

# Request for Proposal

*MSRB's Professional Qualifications Program*



**DECEMBER 2022**

## Request for Proposal (RFP) TOPIC

The Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB) is accepting proposals from qualified individuals or organizations to consult (“Consultant”) with the MSRB’s Professional Qualifications (PQ) Department on matters related to the development and delivery of high-stakes exams in accordance with *The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, while also reducing the risk associated with test bias. The Consultant would serve a critical role in training the Item-writing committee on how to review items and content through the lens of diversity, equity, inclusion and bias reduction (DEI-BR); and support MSRB staff in the review and updating of item banks, as applicable. Additional details are provided in Section II (“Scope of Work”) below. We invite you or your organization to submit a proposal to the MSRB by close of business on January 31, 2023.

### I. Background Information on MSRB

The MSRB was established in 1975 by Congress as an independent self-regulatory organization. For almost 50 years the MSRB has been charged with protecting investors and the public interest by promoting a fair and efficient municipal securities market through rulemaking on the municipal securities activities of broker-dealers and banks. With the 2010 Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, the MSRB’s mission was expanded to also protect municipal entities and obligated persons and to undertake rulemaking in connection with the municipal advisory activities of municipal advisors. The MSRB also operates market information and transparency systems for use by investors and municipal market participants.

#### *Mission*

The MSRB protects and strengthens the municipal bond market, enabling access to capital, economic growth, and societal progress in tens of thousands of communities across the country.

- We create trust in our market through informed regulation of dealers and municipal advisors that protects investors, issuers and the public interest.
- We build technology systems that power our market and provide transparency for issuers, institutions, and the investing public.
- We serve as the steward of market data that empowers better decisions and fuels innovation for the future.

Under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, the MSRB is subject to oversight by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), which includes the approval of the MSRB’s rules and the regulation of certain of the MSRB’s technology systems under the SEC’s Regulation Systems Compliance and Integrity (Regulation SCI). The MSRB Board of Directors consists of 15 members who are knowledgeable of matters related to the municipal securities markets. These members include eight representatives of the public and seven representatives of regulated entities in the municipal securities market. Members of the Board of Directors meet throughout the year to make policy decisions, authorize rulemaking, consider enhancements to market transparency systems and oversee operations. A professional staff of over 110 individuals led by the Chief Executive Officer manages the MSRB’s day-to-day operations under direction of the Board of Directors. The MSRB’s activities are funded primarily from assessments on regulated dealers and municipal advisors, and the MSRB receives no funding from the federal government.

DEI is core to the MSRB's values and to the mission. One of the four strategic goals of the MSRB is to protect and uphold the public interest and integrity of this market by way of committing to social responsibility and DEI. Our vision is to give America the confidence to invest in its communities, and as we fulfill our Congressional mandate, we uphold the public trust by reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve and by fostering greater equity and inclusion in the municipal market. Advancing DEI is not only essential to our success as a regulator, but also for the success of the market.

Proposing individuals or organizations are encouraged to visit our website at [msrb.org](https://msrb.org) for further information.

## II. Scope of Work

The MSRB's PQ program requires associated persons of brokers, dealers and municipal securities dealers (collectively "dealers") that engage in municipal securities activities and municipal advisors that engage in municipal advisory activities (together referred to as "regulated entities") to meet professional qualification standards outlined under MSRB Rule G-3. The MSRB's PQ examinations are designed to ensure that such associated persons have the specified level of competency and knowledge of the federal securities laws, rules and regulations, including MSRB rules, applicable to the role and responsibilities of such associated persons in the municipal securities market. The examinations are not designed to assess an associated person's aptitude for performing municipal securities activities or municipal advisory activities.

The MSRB is accepting proposals from qualified individuals or organizations to serve as a Consultant to the MSRB related to the MSRB's review of its professional qualifications exam content. The Consultant would serve as a subject matter expert (SME) regarding psychological assessments and evaluations, and advise PQ staff on best practices related to bias reduction, including training PQ staff and the MSRB's Item-writing committees on cultural biases. The qualified Consultant would have published research, preferably, examining the potential impact of normed based testing on varying diverse groups.

### ***Role/Responsibilities***

- Train PQ staff and Item-Writing committees on the types of biases found in assessments
- Review the content and statistical data for each item within the MSRB's PQ examination bank for content biases
- Assist PQ staff in updating item-writing guidelines; and the MSRB's Professional Qualifications Style Guide in furtherance of more inclusive language

## III. Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used by the MSRB to evaluate responses to this request for proposal. Clarity and brevity of responses is critical, with page limits for each respective section noted below. Please limit appendices or additional materials beyond what is requested. Your responses to the following four criteria should stand alone and not rely on reference to the appendices. The expected weight of each criterion is provided in parenthesis, as follows:

