



**STATE OF LOUISIANA
LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, Louisiana
Innovation Office (LA.IO)**

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (“RFQ”):
TECH-ENABLED BUSINESS TOOLKIT
PLATFORM DEVELOPMENT**

Addendum No. 1

ADDENDUM 1 – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

This addendum includes responses to questions received by October 17, 2025. The following clarifications are provided to all potential respondents.

NUM.	QUESTION	RESPONSE
1	Regarding the Knowledge Base Integration requirement – integrating authoritative state and municipal resources via robust RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation) pipelines – could LED clarify how these source materials will be provided and maintained? Will LED supply an initial corpus of documents (laws, regulations, FAQs, etc.) for the toolkit, and does LED envision a specific content management process for adding new resources “without code updates”?	LED will work with the selected vendor to navigate and prioritize inputs based on database readiness. There is not uniformity in data structures across all potential inputs. Source material provision and maintenance will vary based on source and LED will co-determine these processes with the selected vendor.
2	Given Executive Order JML 25-109 (effective Sept 29, 2025) prohibits state agencies from procuring or licensing AI technology prior to December 15, 2025, how will LED reconcile this restriction with the anticipated project start in late November 2025? Will LED obtain the necessary approvals or waivers (per Section 2 of the Order) to proceed, or should the vendor plan for a delayed AI implementation until after Dec 15, 2025?	LED will work to obtain all necessary approvals or waivers.
3	Executive Order JML 25-109 Section 6 prohibits inputting certain data into any AI system – including personal identifying information (PII) of the public, specific property information, proprietary, confidential, or restricted data. In the context of the business toolkit, what measures or guidelines does LED expect to enforce to comply with these restrictions? For example, should the solution actively filter or redact user-provided PII and sensitive details, and will LED provide policies on data that must be excluded from AI processing?	The toolkit should include safeguards to prevent capture or processing of restricted data. LED will work with the vendor to finalize policies outlining prohibited data.
4	Could LED clarify whether the Discovery and Planning phase is expected to include user research (e.g., interviews, surveys) beyond the findings LED is already gathering?	No additional user research is expected of the vendor during discovery and planning.
5	Are there any specific content domains (e.g., tax, permitting, funding) that are considered “Phase 1 must-haves” for the knowledge base integration, or	Phase 1 must include information on initial business registration processes, relevant

NUM.	QUESTION	RESPONSE
	should vendors propose prioritization based on their discovery process?	permitting, and funding opportunities. Other topics may be included.
6	Will LED provide structured content/data feeds from state and municipal agencies for ingestion into the retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) system, or will vendors be responsible for content sourcing, scraping, and formatting?	See response to #1
7	The RFQ references a March 31, 2025 launch for Phase 1. Could LED provide clarity on the expected functional scope at launch vs. post-launch enhancements?	The launch date is March 31, 2026. At launch, the toolkit is expected to provide essential features that assist Louisiana small businesses in navigating startup processes. Post-launch, LED envisions iterative enhancements to expand the toolkit's functionalities, incorporating additional data sources, user feedback, and technological advancements. The specific scope and timeline for these enhancements will be determined collaboratively with the selected vendor as part of the co-development of the project roadmap and ongoing discovery.
8	Does LED have a preferred cloud hosting provider (e.g., AWS, Azure, GCP), or will the vendor have discretion to propose their preferred platform?	No; vendors are free to propose their own cloud provider.
9	Are there any existing infrastructure components (e.g., CRM, user authentication, analytics) that vendors must integrate with beyond what's listed in the Technical Requirements section?	There are no additional infrastructure components that must be integrated beyond those listed in the RFQ.
10	Does LED expect vendors to provide SOC 2 audit readiness documentation by the end of Phase 2, or only to articulate a plan to achieve readiness?	Vendors are expected to be SOC 2 compliant by the end of Phase 2; compliance may be self-verified initially pending third-party audit.
11	For persistent conversations required by Phase 2 privacy posture, is LED expecting vendors to architect that capability from Phase 1 (even if not yet active), or can it be added later?	Vendors should design and stub the persistent-conversation capability in Phase 1 so it can be enabled in Phase 2 without re-architecture, but it does not need to be active in Phase 1.
12	Are there any specific performance targets (e.g., latency thresholds, concurrency levels) that vendors should meet beyond what's stated in the RFQ?	There are no specific targets that vendors must meet beyond what is stated in the RFQ.

