

1. INTRODUCTION

The Office of Workforce Development (AccelerateMS) seeks proposals from qualified, nationally recognized nonprofit organizations to develop and deliver a comprehensive, experiential financial literacy and workforce readiness curriculum. The program will serve students in grades 6–12, with an emphasis on supporting the J.P. Wilemon, Jr., Financial Literacy Act, in Mississippi public schools, with the goal of fostering lifelong financial capability and career readiness.

The program must utilize evidence-based instructional models, engage volunteer educators and community professionals, and build partnerships with Local Education Agencies (LEAs). Coverage must be equitably distributed across Mississippi's four workforce regions, and the project will be supported by \$300,000 in legislative appropriated funding.

2. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected nonprofit organization will be responsible for:

2.1 Curriculum Development and Delivery

- Design or adapt a **proven, standards-aligned curriculum** integrating financial literacy and workforce readiness for middle and high school students.
- Include content covering personal finance (e.g., budgeting, saving, credit, taxes), career planning, and employability skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, work ethic).

2.2 Instructional Model

- Utilize **experiential learning** approaches (e.g., simulations, project-based learning).
- Deliver through **in-school, afterschool, and/or virtual formats**.
- Provide implementation support and training for educators and volunteers.

2.3 Volunteer and Community Engagement

- Recruit, train, and support **volunteer instructors and community professionals** to deliver instruction or co-facilitate sessions.
- Establish local industry and community partnerships.

2.4 Regional and School Partnerships

- Establish active partnerships with at least one LEA in each of Mississippi's four workforce regions.
- Demonstrate a plan for **equitable implementation** statewide.

2.5 Reporting and Evaluation

- Collect and report student participation and performance data.
- Measure learning gains and program impact on student readiness.
- Submit regular program and financial reports to AccelerateMS.

3. QUALIFICATIONS

- Be a nationally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a proven track record of serving as a partner with Local Educational Agencies by providing students in grades 6-12 with financial literacy and workforce readiness curriculum and programming in support of Mississippi schools.
- Have a history of program implementation in diverse or rural communities.
- Demonstrate the ability to leverage partnerships with schools and employers.
- Show capacity for statewide coordination and program evaluation.

4. FUNDING DETAILS AND REQUIREMENTS

A total of \$300,000 has been appropriated for this initiative. Funding will be awarded as a single grant. The selected organization must present a detailed budget and narrative outlining how the funds will be used for statewide implementation, including:

- Curriculum development and delivery
- Volunteer recruitment and training
- Partnership development
- Evaluation and reporting

The scope of work as outlined in this Request for Proposal must be delivered at no cost to participating schools or students.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

Criteria	Weight
Program Design and Alignment	40%
Regional Equity and Partnerships	30%
Budget and Cost Efficiency	15%
Evaluation and Reporting Plan	15%

Evaluation will be conducted in a manner that ensures a fair, open, and competitive procurement process. All proposals will be assessed consistently based on the criteria outlined above, and selection will be based on best value.

6. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORMAT

Each proposal must include:

- Executive Summary
- Narrative responding to the Scope of Work
- Implementation timeline with milestones
- Organizational qualifications and bios of key personnel
- Detailed line-item budget and budget narrative with sufficient detail to allow evaluation of cost reasonableness and overall value, and pricing must be presented in a manner that supports comparison across proposers and enables a determination of best value based on both technical merit and cost.
- Letters of support from partner LEAs or organizations
- Documentation of nonprofit status

All submissions must provide sufficient detail to support evaluation and award decisions.

7. TIMELINE

The timeline of this contract will be from the date of signature by all parties until June 30, 2027.

8. SUBMISSION

All proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format with information set forth in Section 6 to:

Email: info@acceleratems.org

Subject Line: “Proposal – Financial Literacy and Workforce Readiness Program”

Deadline: No later than 5:00 PM CT on July 26, 2026.

Late submissions will not be considered.

9. OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- AccelerateMS reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.
- No costs incurred in proposal preparation will be reimbursed.
- The award is contingent on compliance with Mississippi state procurement laws.

