

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

RFP ID-12-0001 – QUALITY HEALTH PLAN SPECIALIST

Q. Has the State collected all necessary stakeholder feedback or will it be anticipated that the winning bidder may need to conduct stakeholder meetings/interviews?

A. The state anticipates that there will be a need to elicit additional information from stakeholders during the term of the award. As the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) continues to provide additional guidance to states on subjects such as the Federally-facilitated Exchange, the need for meetings/interviews is a reasonable bidder expectation.

The state expects the winning bidder to participate in the Stakeholder Engagement effort including as a key participant of the Qualified Health Plan Advisory Committee. The Qualified Health Plan Advisory Committee will be comprised of Arkansas industry leaders as well as consumers and representatives of Arkansas government (for example – Arkansas Insurance Department (AID) and Arkansas Department of Human Services).

Q. Page 10 of the RFP states in part “... developing processes and supporting technologies...” Is the State seeking a vendor that has the technical expertise to develop the data application in the event the SERFF system cannot accommodate the additional data requirements or is the State seeking a vendor that will assist in the review and selection of an existing application (or IT development firm) that can be used?

A. The state is not expecting the vendor to have the necessary technical expertise to develop the data application. The state is expecting the vendor to possess the necessary skills to identify requirements not addressed by the SERFF application as well as the ability to work with the Arkansas Health Benefits Exchange Planning Team to acquire the functionality necessary to satisfy these unmet requirements. The vendor may also be asked to represent the state’s requirements of NAIC’s SERFF application.

Q. Page 17 of 20 of the RFP indicates, “For evaluation purposes, a total value of 2,000 Person Hours must not be exceeded.” Please clarify whether that cap pertains to each single individual proposed on the project team or whether that pertains to the total hours in aggregate for all team members proposed by the bidder.

A. The intent of the “2,000 Person Hours” statement is to provide bidders with a time window for the necessary effort. A bidder may choose to submit one or more candidates, but the total first year’s effort is not to exceed 2,000 Person Hours.

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Q. Please clarify whether the 2,000 person hour cap is for evaluation purposes only or whether the State intends to cap this project at 2,000 hours.

A. Given the current understanding of the effort necessary, the State intends to cap payment for this project at 2,000 billable hours for all activities within the first 12 months.

Q. Please clarify whether the State anticipates that actuarial support will be required to be provided by the successful bidder (or its subcontractor) for this project.

A. Neither the successful bidder (nor its subcontractor) will be expected to provide actuarial support. Given the significance of the rate setting component to the success of the Qualified Health Plans certification, a candidate who has an understanding of the purpose for rate review actuarial services is viewed favorably.

Q. Please clarify whether the State anticipates that the 2,000 Person Hours cap includes the actuarial analysis that may be required in response to this RFP?

A. Actuarial analysis is not part of the vendor's responsibilities.

Q. Please clarify any State requirements for the following proposal components:

- I. Proposal Cover Letter
- II. Title Page and Table of Contents
- III. Project Scope Overview
- IV. Resume
- VI. Contractor Technical Skills Experience

A. The items listed from Section 5 are required and must be included with the vendor's technical proposal and in the order stated. Failure to submit any required item as stated in the solicitation document will cause a bid to be rejected. There are no specific requirements other than what is listed in the solicitation document.

Q. Roman numeral "V" is absent from the above list of proposal components, is this intentional or is there a missing proposal requirement that bidders should be aware of?

A. There is no missing proposal requirement. Section 'VI' should be numbered 'V'.

Q. Page 6 of the RFP indicates that "To be considered, offerors must include as part of their proposal all of the provisions of the RFP." Please clarify the State intent with this requirement. Is the State requesting that bidders print and include in their proposal package a complete copy of the RFP document?

A. The state is not expecting the bidder to include a complete copy of the RFP in the bidder's response. The state is expecting the bidder to provide a proposal that addresses the state's stated expectations in the order set forth in the RFP.

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Q. The RFP states that “The vendor will support the Project Planning Specialist in developing processes and securing the necessary technology to accept the additional elements independent of SERFF.” With respect to “necessary technology” please specify the extent to which the vendor will need to:

a. Develop RFP criteria for such technology

A. Since the SERFF application enhancement effort is under the control of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC), the department recognizes some of requirements may not be addressed in SERFF’s final configuration. Requirements for an additional RFP may be needed to acquire the necessary functionalities and the State would expect the vendor to participate in requirements definition.

b. Create wireframes or specifications for software

A. No

c. Procure the referenced technology from an outside technology vendor

A. The vendor is expected to support the AID in researching and evaluating technology candidates, if needed. The AID does not expect the vendor to procure the technology.

d. Otherwise be involved in defining specific technology needs (as opposed to developing the separate processes for data to be accepted and used by some type of technology)

A. The vendor is expected to support the AID’s research, evaluation and requirement-gathering efforts as they pertain to the acquisition of the necessary technologies for the AID to complete its objectives, if needed.

Q. The RFP states that “The vendor will support the Project Planning Specialist in developing processes necessary for Divisions to access and download SERFF-stored data.” With respect to “access and download SERFF-stored data”, please specify the extent to which software specifications will need to be developed for actual connectivity between SERFF and the data host.

A. The SERFF application possesses no analytical capabilities, nor is it anticipated that the expected enhancement effort will include these capabilities. If the Department determines analytical efforts are required to complete its business processes, transferring data from the SERFF environment to a different environment will be required. The vendor will assist the Project Planning Specialist in collecting data transfer technology information, selecting the most appropriate option and implementing the technology.

