting contract.

SECTION 5 – PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE

EarthScope anticipates conducting the procurement process in accordance with the following schedule. All dates are subject to change at the sole discretion of EarthScope. Any modifications will be communicated to all known prospective vendors via formal addendum.

Milestone	Date	Time (ET)
RFQ Phase 1 Issued	July 17, 2026	—
Vendor Questions Due	July 24, 2026	5:00 PM
Responses to Questions Issued (Addendum #1)	July 31, 2026	—
Phase 1 Qualification Proposal Submission Deadline	August 7, 2026	5:00 PM
Initial Compliance Review	August 7 – August 21, 2026	—
Phase 1 Evaluation Period	August 7 – August 21, 2026	—
Notification of Shortlisted Vendors	August 24, 2026	—
NDA Distribution to Shortlisted Vendors	August 24, 2026	—
Executed NDA Due	August 27, 2026	5:00 PM
Release of Confidential Workforce Information	August 28, 2026	—

Vendor Follow-Up Questions Due	September 10, 2026	5:00 PM
Responses to Phase 2 Questions Issued	September 17, 2026	—
Phase 2 Final Proposal Submission Deadline	October 2, 2026	5:00 PM
Vendor Interviews / Demonstrations	October 3, 2026 - October 31, 2026	—
BAFO (if applicable)	November 01, 2026	—
Anticipated Award Notification	November 04, 2026	—
Contract Negotiation Period	November 5 – November 27, 2026	—
Implementation Planning & Data Conversion	December 2026	—
Anticipated Contract Start Date	January 1, 2027	—

Additional Schedule Information:

- Vendors are responsible for monitoring communications regarding this RFP, including any addenda issued by EarthScope.
- Questions must be submitted in writing to **bidrequests@earthscope.org** and must reference the RFP number.
- EarthScope reserves the right to modify the schedule at any time to ensure compliance with federal procurement requirements and to support a fair and thorough evaluation process.
- Late submissions may be rejected and may not be considered for evaluation.
- Only Vendors advancing through Phase 1 will be eligible to participate in Phase 2 and receive confidential workforce and benefits information.

APPENDIX A: DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If any of the following have a financial or other substantive interest** with EarthScope Consortium Inc., an attached detailed explanation of the relationship or benefit must be submitted with your Proposal: • yourself • immediate family * • your partner • any organization in which any of the aforementioned have a material financial or other substantive interest**

I certify that I have provided full disclosure of all relationships that may create a conflict of interest with EarthScope Consortium Inc.

Name of Organization

Signature of Authorized Representative

Title of Authorized Representative

Printed Name of Authorized Representative

Date

** Immediate Family is defined as any person related within the second degree of affinity (marriage) or within third degree of consanguinity (blood) to the party involved.*

APPENDIX B: CERTIFICATION REGARDING DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

This certification is required by the Federal Regulations Implementing Sections 5151-5160 of the Drug-Free Workplace Act, 41 USC 701. The undersigned Vendor certifies that it will provide a drug-free workplace by:

1. Publishing a policy statement notifying employees that unlawful manufacturing, distribution, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited;
2. Establishing an on-going drug-free awareness program;
3. Providing each employee with a written copy of the Drug-Free policy;
4. Notifying EarthScope within ten (10) business days of receipt of notice of a conviction of an employee.

Name of Organization

Signature of Authorized Representative

Title of Authorized Representative

Printed Name of Authorized Representative

Date

APPENDIX C: CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT AND SUSPENSION

The prospective primary participant certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it and its principals:

- A. Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or declared ineligible by any Federal department or agency.
- B. Have not within a three (3) year period been convicted of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with a public (Federal, State, or local) transaction.
- C. Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a government entity.
- D. Have not within a three (3) year period had one or more public transactions terminated for cause or default.

Name of Organization

Signature of Authorized Representative

Title of Authorized Representative

Printed Name of Authorized Representative

Date

APPENDIX D: STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The undersigned agrees to comply with Public Law 105-220, Sec. 188. No individual shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, subjected to discrimination under, or denied employment in the administration of any such program because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation or belief.

Name of Organization

Signature of Authorized Representative

Title of Authorized Representative

Printed Name of Authorized Representative

Date

APPENDIX E: CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

1. No federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency or a Member of Congress in connection with this contract.
2. If any funds other than federal appropriated funds have been paid, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying".

Name of Organization

Signature of Authorized Representative

Title of Authorized Representative

Printed Name of Authorized Representative

Date

APPENDIX F: EARTHSCOPE CENSUS

The information contained in this Appendix provides a high-level overview of EarthScope's workforce and benefits participation for the purpose of assisting Vendors in preparing preliminary pricing and service proposals.

Due to the sensitivity of employee data and internal operational information, EarthScope will provide a detailed employee census only after execution of a mutually acceptable Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).

