

KANSAS PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

ISSUE DATE: August 27, 2026

TITLE: **Executive Search Firm**

ISSUING AGENCY: KANSAS PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM
ATTN: JULIE BAKER
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER
611 SOUTH KANSAS AVENUE, SUITE 100
TOPEKA, KS 66603

SEALED PROPOSALS for furnishing the services described herein will be received until **October 12, 2026, @ 3:00 P.M. C.D.T. LATE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

All inquiries for information should be directed to Julie Baker, Human Resources Officer, Kansas Public Employees Retirement System, jbaker@kspers.gov, phone: (785) 296-1476.

Note: This RFP is posted on the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System web site, **<https://www.kspers.gov/procurement>**, to allow Firms the ability to view documents and programs referenced in this RFP.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR PROPOSAL VIA EMAIL IN PDF FORMAT TO JBAKER@KSPERS.GOV. SEE SECTION VI FOR DETAILS.

In compliance with this Request for Proposals and with all Conditions imposed therein, the undersigned Firm agrees to furnish the services in accordance with the attached signed proposal or as mutually agreed upon by subsequent negotiation.

I certify that I have read and understand this Request for Proposals and am authorized to sign this proposal for the Firm.

NAME AND ADDRESS OF FIRM:

DATE: _____

BY: _____
(signature in ink)

NAME: _____
(print)

TITLE: _____

FEI/FIN: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

FAX: _____

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I. PURPOSE

The Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS) requests proposals from qualified firms for executive recruitment searches for investment and other executive level positions on an as-needed basis. The time frame is for three years as positions become open.

The Retirement System reserves the right without prejudice to reject any or all proposals submitted. There is no express or implied obligation for KPERS to reimburse Firms for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals in response to this request. In the event none of the proposals are satisfactory to KPERS, no selection will be made. Proposals submitted in response to this RFP become the property of KPERS and are subject to public inspection. KPERS reserves the right to modify the RFP contents and requirements at any time prior to the submission deadline.

II. BACKGROUND

The Kansas Public Employees Retirement System, located in Topeka, Kansas, administers defined benefit pension and related benefits for public employees in Kansas. As a fiduciary serving over 350,000 members, KPERS is an umbrella organization for three pension groups:

- the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS),
- the Kansas Police and Firemen's Retirement System (KP&F), and
- the Kansas Retirement System for Judges (Judges).

The three systems are separate and distinct with different membership groups, actuarial assumptions, contribution rates and benefit options. In addition to defined benefit pension benefits, the Retirement System administers life insurance and long-term disability benefit programs.

KPERS is a governmental defined benefit plan governed by K.S.A. 74-4901 *et seq.* and Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code. KPERS participation by the State of Kansas is mandatory, whereas participation by local political subdivisions is optional but irrevocable once elected.

A. Benefits Administration and Contribution Reporting

The Retirement System partners with more than 1,500 public employers to provide retirement, disability and survivor benefits for public employees in Kansas. Our membership includes over 350,000 members. Participating employers include the State of Kansas, school districts, counties, cities, public libraries, hospitals and other governmental units.

B. Investment Management

The Kansas Public Employees Retirement System has an investment portfolio with a market value of approximately \$32 billion. The System's diversified investment portfolio is invested in domestic and international equities, core fixed income securities, private equity, private real estate, infrastructure, timber, high yield bonds, REITS, and cash equivalent securities. All of the System's investments are managed by external investment managers, which are overseen by an internal staff of ten investment professionals and three external investment consultants. Passive management is employed for the domestic equity portfolio, while active management is used across the remainder of the investment portfolio.

C. Other Relevant Information

The Retirement System's executive team also provides management and oversight in the areas of agency administration, fiscal management and accounting, information technology, information security, deferred compensation, communications, legal, planning and research, internal auditing and human resources.

Further information about KPERS can be found at kspers.gov.

III. TIMELINE

The following timeline is an estimate and may be adjusted at the Retirement System's discretion any time during this procurement process.

Task	Date
Distribution of RFP	August 27, 2026
Deadline for questions submitted in writing	September 18, 2026
Proposals due (no later than 3 p.m. C.D.T.)	October 12, 2026
Estimated contract start date	January 1, 2027

All proposals submitted in response to this RFP must be delivered to KPERS no later than 3:00 p.m. C.D.T. on October 12, 2026.