NUM.	QUESTION	RESPONSE
13	Under “Comprehension of Project Purpose” (20 points), are vendors encouraged to propose value-added functionality not explicitly listed in the RFQ (e.g., advanced personalization, multilingual support), or should responses remain tightly scoped?	Vendors may include value-added functionality in their response.
14	How many other companies are responding to this RFP?	LED is not aware of how many companies intend to respond to this RFQ as it is an open procurement.
15	The RFQ asks for hourly rates but does not specify an overall budget range. Can LED provide a ballpark budget or funding ceiling for Phase 1 to help ensure proposals are right-sized?	There is no set budget or funding ceiling for Phase 1. LED intends to work with the selected vendor to develop a scope of work and budget that appropriately and efficiently accomplishes the objectives of this project outlined in the RFQ. Respondents are only required to provide hourly rates and not fixed fee estimates.
16	For subcontractors, should vendors include rates and qualifications for all potential subcontractors at the time of submission, or is it acceptable to identify subcontractors post-award (pending LED approval)?	It is acceptable to identify subcontractors post-award, but only with written LED approval. If the initial solution proposes the use of subcontractors, rates and qualifications must be included.
17	The Project Start Date is listed as November 31, 2025 (which is not a calendar date). Should vendors assume November 30 or December 1 as the anticipated start?	The anticipated project start date is December 1, 2025.
18	Will LED allow brief proposal updates or addenda from vendors if significant clarifications are issued in response to submitted questions?	Yes. LED will allow proposal updates or addenda, provided they are submitted by the deadline included in the RFQ.
19	The RFQ notes potential future phases including integration with social media or messaging platforms. Does LED envision these as separate task orders or part of a multi-year master services agreement?	LED will negotiate any expansions of work as necessary with the selected vendor.
20	Will LED provide structured digital versions (e.g., PDFs, HTML, datasets) of all state and municipal resources to be integrated into the toolkit, or should vendors plan to perform content ingestion and structuring as part of Phase 1?	See response to #1.
21	Are there existing LED APIs or repositories that the toolkit will be expected to integrate with for regulatory/licensing content?	See response to #1.

NUM.	QUESTION	RESPONSE
22	Are there state cybersecurity frameworks or standards beyond SOC2 that the solution should adhere to?	No.
23	Does LED have a preferred cloud hosting provider (e.g., AWS, Azure, GCP), or will the vendor have discretion to propose their preferred platform?	See response to #8.
24	Which CRM system does LED currently use, and what level of integration is expected in Phase 1 vs. later phases?	LED currently uses HubSpot and Salesforce CRM platforms. Phase 1 will include only the core CRM integrations necessary to support basic user and business interactions. Additional or more advanced CRM functionality can be implemented in later phases as part of iterative enhancements.
25	For persistent conversations in later phases, are there specific state retention policies or anonymization protocols the vendor should plan for?	LED has not finalized a retention schedule or anonymization standard for persistent conversations; these will be set as part of the Phase 2 privacy posture. Vendors should design for configurable retention, legal hold and secure deletion; default pseudonymization/redaction of logs and PII minimization; encryption in transit/at rest with RBAC and audit trails; and support for data-subject requests and public-records export flags. Solutions must achieve SOC 2 by the end of Phase 2; no additional state cybersecurity frameworks are mandated at this time.
26	Can you provide more detail on LED's expectations for the administrative interface for response review and labeling (e.g., role-based permissions, number of expected reviewers)?	The administrative interface must support role-based access with a small reviewer pool. Similar to: Admin (configure labels, manage users/permissions, view audits), Reviewer/Approver (triage, annotate, approve/reject), Contributor/Labeler (propose edits/labels), and optional Read-only. Total active reviewers are not expected to exceed five. Capabilities should include a queue-based review workflow with configurable labeling taxonomy, audit logging, and SSO/SAML; pair this with the required admin dashboard (usage, performance, accuracy/safety metrics) and evaluation harness integration.