F.1 Confidential Data Availability

Upon execution of a signed NDA, EarthScope will provide Vendors with a detailed workforce census file that may include, but is not limited to:

- Employee counts by location and employment classification
- Compensation ranges or salary data necessary for payroll pricing models
- Detailed benefits enrollment by plan and coverage tier
- Employee demographic information required for underwriting or benefits analysis (as legally permissible)
- Work location and state tax jurisdiction data
- Hire dates and employment status indicators

The detailed census will be provided solely for the purpose of enabling Vendors to prepare refined pricing, underwriting, and implementation planning.

F.2 High-Level Workforce Overview (Pre-NDA)

For purposes of initial proposal preparation, Vendors should assume a workforce with the following general characteristics:

Geographic Distribution

EarthScope operates a multi-state workforce within the United States, with employees located across numerous states. The organization maintains physical offices as well as remote employees.

Approximate Workforce Size

EarthScope employs approximately 160 employees across all U.S. locations.

Employment Structure

The workforce includes a combination of:

- Full-time employees
- Limited part-time employees

- Remote and office-based staff

EarthScope operates as a **multi-state employer**, requiring payroll tax administration, compliance support, and employment law guidance across multiple jurisdictions.

F.3 Benefits Programs Overview

EarthScope currently offers a comprehensive benefits program that includes, but may not be limited to:

- Medical insurance
- Dental insurance
- Vision insurance
- Employer-sponsored life insurance
- Short-term disability
- Long-term disability
- Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)
- Health Savings Accounts (HSA)
- 403(b) retirement plan administered through **TIAA**
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Additional voluntary benefits

F.4 Benefits Participation (High-Level)

For preliminary planning purposes, EarthScope will provide aggregate enrollment counts by coverage tier, which may include:

- Employee Only
- Employee + Spouse/Domestic Partner
- Employee + Child(ren)
- Family Coverage

Specific plan enrollment numbers and detailed participation data will be provided post-NDA.

F.5 Publicly Available Organizational Information

Vendors may supplement their understanding of EarthScope through publicly available or discoverable information, including but not limited to:

- EarthScope's public website
- IRS Form 990 filings
- Public grant or research program documentation
- Organizational mission and operational structure

F.6 Data Accuracy Disclaimer

The information provided in this Appendix is intended solely for preliminary proposal preparation. Final workforce census information provided after NDA execution may vary slightly and should be used by the selected Vendor for final pricing, underwriting, and implementation planning.

APPENDIX G: WORKER'S COMPENSATION TITLES AND CODES

NAICS Workers' Comp Code	Job Title Description
8871AK	Project Manager III
8871MD	Accounts Payable Specialist III
8871CO	Cloud Software Engineer III
8871TN	HR Coordinator
8601CA	Engineer III
8871IL	Cloud Operations Engineer II
8871CA	Staff Accountant II
8601CA	Engineering Manager III
0103WA	Engineering Manager II
8871DC	Accounting & Travel Compliance Specialist
8871VA	Data Scientist IV
8871CA	Software Engineer III
8606OR	Engineer III
8606CO	Interim Engineering Manager II
8871CO	Data Scientist III

8742MT	Chief Executive Officer
8871CO	Engineering Manager III
8606AK	Engineering Manager II
5301WA	Instructional Designer III
8871NM	Cloud Architect III
8601CA	Engineer II
8742VA	Chief Administrative Officer
8606NM	Engineer I
8871UT	Staff Accountant III
8606NM	Engineering Manager II
5301WA	Data Services Coordinator
5301WA	Engineering Manager IV
8871CO	Vice President, Engagement
8606NM	Engineering Manager III
4904WA	Cloud Software Engineer III
5301WA	Web Developer III

8742SC	Engineering Manager II
8810NM	Warehouse Coordinator I
8871FL	Administrative Assistant IV
8871NC	Administrative Assistant III
8606CO	Engineering Manager III
8871NM	Software Engineer II
8747ND	Director of Project Management
8601CA	Engineer II
8606CO	Engineering Manager III
8859CA	Engineering Manager III
8871CO	Director of Contracts and Compliance
8871CO	Geo Workforce Associate II
8810MT	Cloud Software Engineer III
8606NM	Engineer II
8871CO	Cloud Software Engineer III
5301WA	Engineering Manager IV

8606CO	Senior Program Manager
8601CA	Cloud Operations Engineer III
8606CO	Engineer IV
8871CO	Cloud Operations Engineer III
8871NV	Data Scientist IV
8606NM	Engineer II
8871NJ	HR Generalist III/Benefits Administration
8810NM	Warehouse Manager I
8810NY	Instructional Designer II
4904WA	Permitting Assistant
8871CO	Cloud Architect III
8871NM	Data Technician III
0951PA	Full-Stack Web Developer-II
8606CO	Engineer III
8810TX	Software Engineer II
8871NY	Engagement Manager

8606NM	Engineer I
8871CO	Financial Systems Administrator III
5301WA	Data Technician III
8606CO	Engineer III
8871AZ	Science and Communication Associate II
8871CA	Staff Accountant II
8606TX	Engineer IV
8606NM	Engineer II
5301WA	Data Scientist III
8606NM	Engineer I
8601CA	Data Scientist II
8601CA	Engineer I
8606CO	Engineer II
8601CA	Engineer II
8810CO	Cloud Software Engineer III
8871CO	Data Engineer III