IV. COMMUNICATION WITH KPERS

KPERS is the sole point of contact during the RFP process and any questions should be submitted in writing to Julie Baker, Human Resources Officer, at Kansas Public Employees Retirement System, 611 S. Kansas Ave., Suite 100, Topeka, KS 66603, or by email to jbaker@kspers.gov by 3 p.m. C.D.T.,

September 11, 2026. Answers to written questions will be posted on the Retirement System's web site at kspers.gov/procurement.htm. Vendors are responsible for checking the website periodically for updates to the RFP and responses to written questions. Telephone questions will not be accepted. No verbal communication will override written communications, and only written communications are binding.

KPERS policy prohibits direct contact between prospective service providers and KPERS Board members, consultants or staff regarding this RFP during the selection process. From the date of release of this RFP until a Firm is selected and a contract is executed and approved, all contacts and communications regarding this RFP are restricted except communications with KPERS staff identified in this section and designated participants in attendance **ONLY DURING** negotiations, presentations, and contract award and execution. Violation of these conditions may result in rejection of a bidder's proposal.

V. STATEMENT OF NEEDS

The selected firm shall provide consulting services for the Retirement System in compliance with KPERS' legal, management, and reporting requirements.

Contract Term: The contract for services will be for a three-year term beginning on December 1, 2026 and ending November 30, 2029, with the option for three (3) three-year renewals.

Please indicate your willingness and ability to meet the requirements specified below and designate any differences from the specified requirements. KPERS may consider deviations from the following requirements, but any proposed deviation must be submitted in writing as part of the proposal and clearly identified in the appropriate section of the proposal.

Required consulting services shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

A. Scope of Services

The selected executive search firm "Firm" shall provide comprehensive executive search and recruitment services to assist KPERS in attracting, identifying, evaluating, interviewing, recommending, and hiring highly qualified investment and executive staff on an as-needed basis as executive or investment positions become vacant.

The Firm shall work collaboratively with KPERS throughout each search process and shall tailor its approach to the organization's leadership needs, culture, mission, strategic priorities, and individual position requirements.

The scope of services shall include:

1. Search Strategy and Position Profile

- Meet with KPERS leadership and stakeholders to understand the individual position, organizational objectives, leadership requirements, and desired candidate profile.
- Assist in refining position descriptions, required and preferred qualifications, leadership competencies, and selection criteria.
- Develop a comprehensive search strategy, including recruitment methodology, target markets, system requirements, anticipated timeline, and communication plan.

2. Candidate Identification and Recruitment

- Conduct a broad, proactive national and/or regional search, as appropriate, utilizing the Firm's professional networks, databases, industry contacts, referrals, and other appropriate sourcing methods.
- Identify and actively recruit qualified passive and active candidates.
- Maintain confidentiality and exercise appropriate discretion throughout the recruitment process.

3. Candidate Evaluation and Screening

- Conduct preliminary screening and assessment of candidates against the established position requirements and selection criteria.
- Conduct appropriate reference checks, background inquiries, and other due diligence as authorized and required by KPERS.
- Provide an objective assessment of each finalist's qualifications, experience, leadership capabilities, strengths, potential concerns, and overall fit with the organization.
- Verify information provided by candidates to the extent appropriate and permitted by law.

4. Candidate Presentation and Selection Support

- Present a qualified pool of candidates for consideration, including resumes/CVs and written candidate profiles or executive assessments.

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- Coordinate interviews and assist KPERS in developing interview questions, evaluation criteria, and selection processes, as requested.
 - Facilitate communication between candidates and KPERS and assist with candidate engagement throughout the process.
 - Provide guidance to KPERS regarding finalist evaluation, selection, compensation considerations, and other relevant factors.

5. Offer and Transition Support

- Assist with negotiations and development of an employment offer, as requested by KPERS.
- Support communications with the selected candidate through acceptance and onboarding.
- Assist with transition and onboarding activities, as appropriate, to promote a successful placement.

6. Project Management and Communication

- When a search is initiated for a position, the Firm should designate a senior-level search consultant who will have primary responsibility for the engagement and remain actively involved throughout the search.
- Provide regular written and/or verbal status updates regarding search progress, candidate activity, challenges, and anticipated next steps.
- Maintain appropriate documentation regarding candidate outreach, recruitment activity, and search progress.
- Promptly communicate any issues that may affect the search schedule, candidate pool, or successful completion of the engagement.

7. Guarantee and Replacement

- Describe the Firm's guarantee or replacement policy in the event the selected candidate resigns, is terminated for cause, or otherwise leaves the position within a specified period following placement.
- The selected Consultant shall perform all services in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including applicable equal employment opportunity, nondiscrimination, confidentiality, and privacy requirements.

B. Miscellaneous

The selected firm shall make available at least one primary staff contact and one secondary contact to which staff may direct questions and seek assistance as needed.

