



HOWARD COUNTY
LIBRARY SYSTEM

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HOWARD COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP-HCLS-2025-001

Comprehensive Classification & Compensation Study

ISSUE DATE: July 8, 2025

PROJECT MANAGER: Stacey Fields, Director of Human Resources

DEADLINE FOR QUESTIONS: July 17, 2025, by 5:00 PM ET

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS: July 23, 2025

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION: August 4, 2025, by 5:00 PM ET

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS: Email PDF to
rfp@hclibrary.org

CONTACT: rfp@hclibrary.org



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Background

Howard County Library System (HCLS) is a nationally recognized, award-winning library system. With multiple branches serving a dynamic and diverse community, HCLS remains a critical anchor institution in the region. In alignment with its mission as your place to learn, grow, and connect, HCLS is seeking proposals for a **Comprehensive Classification and Compensation Study**. Among the busiest libraries in the state, HCLS serves a diverse population of 337,000 in a community that prioritizes education.

This study must evaluate HCLS's current structure and future workforce needs to ensure internal equity, market competitiveness, and strategic talent alignment.

Point of Contact

All communication regarding this RFP must be submitted via email to the contact below:

Email: rfp@hclibrary.org

Acceptable Submissions

Only electronic submissions in PDF format will be accepted. Vendors are responsible for ensuring their submissions are received and acknowledged. HCLS reserves the right to request additional information, clarification, or corrections from proposers. Vendors may also be asked to make oral presentations during the evaluation process. By submitting a proposal, the vendor accepts the conditions outlined in the RFP, unless exceptions are clearly stated. Proposals must be submitted to: **rfp@hclibrary.org by August 4, 2025, at 5:00 PM EST.**

Consulting Firm Inquiries



All questions must be submitted in writing via email to rfp@hclibrary.org by **July 17, 2025**.

Standard/Licensure Requirements

The selected firm must provide evidence of any necessary licenses or professional certifications required to perform the services prior to the awarding of the contract.

Experience

Vendors must demonstrate at least five years of relevant experience, ideally including work with public-sector, nonprofit, or library organizations.

Basis of Award

The vendor that best meets the experience, capability, approach, cost requirements, and understanding of HCLS' mission and goals will be selected. Firms must demonstrate the ability to analyze current and future staffing needs. Preference will be given to vendors with experience working with public libraries or government agencies.

All submissions will undergo technical analysis of product, pricing, qualifications and credentials, proposal, performance, capabilities, experience, control procedures, project staffing and support, and presentation quality.

Proposal Evaluation

Proposal evaluations will include, but not be limited to:

1. Understanding of HCLS' service needs
 2. Demonstrated service capability, overall quality, and completeness of service
 3. Fees and Charges
 4. Interview/presentation score (at HCLS' discretion)
-

Payment Terms

Monthly progress-based payments upon satisfactory completion of milestones. Final payment upon submission of final report and deliverables. HCLS is tax-exempt.

Progress payments may be submitted based on work completed according to the following schedule:

- Completion of field work
- Submission of draft report
- Submission of final report and any other required documents

If the vendors' payment terms differ, said terms must be included in the vendors proposal.

HCLS may request additional services beyond the scope of this proposal. Any additional work agreed upon will be performed at the same rates outlined in the firm's schedule of fees and expenses provided in the sealed dollar-cost bid.

Howard County Library System reserves the right to reject all proposals.

Agreement Required

The selected consultant must enter into a formal agreement with HCLS and ensure the contract is completed within the specified time. Work may not begin until a fully executed agreement and purchase order are in place.

Vendor Rights

All materials submitted in response to this RFP become the property of HCLS and may be included in any formal documentation related to the contract. Vendors agree that the contents of other proposals are confidential and proprietary, waiving any right to access them. Supporting documentation submitted will not be returned to the Vendor.

Vendors submitting proposals should be aware that HCLS is a public body and must comply with public record laws, which may require disclosure of certain information. Neither party will be held liable for disclosures required by law.