NUM.	QUESTION	RESPONSE
		LED will co-define specific labels and workflow during discovery; vendors may propose additional roles or tooling but should keep complexity proportional to the small reviewer cohort.
27	If selected for oral presentations, will LED allow vendors to bring technical partners to participate in the presentation, or must only the prime contractor present?	Yes; technical partners may be present for oral presentations.
28	While this is a qualifications-based selection, are there anticipated budget ranges for Phase 1 development that vendors should consider when framing their cost projections?	See response to #15.
29	What is the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system used by LED?	See response to #24.
30	Is the preference to have a stand-alone platform, dedicated LED members and companies or would it be preferable to have a secure LED “organization” within a broader platform through which future expansion could be leveraged.	The preference is for a stand-alone platform.
31	What is the expected budget range or funding ceiling for the initial phase and for future task orders?	See response to #15.
32	Will LED contract with a single prime vendor or allow consortium / sub-contractor team structures?	See response to #16.
33	What is the anticipated duration of the initial task order, and will subsequent task orders be renewal-based or competitively bid?	The initial task order will be negotiated and details specified in contract negotiations with LED; LED will negotiate any expansions of work as necessary with the selected vendor.
34	Will oral presentations be virtual or in-person, and how will the additional 10 evaluation points be applied?	Oral presentations, if deemed to be necessary and desired, will be virtual. The 10 additional points will be assigned based on the evaluation team’s review of each firm’s presentation, assessing clarity, understanding of project scope, approach, and ability to effectively communicate proposed solutions. These points will be added to the written response’s total score for an overall maximum of 110 points.

NUM.	QUESTION	RESPONSE
35	May vendors propose alternate or accelerated project timelines as part of value-added innovation?	Yes.
36	What are the required insurance coverages (General Liability, E&O, Cyber) to contract with LED?	The State requires Employer's Liability insurance (\$1,000,000) and Commercial General Liability (CGL) (\$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate). LED requests that vendors provide the same insurance coverages, along with \$1,000,000 in Cyber Liability Insurance.
37	How will confidential or proprietary information be protected under Louisiana's Public Records Law (R.S. 44), and what process exists for designating trade-secret materials?	All materials submitted in response to this RFQ are subject to disclosure under Louisiana's Public Records Law. Proposers should clearly mark any portions of their submissions that contain trade secrets, proprietary information, or other materials they consider confidential. LED will make the final determination regarding the applicability of any claimed exemptions in accordance with state law.
38	Which Louisiana datasets, documents, or APIs will be provided to seed the RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation) knowledge base?	See response to #1.
39	Will LED require SOC 2 readiness to be validated through third-party audit, and will self-attestation be acceptable for Phase 1?	See response to #10.
40	Is LED prepared to provide staff/personnel in the process of prompt-building?	Yes; LED will support the process of prompt building.
41	What are LED's expectations for the assistant's persona, tone, and guardrail policies to ensure alignment with state communications standards?	LED expects the assistant to maintain a professional, clear, and approachable persona consistent with state communications standards. Its tone should be informative and neutral. LED will work with the vendor to determine specific guardrails and the scope for the toolkit.
42	Will LED provide existing brand guidelines, color palette, and typography for interface design?	Yes.