It is expressly understood and agreed that by issuing this Request for Proposal AccelerateMS has no obligation to issue an award or enter a contract, and it, in its sole discretion, may withdraw or amend this Request for Proposal before doing so.

Discussions may be had with applicants determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for the award; however, proposals may be accepted without such discussions.

Invoices shall be emailed to maryannmyers@acceleratems.org.

All goods and services must meet the specifications outlined in this RFP. Non-confirming goods and services must be replaced at the vendor's expense.

Proposer acknowledges, accepts, and agrees to comply with the State of Mississippi's Standard Terms and Conditions, as set forth in Exhibit A, and agrees these are fully incorporated into any contract entered by the Parties related to this RFP. Failure to comply with these terms and conditions may result in the termination of any contract entered.

10. PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY

This solicitation is issued in accordance with the Mississippi Procurement Manual, Section 3.107 (Competitive Sealed Proposals). Reverse auction exemption has been requested from the Public Procurement Review Board (PPRB) due to the technical and integration requirements of this system.

11. CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions or clarifications regarding this RFP, please contact:

Blaise King, Director of Strategy & Alignment, AccelerateMS

Email: bking@acceleratems.org

Exhibit A
State of Mississippi Terms and Conditions
for
OPTFM Cooperative, Competitive, and Negotiated Contracts

A. PRECEDENCE

The STATE OF MISSISSIPPI TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR OPTFM COMPETITIVE, NEGOTIATED, and COOPERATIVE CONTRACTS shall take precedence over the Proposer's Proposal and any agreements, and should ambiguities, conflicts, or questions of interpretation of these documents arise, they shall be resolved first by reference to the STATE OF MISSISSIPPI TERMS AND CONDITIONS for OPTFM COMPETITIVE, NEGOTIATED, and COOPERATIVE CONTRACTS. AccelerateMS is an entity of the State of Mississippi.

B. E-PAYMENT

Proposer agrees to accept all payments in United States currency via the State of Mississippi's electronic payment and remittance vehicle. AccelerateMS agrees to make payment in accordance with Mississippi "Timely Payments for Purchases by Public Bodies" laws, which generally provide for payment of undisputed amounts by AccelerateMS within 45 calendar days of receipt of invoice. Mississippi Code Annotated § 31-7-301, et seq.

C. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligation of AccelerateMS to proceed under this agreement is conditioned upon the appropriation of funds by the Mississippi State Legislature and receipt of the appropriated funds. If the funds anticipated for the continuing time fulfillment of the agreement are, at any time, not forthcoming or insufficient, regardless of the source of funding, AccelerateMS shall have the right upon 10 business days' written notice to Proposer to terminate this agreement without damage, penalty, cost or expense to AccelerateMS of any kind whatsoever. The effective date of termination shall be as specified in the notice of termination.

D. RECORD RETENTION AND ACCESS TO RECORDS

Proposer shall maintain such financial records and other records as may be prescribed by AccelerateMS or by applicable federal and state laws, rules, and regulations. Provided Proposer is given reasonable advance written notice, and such inspection is made during normal business hours of Proposer, AccelerateMS or any duly authorized representatives shall have unimpeded, prompt access to any of Proposer's books, documents, papers, and/or records which are relevant to this agreement. All records related to this agreement shall be retained by Proposer for three years after final payment is made under this agreement and all pending matters are closed; however, if any audit, litigation or other action arising out of or related in any way to this project is commenced before the end of the three year period, the records shall be retained for one year after all issues arising out of the action are finally resolved or until the end of the three year period, whichever is later.

E. APPLICABLE LAW

The contract shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Mississippi, excluding its conflicts of laws, provisions, and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the courts of Mississippi.