Reservation of Rights

This RFP does not obligate HCLS to award an agreement for services, pay any costs related to proposal preparation, or contract for any services. HCLS reserves the right to accept or

reject any proposals, negotiate with qualified vendors, or cancel the RFP in whole or in part if it is in HCLS' best interest.

HCLS will evaluate proposals based on how effectively they meet its specific requirements. The lowest fee proposal may not be the one selected. HCLS' reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive defects or informalities, or accept portions of proposals if it is in HCLS' best interest.

Proposal Format

The proposal must be signed by an authorized representative of the Consulting Firm and include a statement confirming that the proposal is valid for 180 calendar days from the date of opening.

Vendors are expected to thoroughly understand the conditions, requirements, and specifications before submitting a proposal. By submitting a proposal, the vendor accepts the terms and conditions unless otherwise specified.

HCLS reserves the right to request a detailed breakdown of the vendor's pricing. All quoted fees must be firm and fixed for the entire contract duration, including any extensions.

HCLS reserves the right to request a presentation or interview if a vendor's proposal for the consulting services is selected. This request will be at no cost to HCLS.

Interested consultants should submit a proposal that includes:

1. The proposal cover sheet must include the name, title, address, and phone number of individuals authorized to bind the Contractor contractually, and who can be contacted during the Services Agreement period.
2. Provide a description of your company's qualifications, credentials and experience as they relate to consultation in the areas of job analysis and compensation.
3. Provide bios/resumes of all staff that will be assigned to the study, including training and/or experience in the areas of job analysis and compensation. List their expected hours devoted to this project.
4. Provide an overall description of the methodology you intend to use in conducting the study. Include a scheduled timeframe for completion of project no later than July 31, 2025.



5. Provide a list of three (3) similar projects and services your company has performed within the last 7 years with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of clients for whom work was done, placing particular emphasis on services provided to libraries. Include examples of compensation plan, philosophy descriptions, and salary schedules.

6. Provide a detailed cost estimate for completing the services included in Section II, Scope of Work. Provide firm costs, including a list of itemized expenses to accomplish this study. Include a payment schedule and terms. Vendors must complete the following pricing information:

STUDY AREA	PROPOSED COST
Service 1 Classification Study	\$
Service 2 Compensation Study	\$
Service 3 Project Communication Plan and Final Report with Implementation Timetable and Costs	\$
Estimated Expenses	\$
TOTAL PROPOSED COST:	\$

7. Each prospective Consulting Firm shall submit proposal via email to rfp@hclibrary.org (no other email will be considered for appropriate submission) which will consist of a technical section proposal, including a signed certification, and a dollar cost bid. Failure to do so shall result in automatic rejection of the proposal.

Late Proposals Not Considered

Proposals received after the specified submission deadline will not be considered.

Inconsistency or Error in the RFP



Any Consulting Firm that identifies ambiguity, inconsistency, error in the RFP must notify HCLS in writing before the Proposal Submission Deadline. Failure to do so will waive any claims of ambiguity, inconsistency, or error.

Errors or Omissions

HCLS is not liable for any mistakes or oversights made by the Vendor.

Addenda

HCLS is not accountable for oral instructions from its employees regarding the RFP. Changes will be made only through the official addenda. Vendors must regularly check the HCLS Procurement page at <http://hclibrary.org/about-us/procurement/>

Consulting Firm Incurred Costs

The Consulting Firm is responsible for all the costs of preparing their RFP response. Submitted materials become the property of HCLS and will not be returned after the submission deadline.

Modification or Withdrawal of Proposal

Proposals cannot be modified, withdrawn, or canceled for 180 days after the submission deadline, as agreed by submitting firms. However, proposals may be withdrawn, altered, or resubmitted in writing before the deadline, provided they comply with the terms and conditions.

Rejection of Solicitation Responses

HCLS may reject or accept any proposal, in whole or part, or waive informalities as it sees fit. Firms objecting to a rejection must submit a written protest within five days of the Notification of Award.