1. **Individual/Organization Qualifications – limit of 4 pages (20%)**
  - Describe the depth of your (organization) practice and/or research in assessing content biases in standardized testing or comparable assessments, particularly as it relates to human diversity, including gender, race, language and culture. (1 page)
  - Provide information on whether you have, or your organization has provided these types of services to any financial services market participants, trade associations or, in particular, self-regulatory organizations (SROs). (1 page)
  - Provide information on whether you have, or your organization has provided these types of services to other institutions administering high-stakes exams, such as the SAT or GMAT. (1 page)
  - Discuss your view (organization) on sustainability practices (e.g., diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, carbon footprint reduction efforts, any related certifications). (1 page)
2. **Experience – limit of 3 pages (25%)**
  - Provide a biography that highlights your relevant past experience, including any affiliations with credentialing organizations and membership(s) with any nationally recognized psychometric association, test publishers association or psychological assessment association.
3. **Proposal – limit of 3 pages (40%)**
  - Based on your understanding of the MSRB, describe your proposed process for applying your expertise to deliver the requested services outlined under the scope of work.
4. **Fee Proposal – limit of 2 pages (15%)**
  - Propose a flat, fixed fee to perform the scope of work and deliverables described in Section II of this request for proposal.
  - Furnish hourly billing rates for professional personnel and the estimated number of hours per person to complete the project.
  - Identify any costs or expenses that are not included in the fixed fee proposal, including a not-to-exceed expense cap.

In addition, please provide the following information as part of your response to this request for proposal:

5. **Conflicts of Interest Statement**
  - Discuss your firm's independence with respect to the MSRB. In particular, describe any conflict of interest with respect to the MSRB, including any relationships with the MSRB Board members or MSRB employees (visit [msrb.org](https://www.msrb.org) to obtain a list of current Board members).
6. **Client References**
  - Provide references from two entities for which you have provided comparable services.
7. **Firm Standard Agreement**
  - Provide your or your organization's standard form of agreement/engagement document, if any, proposed to be used for this engagement (which will be subject to negotiation, or an MSRB form agreement may be used; proceeding with a selected individual or organization be conditioned on and subject to the negotiation, execution and delivery of a mutually acceptable definitive agreement/documentation).

Responding individuals or organizations will be evaluated on the quality of the written proposal, as determined by the MSRB in its sole discretion. The proposal must be complete and stand on its own

merits. All proposals and any accompanying information will become the property of the MSRB and will not be returned.

IV. Timeline

January 31	Response to request for proposals due
February 20	Selection of Consultant
March 1	Consultant Begins Work

The MSRB reserves the right to alter this timeline at its sole discretion, or to discontinue/cancel this request for proposal. This request for proposal does not obligate the MSRB to enter into any further agreement or documentation.

V. Submission of Response

Please submit any questions about this request for proposal and your response to Bri Joiner, Director Regulatory Compliance or Lily Echeverria, Senior Professional Qualifications Analyst, in electronic form no later than **January 31, 2023**, to [lecheverria@msrb.org](mailto:lecheverria@msrb.org).

VI. Confidentiality Statement

By accepting to take part in this request for proposal process, you agree to keep in confidence all information provided to you relating to or in connection with the proposal process, not to disclose it to third parties, and not to use it for any purpose other than for the proposal.

Please request the attached Intent to Submit Proposal and Confidentiality Statement by contacting Lily Echeverria at [lecheverria@msrb.org](mailto:lecheverria@msrb.org) by no later than **Monday, January 16, 2023**, for executing and as evidence of your (organization) wish to participate in the proposal process. Once we have received your (organization) Confidentiality Statement, we will be available to provide you with additional information and to answer any questions.

**Request for Proposal ("RFP")  
Intent to Submit Proposal and Confidentiality Statement**

To: Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board  
1300 I Street NW, Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20005

In response to the above-referenced RFP, the undersigned firm accepts the invitation to present its proposal to TOPIC. The firm shall submit its bid for such services on the terms and conditions stated in the RFP and by the due date set forth in it.

The firm agrees to keep confidential all information (whether oral, written or in any other form/media) provided by or on behalf of the MSRB in connection with the RFP/the proposal and potential engagement (collectively, "Confidential Information"), and not to disclose any Confidential Information to any third party(ies) or to use it for any purpose other than solely for purposes of the proposal and, if any, the engagement. The firm acknowledges and agrees that the RFP's contents and the fact that the MSRB is seeking the services described therein, as well as all notes, memoranda/proposals or other documents or materials created by the firm which contain Confidential Information, shall be considered to be Confidential Information. The firm may disclose Confidential Information to its employees as necessary or appropriate in connection with its proposal, provided, that the firm shall make employees receiving Confidential Information aware of the confidentiality obligations herein (and shall be responsible for any unauthorized disclosure or use of Confidential Information by any of its employees).

The firm has caused this Intent to Submit Proposal and Confidentiality Statement to be signed on its behalf by its duly authorized officer or other duly authorized employee.

**Firm Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Authorized Signatory:**

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

***Please deliver a duly executed copy of this Statement to the MSRB  
via email to [bjoiner@msrb.org](mailto:bjoiner@msrb.org).***