F. ANTI-ASSIGNMENT/SUBCONTRACTING

Proposer acknowledges that it was selected by AccelerateMS to provide the commodity and perform the services required hereunder based, in part, upon Proposer's special skills and expertise. Proposer shall not assign, subcontract, or otherwise transfer this agreement, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of AccelerateMS, which may, in its sole discretion, approve or deny without reason. Any attempted assignment or transfer of Proposer's obligations hereunder without consent of AccelerateMS shall be null and void. Approval of a subcontract by AccelerateMS shall not be deemed to be approval of the incurrence of any additional obligation of AccelerateMS. Subcontracts shall be subject to the terms and conditions of this agreement and to any conditions of approval that AccelerateMS may deem necessary. Subject to the foregoing, this agreement shall be binding upon the respective successors and assigns of the parties

G. COMPLIANCE WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Proposer understands that AccelerateMS is an equal opportunity employer and therefore, maintains a policy which prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical handicap, disability, genetic information, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. All such discrimination is unlawful, and Proposer agrees during the term of the agreement that Proposer will strictly adhere to this policy in its employment practices and provision of services.

H. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

Proposer shall comply with, and all activities under this agreement shall be subject to, all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, as now exist and as may be amended or modified.

I. REQUIRED PUBLIC RECORDS AND TRANSPARENCY

Upon execution of a contract, the provisions of the contract which contain the personal or professional services provided, the unit prices, the overall price to be paid, and the term of the contract shall not be deemed to be a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated § 25-61-9(7). The contract shall be posted publicly on www.transparency.ms.gov and shall be available at AccelerateMS for examination, inspection, or reproduction by the public. The Proposer acknowledges and agrees that AccelerateMS and this contract are subject to the Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983 codified at Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-61-1, et seq. and its exceptions, Mississippi Code Annotated § 79-23-1, and the Mississippi Accountability and Transparency Act of 2008, codified at Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 27-104-151, et seq.

J. E-VERIFICATION

If applicable, Proposer represents and warrants that it will ensure its compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act and will register and participate in the status verification system for all newly hired employees. Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 71-11-1 and 71-11-3. Proposer agrees to provide a copy of each verification upon request of AccelerateMS subject to approval by any agencies of the United States Government. Proposer further represents and warrants that any person assigned to perform services hereafter meets the employment eligibility requirements of all immigration laws. The breach of this clause may subject Proposer to the following:

- (1) termination of this contract and exclusion pursuant to Chapter 15 of the Public Procurement Review Board Office of Personal Service Contract Review Rules and Regulations;
- (2) the loss of any license, permit, certification or other document granted to Proposer by an agency, department, or governmental entity for the right to do business in Mississippi; or
- (3) both. In the event of such termination, Proposer would also be liable for any additional costs incurred by AccelerateMS due to Contract cancellation or loss of license or permit to do business in the state.

K. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR STATUS

Proposer shall, at all times, be regarded as and shall be legally considered an independent contractor and shall at no time act as an agent for AccelerateMS. Nothing contained herein shall be deemed or construed by AccelerateMS, Proposer, or any third party as creating the relationship of principal and agent, master and servant, partners, joint ventures, employer and employee, or any similar such relationship between AccelerateMS and Proposer. Neither the method of computation of fees or other charges, nor any other provision contained herein, nor any acts of AccelerateMS or Proposer hereunder creates or shall be deemed to create a relationship other than the independent relationship of AccelerateMS and Proposer. Proposer's personnel shall not be deemed in any way, directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, to be employees of AccelerateMS. Neither Proposer nor its employees shall, under any circumstances, be considered servants, agents, or employees of AccelerateMS, and AccelerateMS shall be at no time legally responsible for any negligence or other

wrongdoing by Proposer, its servants, agents, or employees. AccelerateMS shall not withhold from the contract payments to Proposer any federal or state unemployment taxes, federal or state income taxes, Social Security tax, or any other amounts for benefits to Proposer. Further, AccelerateMS shall not provide to Proposer any insurance coverage or other benefits, including Workers' Compensation, normally provided by AccelerateMS for its employees.