NUM.	QUESTION	RESPONSE
43	Will LED require third-party accessibility testing or certification to verify ADA and Section 508 compliance prior to launch?	Third-party certification is not required if the vendor is willing to self-certify adherence to compliance requirements.
44	Should the platform include alternative interaction modalities (e.g., text-to-speech, high-contrast, captioning, keyboard-only navigation, voice input) to ensure usability for individuals with disabilities?	Alternative interaction modalities are not required.
45	Does LED maintain a statewide digital-accessibility policy or procurement checklist (e.g., VPAT / ACR) that vendors must complete or document against?	No; LED does not maintain a digital accessibility policy in its procurement guidelines.
46	What are the primary user journeys that Phase 1 must support (e.g., registering a business, applying for incentives, identifying permits)?	See response to #5.
47	Will the toolkit's analytics dashboards be internal-only or include public transparency metrics?	Internal only.
48	Will LED or the vendor be responsible for user-testing recruitment and focus-group management during discovery?	No. User-testing recruitment and focus-group management will be the responsibility of LED.
49	Will the toolkit collect or process personally identifiable information (PII), and if so, what privacy-impact-assessment standards apply?	The toolkit may collect limited PII to support user interactions, but all data handling must comply with state and federal privacy laws. Vendors should design for PII minimization.
50	What are LED's target uptime, latency, and recovery objectives (SLAs) for the deployed platform?	Initial targets are as follows, the selected vendor will refine and finalize with LED in initial project stages. Vendors may propose alternatives with rationale. • Availability (monthly): Core chat/API 99.9%; admin/analytics 99.5%. Approved maintenance ≤ 2 hrs/month outside 8a–6p CT. Multi-AZ and auto-scaling expected. • Latency (consumer LLM UX, streaming on; “standard prompt” ≈ 2k input / 200 output tokens): ○ Time-to-first-token (TTFT): p50 ≤ 700 ms, p95 ≤ 2.5 s.

NUM.	QUESTION	RESPONSE
		○ End-to-end to first 200 tokens: p50 ≤ 3 s, p95 ≤ 8 s, p99 ≤ 12 s. ○ Tool/RAG calls: add up to +2 s to p95 targets; apply caching where feasible. Long documents & batch jobs handled async and excluded from interactive SLOs. • Recovery Objectives: RTO: P0 ≤ 60 min, P1 ≤ 4 hrs, P2 ≤ 1 business day. RPO: conversation/config data ≤ 15 min; logs/analytics ≤ 1 hr. • Incident Management: P0 acknowledge ≤ 15 min; public status updates ≤ 30 min cadence until resolution. • SLA Measurement & Credits: Vendor-operated synthetic monitors; monthly SLO reports. Service credits for breaches. Upstream LLM outages may be excluded unless the vendor offers multi-provider failover.
51	What is the expected post-launch support window (e.g., 30, 90, 180 days)?	LED requests that proposers define their recommended post-launch support window and approach based on their solution and anticipated needs.
52	Should pricing be submitted strictly as fully-loaded hourly rates, or may vendors also provide fixed-fee phase estimates?	See response to #15.
53	Are travel or sub-contractor costs reimbursable under LED policy?	Specific reimbursement details for travel and subcontractor costs will be finalized during contract negotiations and will comply with LED's Procurement Code (LAC 34:XV.Chapters 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11).
54	Is it the intention of LED to retain full intellectual-property ownership of all source code, prompts, and data pipelines, or is shared IP or perpetual license acceptable once the project is in production?	Shared IP and perpetual licensing are acceptable.