8871CO	Governance and Executive Operations Coordinator
8871NV	Project Manager II
8606NM	Engineering Manager II
8601CA	Engineer IV
8606CO	Vice President, Instrumentation
8871GA	Systems Administrator II
8871WI	Geo Workforce Associate II
8810MI	Instrumentation Coordinator
8871CO	Administrative Assistant III
8871FL	Cloud Operations Engineer III
8606CO	Vice President, Data Services
8859CA	Software Engineer III
8606NM	Senior Program Manager
8871NM	Engineering Manager II
5301WA	Data Engineer III
8871IN	Grants & Contracts Administrator II

8871CO	Community Engagement Coordinator II
8606CO	Engineering Manager III
8601CA	Cloud Software Engineer III
8859CA	Instructional Designer I
8810TX	Cloud Developer Advocate IV
8606NM	Engineer II
8606CO	Senior Program Manager
8747ND	Meeting Planner II
8871CO	Systems Administrator III
8871CO	Instructional Designer III
8871CO	Data Scientist II
8606OR	Engineer III
8871CO	Procurement & Inventory Specialist III
8871CO	Project Cost Controller
8810NM	Community Engagement Coordinator I
8606CO	Engineer III

8871CO	Web Developer III
8871ID	Engineering Manager II
8871CO	Data Scientist IV
8810NM	Data Scientist II
8871NM	Accounting & Audit Manager
8606CO	Engineer II
8871CO	Engineering Manager II
8810NM	Engineer III
5301WA	Engineering Manager III
8871CO	Engineering Manager III
8606CO	Engineer III
8871NC	Data Scientist II
0953DE	Staff Accountant III
8810NM	Engineer I
8810MT	Project Manager II
8606NM	Engineering Manager III, Facilities Operation

8871NM	Data Scientist II
8742SC	Cloud Operations Engineer III
5301WA	Cloud Software Engineer III
8871FL	Cloud Software Engineer III
8742VA	Director Human Resources and Admin Services
8871VA	Administrative Assistant I
8606WI	Project Manager II
8606NE	Data Scientist II
8871CO	Staff Accountant II
5301WA	Engineering Manager IV
8606OR	Engineer III
5301WA	Engineering Manager II
5301WA	Data Scientist II
8871OH	Staff Accountant II
5301WA	Controller
8871OK	Senior Program Manager

8871NC	Data Scientist II
5301WA	Systems Administrator III
8606NM	Engineer II
5301WA	Data Scientist II
8871CO	Data Technician III
8871CO	Cloud Developer Advocate III
8601CA	Engineer III
8606CO	Engineering Manager II
8601CA	Science and Communication Associate II
8871MO	Recruiter/HR Generalist

APPENDIX H: CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL CONTRACT PROVISIONS (2 CFR 200 APPENDIX II)

The undersigned Vendor certifies that it understands and agrees that any contract awarded as a result of this Request for Proposals (RFP) will be subject to all applicable federal requirements, including but not limited to those set forth in 2 CFR Part 200, Appendix II.

The Vendor hereby certifies and agrees to comply with the following provisions, as applicable to the scope of services:

1. **Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)**
The Vendor shall comply with Executive Order 11246, as amended, and all applicable regulations prohibiting discrimination in employment.
2. **Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment (31 U.S.C. 1352)**
The Vendor certifies that no federally appropriated funds have been used to influence or attempt to influence an officer or employee of any federal agency, Member of Congress, or employee of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract.
3. **Debarment and Suspension (2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 3000)**
The Vendor certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or otherwise excluded from participation in federal transactions.
4. **Contract Remedies**
The Vendor acknowledges that the resulting contract will include provisions addressing remedies for breach of contract, including sanctions and penalties as appropriate.
5. **Termination for Cause and Convenience**
The Vendor acknowledges that the resulting contract will include provisions allowing EarthScope to terminate the contract for cause and for convenience, in whole or in part.
6. **Clean Air Act and Federal Water Pollution Control Act**
For contracts exceeding \$150,000, the Vendor agrees to comply with all applicable standards, orders, or regulations issued pursuant to the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401–7671q) and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251–1387).
7. **Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (if applicable)**
Where applicable, the Vendor agrees to comply with provisions regarding overtime compensation and safe working conditions.
8. **Rights to Inventions (if applicable)**
The Vendor agrees to comply with all applicable requirements related to rights in inventions made under a contract or agreement.
9. **Record Retention and Access to Records**
The Vendor agrees to maintain all records related to the contract for a minimum of three (3) years in accordance with 2 CFR 200.334 and to provide access to such records to EarthScope, the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Comptroller General of the United States, and their authorized representatives.
10. **Compliance with Federal Laws and Regulations**
The Vendor agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and executive orders governing the performance of the contract.

The Vendor understands that failure to comply with these requirements may result in termination of the contract, suspension of payments, or other remedies as permitted by law.

By signing below, the Vendor certifies that it has reviewed, understands, and agrees to comply with the above federal requirements.

Name of Organization

Signature of Authorized Representative

Title of Authorized Representative

Printed Name of Authorized Representative

Date