VI. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP should be prepared simply and economically, avoiding the use of elaborate promotional materials beyond those sufficient to provide a complete, accurate and reliable presentation. The Retirement System assumes no financial responsibility for any costs incurred in responding to this RFP. All materials submitted in response to this RFP become the property of KPERS and are subject to public inspection.

A. Proposal Submission

To be considered for selection, Firms must submit a complete response to this RFP. One (1) electronic copy must be submitted to the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System. The electronic copy should be sent via email to jbaker@kspers.gov in PDF format.

NOTE THAT PROPOSALS DELIVERED TO KPERS AFTER 3:00 P.M. C.D.T. ON OCTOBER 12, 2026, SHALL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

B. Proposal Contents

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP must include, at a minimum, the information and documents outlined below.

1. **Signed RFP Cover Sheet** (see page 1) and **Signed Attachment Acknowledgement Forms** (as applicable).

2. **Transmittal Letter**

The transmittal letter must include the company name, address, and the name, title or position, and contact information of the person or persons authorized to bind the Firm to all commitments made in the proposal. The transmittal letter must identify all materials and enclosures being submitted in response to this RFP and must be signed by a person or persons authorized to bind the Firm contractually.

The transmittal letter must include the following statement:

"We have read KPERS' Request for Proposals (RFP) for investment and executive staff recruitment services, dated August 27, 2026, and fully

understand its intent. We certify that we have adequate personnel and resources to provide the requested services. We understand that our ability to meet the criteria and provide the required services shall be judged solely by the KPERS Executive Director and staff.

Our proposal is genuine. We have no conflicts of interest in providing investment and executive staff recruitment services for KPERS. We have not directly nor indirectly induced or solicited any person to submit a false proposal or to refrain from proposing, nor have we in any manner sought by collusion to secure an advantage over any other proposer. We have thoroughly examined the RFP requirements and our proposed fees cover all services that we have indicated we can meet. We acknowledge and accept all terms and conditions included in the RFP."

3. Information Required

- Executive Summary: Respondents should provide a summary of their organization, their qualifications and their proposed approach for working with KPERS.
- Statement of Firm Qualifications: All responses must include a statement of qualifications, experience and description of the Respondent firm and its history. The response should specifically indicate the firm's current and historical expertise in providing executive search services to large public pension systems as identified in the RFP.
- Staff Qualifications: All responses must include names and titles of each individual who will be providing the Executive Search Services under any work order, as well as written descriptions of the individual's experience. All Respondents must identify the individual(s) who will have primary responsibility for contact and communications with KPERS and the person who is authorized to negotiate and contractually-bind Respondent. KPERS reserves the right to investigate and review the background of any or all personnel assigned to work under the Contract, including any work orders thereto, and, based on such investigations, to reject the use of any persons within KPERS discretion.
- Work Plan Approach: All responses should include a plan for performing the services which articulates what services and the level of effort that would be required for the initial engagement and what services would be required for future engagements.
- Billing Rates and Structure:

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- Respondent shall provide a fee proposal that gives a detailed breakdown of fees and expenses associated with the search. Respondent shall include any incidental fees that may be incurred.
 - References: All responses must include references from at least 3 clients of the firm, and preferably large public pension plans who have utilized the firm on matters related to Executive Search Services. The references must include a contact person, a full address, email and a phone number.

VII. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND AWARD

A. Proposal Evaluation

The Retirement System will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

- Qualifications and experience of the Firm and key personnel assigned to KPERS, with emphasis on documented experience in successfully completing work on contracts of similar size and scope to those required by this RFP.
- Responsiveness of proposal and the Firm's planned approach for performing services required by the Statement of Needs, Section V, of this RFP.
- The overall ability, knowledge and skills of Firm to successfully provide the services outlined in this RFP, as assessed by Retirement System staff.
- The Firm's cost proposal.
- Additional relevant criteria, as determined by the Retirement System.

At any time during the evaluation process, Firms may be requested to be interviewed or to provide explicit written clarification of any part of their proposal. At its sole discretion, the Retirement System reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and/or to waive any deviation or defect (deemed by KPERS to be immaterial) within proposals. KPERS' waiver of any immaterial deviation or defect shall in no way modify the proposal or the RFP documents or excuse the applicant from full compliance with the RFP requirements.

B. Selection Criteria

On the basis of the evaluation factors included in Section VII, Part A, Firms deemed to be fully qualified and best suited among those submitting proposals may be interviewed by KPERS staff in a process that may include

discussion and negotiation of key terms. Contract fees and rates will be considered but need not be the sole determining factor.