L. MODIFICATION OR RENEGOTIATION

The parties agree to renegotiate the agreement in good faith if federal and/or state revisions to any applicable laws or regulations make changes in this agreement necessary. This agreement may be modified only by written agreement signed by the parties hereto and approval by the Public Procurement Review Board, if required

M. TERMINATION

Termination for Convenience. AccelerateMS may, when the interests of AccelerateMS so require, terminate this contract in whole or in part, for the convenience of AccelerateMS. AccelerateMS shall give written notice of the termination to Proposer specifying the part of the contract terminated and when termination becomes effective. Proposer shall incur no further obligations in connection with the terminated work and on the date set in the notice of termination Proposer will stop work to the extent specified. Proposer shall complete the work not terminated by the notice of termination and may incur obligations as are necessary to do so.

Termination for Default. If AccelerateMS gives the Proposer a notice that the commodity or personal or professional services are being provided in a manner that is deficient, the Proposer shall have 30 days to cure the deficiency. If the Proposer fails to cure the deficiency, AccelerateMS may terminate the contract for default and the Proposer will be liable for the additional cost to AccelerateMS to procure the commodity or personal and professional services from another source. Termination under this paragraph could result in Proposer being excluded from future contract awards. Any termination wrongly labeled termination for default shall be deemed a termination for convenience.

N. STOP WORK ORDER

AccelerateMS may, by written order to Proposer at any time, require Proposer to stop all or any part of the work called for by this contract. This order shall be for a period of time specified by AccelerateMS. Upon receipt of such an order, Proposer shall forthwith comply with its terms and take all reasonable steps to minimize any further cost to AccelerateMS. Upon expiration of the stop work order, Proposer shall resume providing the services which were subject to the stop work order, unless AccelerateMS has terminated that part of the agreement or terminated the agreement in its entirety. AccelerateMS is not liable for payment for services or commodity which were not rendered or received due to the stop work order.

O. ORAL STATEMENTS

No oral statement of any person shall modify or otherwise affect the terms, conditions, or specifications stated in this contract. All modifications to the contract shall be made in writing by AccelerateMS, agreed to by Proposer, and approved by the Public Procurement Review Board, if required.

P. OWNERSHIP OF DOCUMENTS AND WORK PAPERS

AccelerateMS shall own all documents, files, reports, work papers and working documentation, electronic or otherwise, created in connection with the project which is the subject of this agreement, except for Proposer's internal administrative and quality assurance files and internal project correspondence. Proposer shall deliver such documents and work papers to AccelerateMS upon termination or completion of the agreement. The foregoing notwithstanding, Proposer shall be entitled to retain a set of such work papers for its files. Proposer shall be entitled to use such work papers only after receiving written permission from AccelerateMS and subject to any copyright protections.

Q. INDEMNIFICATION

To the fullest extent allowed by law, Proposer shall indemnify, defend, save and hold harmless, protect, and exonerate AccelerateMS, its commissioners, board members, officers, employees, agents, and representatives, and the State of Mississippi from and against all claims, demands, liabilities, suits, actions, damages, losses, and costs of every kind

and nature whatsoever including, without limitation, court costs, investigative fees and expenses, and attorneys' fees, arising out of or caused by Proposer and/or its partners, principals, agents, employees and/or subcontractors in the performance of or failure to perform this agreement. In AcclerateMS's sole discretion, upon approval of the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General and AcclerateMS, Proposer may be allowed to control the defense of any such claim, suit, etc. In the event Proposer defends said claim, suit, etc., Proposer shall use legal counsel acceptable to the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General and AcclerateMS. Proposer shall be solely responsible for all costs and/or expenses associated with such defense, and AcclerateMS shall be entitled to participate in said defense. Proposer shall not settle any claim, suit, etc. without the concurrence of the Office of the Mississippi Attorney General and AcclerateMS, which shall not be unreasonably withheld.

R. THIRD PARTY ACTION NOTIFICATION

Proposer shall give the customer prompt notice in writing of any action or suit filed, and prompt notice of any claim made against Proposer by any entity that may result in litigation related in any way to this agreement.

S. RECOVERY OF MONEY

Whenever, under the contract, any sum of money shall be recoverable from or payable by Proposer to AcclerateMS, the same amount may be deducted from any sum due to Proposer under the contract or under any other contract between Proposer and AcclerateMS. The rights of AcclerateMS are in addition and without prejudice to any other right AcclerateMS may have to claim the amount of any loss or damage suffered by AcclerateMS on account of the acts or omissions of Proposer.