Consulting Firm Certification



By submitting a proposal, the Consulting Firm certifies it has not offered any fees, commissions, or valuables to HCLS employees, officials, or consultants to secure a contract.

Contract Period

The Service Agreement shall cover the contract period aligned with dates in the awarded Services Agreement. The agreement will expire upon completion of the Scope of Work requirements.

Site Visits

Site visits are required as a part of submission process.

Protest of Award

Any person objecting to the award of the Services Agreement must submit a written protest to HCLS by 4:00 p.m. on the fifth calendar day after the Notification of Award. HCLS may reject protests not filed on time, those without merit, or those requesting confidential information about other bidders, including pricing details of the awarded firm.

A protester must submit a deposit to cover HCLS' protest administration costs. If the protest is upheld, the deposit will be returned; if rejected, it will be forfeited. The deposit, in cash or cashier's check, must be \$1,000 or 1% of the pending award, whichever is greater, up to a maximum of \$8,000

Termination for Convenience

HCLS may terminate the contract with 30 days' written notice, or a mutually agreed timeframe not exceeding 30 days, if it is deemed in HCLS' best interest. HCLS will cover reasonable costs incurred by the Contractor up to the termination date, but the Contractor will not be reimbursed for anticipated profits not yet earned.

Termination for Default



If the Contractor fails to meet contract obligations or violates any provision, HCLS may terminate the agreement with written notice specifying the cause. HCLS may claim ownership of the services provided, paying fair compensation for satisfactory work done before termination, minus any damage caused by the breach. If damages exceed the compensation, the Contractor remains liable, and HCLS can collect damages or deduct from future payments. In case of disputes, the parties agree to attempt mediation before seeking arbitration, litigation, or other resolution methods.

Scope of Work

Overall Goal: Provide a comprehensive, actionable study to support equitable compensation practices, workforce planning, and strategic talent development.

Service 1: Classification Study

- Review all current job descriptions and organizational structure
- Engage employees through surveys (e.g., PAQs), interviews, or focus groups
- Identify redundancies, inconsistencies, and opportunities for career ladders
- Conduct internal equity review including roles, responsibilities, and requirements
- Recommend classification structure changes with future-forward alignment
- Pay special attention to minimum qualifications and ADA/FLSA compliance
- Evaluate staffing needs to maintain and expand core operations

Service 2: Compensation Study

- Conduct salary benchmarking using peer public library systems and local government agencies. Measure comparator compensation in terms of earnings over time, scale minimums and maximums, actual average salaries, periodic pay adjustments, career promotional progressions, and other compensation factors that impact earnings.
- Review HCLS' salary scales and recommend changes resulting from internal and market analysis
- Analyze pay compression, progression, and equity (e.g., race, gender, tenure)
- Develop recommendations for a sustainable compensation structure with salary ranges
- Assess current and future staffing models, particularly high-demand or evolving skillsets



- Evaluate HCLS' benefits structure in relation to market norms and employee satisfaction
- Include non-monetary offerings such as wellness, development, flexibility

Service 3: Deliverables

- In the interest of transparency and in conjunction with designated management team members, design and develop an ongoing communication plan regarding the study to inform and educate all stakeholders on direction and progress.
- Provide a phased plan to implement compensation changes, including timelines and costs
- Include a communications strategy to inform and educate all stakeholders on direction and progress
- Provide recommendations and training to HR staff on system maintenance and updates
- Final written report with executive summary and full methodology
- Market benchmarking charts and internal equity visuals
- Revised job descriptions as needed
- Proposed salary structure and compensation policies
- Presentation of findings to HCLS and Board (remote presentation acceptable)
- Ongoing recommendations for future staffing and workforce development
- Prepare a draft report for HCLS documenting all findings, conclusions, recommendations, costs to implement the study, and an implementation timetable. Prepare a final report to be reviewed by the President & CEO for presentation to the HCLS Board of Trustees.