After interviews have been conducted with each Firm so selected, staff will select the Firm which, in its opinion, made the best proposal. KPERS may cancel this Request for Proposals or reject proposals at any time prior to an award. The award document will be a contract incorporating by reference all the requirements, terms and conditions of the solicitation and the Firm's proposal as negotiated, as well as other terms and conditions as appropriate.

VIII. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A. RETIREMENT ACT AND KPSSA

This solicitation is governed by the Kansas Public Employees Retirement Act at K.S.A. 74-4909(15), which provides the Board of Trustees with authority to enter into professional services contracts, guided by the provisions of the Kansas Professional Services Sunshine Act at K.S.A. 75-37,131 *et seq.*

B. APPLICABLE LAWS AND COURTS

This solicitation and any resulting contract shall be governed in all respects by the laws of the State of Kansas, and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the District Court of Shawnee County, Kansas. See K.S.A. 74-4904(1). The Firm shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations.

C. KANSAS CONTRACTUAL PROVISIONS

By submitting their proposals, Firms certify their willingness to comply with the provisions of Kansas Department of Administration Form DA-146a, Contractual Provisions Attachment, which states among other things that "[t]his form contains mandatory contract provisions and must be attached to or incorporated in all copies of any contractual agreement." Form DA-146a is Attachment A to this RFP.

D. CONFIDENTIAL RELATIONSHIP

Firm and KPERS shall maintain the strictest mutual confidence regarding each other's business affairs. Written reports and information furnished by Firm and KPERS to each other shall be treated by both of them as confidential and for the exclusive use and benefit of KPERS, except as disclosure may be required by applicable law. Notwithstanding the foregoing, neither party to this Agreement shall prohibit the Legislative Division of Post Audit from having access, pursuant to K.S.A. 46-1101 *et seq.*, to any records, documents or other

information, whether confidential or otherwise, regarding or relating to the execution and/or performance of any agreement.

E. ETHICS IN PUBLIC CONTRACTING

By submitting their bids or proposals, Firms certify that their bids/proposals are made without collusion or fraud and that they have not offered or received any kickbacks or inducements from any other Bidder/Firm, supplier, manufacturer or subcontractor in connection with their bid/proposal, and that they have not conferred on any public employee having official responsibility for this procurement transaction any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit of money, services or anything of more than nominal value, present or promised, unless consideration of substantially equal or greater value was exchanged.

F. CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

If any prospective Firm has questions about this RFP or the appendices hereto, the prospective Firm should contact KPERS' representative whose name appears on the face of this RFP prior to the stated deadline. Any revisions to the solicitation will be made only by addendum issued by KPERS.

G. PRECEDENCE OF TERMS

All of the above General Terms and Conditions shall apply in all instances. In the event there is a conflict between any of the other General Terms and Conditions and any Special Terms and Conditions in this solicitation, the Special Terms and Conditions shall apply.

H. QUALIFICATIONS OF FIRMS

KPERS may make such reasonable investigations as deemed proper and necessary to determine the ability of the Firm to perform the services/furnish the goods and the Firm shall furnish to KPERS all such information and data for this purpose as may be requested. KPERS reserves the right to inspect the Firm's physical facilities prior to award to satisfy questions regarding the Firm's capabilities. KPERS further reserves the right to reject any proposal if the evidence submitted by, or investigations of, such Firm is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract and to provide the services and/or furnish the goods contemplated therein.

I. ASSIGNMENT OF CONTRACT

A contract shall not be assignable by the Firm in whole or in part without the written consent of KPERS.

J. STATE OF KANSAS REQUIREMENTS

Firms shall be willing to sign the State of Kansas' Certification of Company Not Currently Engaged in a Boycott of Goods or Services from Israel (Attachment B) and the State of Kansas' Policy Regarding Sexual Harassment (Attachment C).

IX. SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A. PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE PERIOD

Any offer in response to this solicitation shall be valid for 120 days. At the end of the 120 days the proposal may be withdrawn at the written request of the Firm. If the proposal is not withdrawn at that time it remains in effect until an award is made or the solicitation is canceled.

From: _____

Name of Firm

Street Address or P.O. Box

City, State, Zip Code

RFP Title: _____

Firm's Contact Name: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Contact E-Mail Address: _____

X. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Contractual Provisions Attachment (KS Dept. of Administration Form DA-146a, rev. 7/19)

Attachment B: State of Kansas Certification of Company Not Currently Engaged in a Boycott of Goods or Services from Israel

Attachment C: State of Kansas Policy Regarding Sexual Harassment