T. FAILURE TO ENFORCE

Failure by AcclerateMS at any time to enforce the provisions of the contract shall not be construed as a waiver of any such provisions. Such failure to enforce shall not affect the validity of the contract or any part thereof or the right of AcclerateMS to enforce any provision at any time in accordance with its terms.

U. REPRESENTATION REGARDING CONTINGENT FEES

By responding to the solicitation, executing the contract the offeror or Proposer represents that it has not retained any person or agency on a percentage, commission, or other contingent arrangement to secure this contract. If the offeror or Proposer cannot make such a representation, a full and complete explanation shall be submitted in writing with the offeror's response, to the Agency prior to contract execution.

V. REPRESENTATION REGARDING GRATUITIES

Offeror or Proposer represents that it has not, is not, and will not offer, give, or agree to give any employee or former employee of AcclerateMS a gratuity or offer of employment in connection with any approval, disapproval, recommendation, development, or any other action or decision related to the solicitation and resulting contract. Offeror or Proposer further represents that no employee or former employee of AcclerateMS has or is soliciting, demanding, accepting, or agreeing to accept a gratuity or offer of employment for the reasons previously stated; any such action by an employee or former employee in the future, if any, will be rejected by the offeror or Proposer. Offeror or Proposer further represents that it is in compliance with the Mississippi Ethics in Government laws, codified at Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 25-4-101 through 25-4-121, and has not solicited any employee or former employee to act in violation of said law.

W. CHANGE IN SCOPE OF WORK

AcclerateMS may order changes in the work consisting of additions, deletions, or other revisions within the general scope of the Agreement. No claims may be made by the Proposer that the scope of the project or of the Proposer's services has been changed, requiring changes to the amount of compensation to the Proposer or other adjustments to the Agreement, unless such changes or adjustments have been made by written amendment to the Agreement signed by AcclerateMS and the Proposer.

If the Proposer believes that any particular work is not within the scope of the project, is a material change, or will otherwise require more compensation to the Proposer, the Proposer must immediately notify AccelerateMS in writing of this belief. If AccelerateMS believes that the particular work is within the scope of the Agreement as written, the Proposer will be ordered to and shall continue with the work as changed and at the cost stated for the work within the Agreement.

X. PROPOSER PERSONNEL

AccelerateMS shall, throughout the life of the Agreement, have the right of reasonable rejection and approval of staff or subcontractors assigned to the work by the Proposer. If AccelerateMS reasonably rejects staff or subcontractors, the Proposer must provide replacement staff or subcontractors satisfactory to AccelerateMS in a timely manner and at no additional cost to AccelerateMS. The day-to-day supervision and control of the Proposer's employees and subcontractors is the sole responsibility of the Proposer.

Y. TRADE SECRETS, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

It is expressly understood that Mississippi law requires that the provisions of this Agreement which contain the commodities purchased or the personal or professional services provided, the price to be paid, and the term of the Agreement shall not be deemed to be a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information and shall be available for examination, copying, or reproduction.

Z. TERMINATION UPON BANKRUPTCY

This Agreement may be terminated in whole or in part by AccelerateMS upon written notice to Proposer, if Proposer should become the subject of bankruptcy or receivership proceedings, whether voluntary or involuntary, or upon the execution by Proposer of an assignment for the benefit of its creditors. In the event of such termination, Proposer shall be entitled to recover just and equitable compensation for satisfactory work performed under this Agreement, but in no case shall said compensation exceed the total Agreement price.

AA. NO LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

Nothing in this agreement shall be interpreted as excluding or limiting any liability of the Proposer for harm arising out of the Proposer's or its subcontractors' performance under this agreement.

BB. PROPERTY RIGHTS (for the contract)

Property rights do not inure to Proposer until such time as services have been provided under a legally executed contract. Proposer has no legitimate claim of entitlement to the provision of work hereunder and acknowledges that AccelerateMS may terminate this contract at any time for its own convenience.