NUM.	QUESTION	RESPONSE
55	Will the vendor be expected to provide ongoing managed services for content moderation, retraining, or dataset refreshes under future task orders?	See response to #19.
56	With the stated goal of simplifying business start-up and navigation, does LED want the toolkit to include all state and federal programs, incentives, and initiatives relevant to small businesses?	Yes; while not necessary in Phase 1, inclusion of all relevant state and federal programs should be considered during the design of the project roadmap.
57	Will LED provide a centralized database of these initiatives, or is the vendor expected to build and maintain a continuously updated database?	See response to #1.
58	Are the applications and forms for these initiatives already digitized, or should the vendor expect to create online application processes for all, most, or some programs?	See response to #1.
59	Should the toolkit include permits, licenses, and compliance requirements for every jurisdiction within each parish, or only those governed by state-level agencies?	Discovery is in process with select municipalities; the processes for gathering and integrating data from jurisdictions with varied levels of digital infrastructure will be co-designed with LED as part of ongoing discovery. Determinations on what jurisdictions to include and approaches for updates will be determined collaboratively with LED as part of ongoing discovery.
60	How should the vendor obtain and integrate information from jurisdictions without digital infrastructure?	See response to #59.
61	Will local jurisdictions be required to update their regulations digitally and in real time, or should the vendor design a process for manual periodic updates?	See response to #59.
62	If the vendor builds this database, what are LED's expectations for governance, data-verification, and refresh frequency?	The vendor is expected to maintain a versioned source registry with provenance, citations, change history, and access controls (SSO/RBAC). The vendor will work collaboratively with LED to add new sources "without code updates," defining data-inclusion criteria and review workflows during discovery. Enable audit logging and an admin feedback loop for labeling/approvals. For data verification,

NUM.	QUESTION	RESPONSE
		implement automated validations should (format, freshness, source reachability), link answers to authoritative citations, and use an evaluation harness plus human spot-checks for accuracy and hallucination control. The baseline expectations for refresh frequency are as follows: • Statutes/regulations/permits: monitor feeds/sources at least weekly; material changes updated within 5 business days; urgent corrections via hotfix. • Programs/funding/news: review monthly (or sooner if a tracked source changes). • Prompts/policies/evals: review per release and at least quarterly. These cadences should be documented in the support plan with periodic content/model updates post-launch. Vendors may propose stricter SLAs with monitoring.
63	How will LED measure and verify that this project aligns with the 9x90 Work Plan milestones and the Growth & Innovation pillar of <i>Positioning Louisiana to Win</i> ?	This initiative is included in LED's 9x90 Work Plan.
64	How does LED envision this toolkit integrating with existing LED programs such as SSBCI Growth Fund, AITC, FastStart, and Small Business Services?	This toolkit will be complementary to these resources; data and information from these sources should be integrated into the toolkit's knowledge base.
65	Will the selected vendor be expected to co-facilitate workshops or discovery sessions with Louisiana entrepreneurs whose feedback LED is currently gathering?	No; additional discovery with these entrepreneurs is not expected of the vendor.
66	Please confirm the March 31, 2025 launch date, which appears earlier than the anticipated November 2025 project start.	The Phase 1 launch date is March 31, 2026.

NUM.	QUESTION	RESPONSE
67	What constitutes Phase 1 completion for payment purposes — functional beta, public launch, or post-launch stabilization?	Specific payment terms will be established in contract negotiations with LED.
68	How will change-order requests and backlog reprioritization be managed during development and subsequent phases?	Change-order requests and backlog reprioritization will be managed collaboratively between LED and the vendor using an iterative, agile approach. LED will set priorities, and the vendor will provide delivery leadership and guidance on effort and risk. Backlog updates and change requests will follow clear, auditable procedures, with a designed prioritization process where urgent issues are handled via an expedited path. Specific workflows, thresholds, and tools will be co-determined during project discovery and roadmap design, allowing flexibility while ensuring LED retains priority control and decision timelines are met.
69	Will LED share a summary of evaluation scores or feedback with respondents after award notification to support future procurements?	No; evaluation results will not be automatically shared with respondents following award.
70	Is multilingual functionality required at initial launch or reserved for later phases?	Multilingual functionality is not required in the initial launch.
71	Will LED require the toolkit to incorporate multilingual and equity-focused accessibility features to ensure inclusive reach for rural and underserved entrepreneurs?	Specific multilingual and equity-focused accessibility features are not required beyond Section 508 compliance.