Q. The RFP states that “The vendor will support the development of processes used to satisfy the essential service and quality requirements of the ACA.” Please specify the deliverables that accompany this activity.

A. CMS provides states with on-going guidance pertaining to essential services that a Qualified Health Plan (QHP) must provide. At the direction of the Department, the vendor will be responsible for reviewing CMS materials as well as other cited materials and assisting the Department in developing the Arkansas QHP Essential Services documentation requirements.

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Presently CMS is in discussion with entities such as the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) to develop (publish) standards which states can incorporate into the state's QHP certification and recertification processes. The vendor will support the Department in developing (publishing) QHP services and quality review processes.

Q. The RFP states that the vendor's efforts will focus on "Development of processes and materials necessary for the education of individual consumers....." Please specify the nature and specific types of "materials" that the vendor will be expected to develop.

A. Health Benefits Exchanges (HBE), (through the HBE's web site), provide consumers with relevant health plan information, allowing the consumer to make plan comparisons and informed purchasing decisions. Relevant information includes information such as services offered, service limits, consumer complaints, cost-sharing, and plan rates. Once a health plan is certified as "Qualified", the state will provide plan information to the web site. Once published, the information is then accessible by the consumer. It is realistic to expect that much of the information provided to the web site will also have to be assembled and made available in print form.

Q. Please specify the form that expected project deliverables will take (e.g. report(s), spreadsheets, software)

A. The Department expects several methods of information delivery to occur. In some instances, the information will be published directly to the HBE web site's pages. In this instance, the vendor may be tasked to develop content, but the Department staff will be responsible for the actual web posting. In other instances, electronic materials will be available from the HBE web site. In this situation, the vendor may be responsible for the development of the document itself. Given the reality that not all consumers have access to the HBE web site, printed materials will also be developed (published) for distribution through various channels. Historically, the two most frequently employed software applications used for these purposes (electronic and printed documents) are Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat.

Q. Does the state require past performance references? The proposal calls for a vendor to list their technical skills experience. Should the vendor also provide specific contact names and information for a certain number of relevant projects?

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A. Past performance references are not required.

Q. Does the state have an anticipated date for a contract award? Does the state have an anticipated project start date?

A. No specific date can be given at this time due to state appropriation and procurement schedules. Our goal for contract award and start up is April 2012.

Q. Are there any state-specific dates or timeframes that the contractor needs to be aware of when designing its approach?

A. The State's goal is to have process design work complete by 1/1/13.

Q. (Page 18). The proposal asks that the rates bid include all auxiliary costs, including costs for travel, meals and lodging. Does this mean that the hourly rates should include travel? Or, would it be acceptable for the vendor to list a fixed amount anticipated for travel outside of the hourly rates? (Note: hourly rates would be inclusive of all other on-travel expenses.)

A. As stated in the second bullet under notes on page 18 of the RFP, rates bid (hourly rates) must include all costs. No rates outside the hourly rate should be provided.

Q. (Page 10): The proposal states "A significant part of the vendor's work will be in supporting the Department's Qualified Health Plan Certification processes, developing business processes for maintaining and updating information on the exchange as well as **developing** processes and **supporting technologies** needed to capture information used by stakeholders and provided to users of the Exchange." Can the AID share more about what "supporting technologies" it sees the vendor creating?

A. The state is not expecting the vendor to have the necessary technical expertise to create or develop the supporting technologies. The state is expecting the vendor to possess the necessary skills to identify requirements not addressed by the SERFF application as well as the ability to work with the FFE in Arkansas to acquire the information and identify technologies needed to support the FFE.

Q. Page 2: Will proposers' use of Minority Business(es) be factored into the evaluation and scoring of proposals?

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A. No

Q. Page 5, Section 1.5.B: Would the AID accept an electronic version of the proposal in PDF format?

A. Yes

Q. Page 5, Section 1.5.B: Does the AID require an electronic copy of our Price Sheet or hard copy only?

A. Section 1.5 B will be corrected by addendum to state:

“Vendors must submit one (1) signed original technical proposal hard copy, on or before the date specified on page one of this RFP. Vendors must also submit five (5) additional hard copies of the technical proposal, each marked ‘Copy’. Do not include any pricing from the Official Proposal Price Sheet on the technical proposal. Pricing from the Official Price Sheet(s) must be separately sealed from the technical proposal response and clearly marked as pricing information. ...”

The Official Proposal Price Sheet should only be sent in hard copy.

Q. Page 14 references the AID’s Deliverables Acceptance process. Has AID defined the deliverables for this project or will this be determined during negotiations with the successful proposer?

A. Deliverables will be defined as part of the development of the Project Management Plan. The vendor will have input into the development of that plan.

Q. Page 15 lists as one of the evaluation considerations, “the vendor’s approach to accomplishing the critical activities described within Section 3.1 of this RFP.” Page 18 requests vendors to provide “Project Scope Overview” as part of our proposal response. Please clarify the level of detail you are seeking with respect to our project approach narrative (e.g., a high-level overview versus a more detailed response).

A. The state views the written overview as a way to evaluate the bidder’s understanding of the effort at hand (Sections 2 and 3, pages 10 – 14). Obviously, there needs to be a sufficient level of detail for the state to make an evaluation as to the bidder’s understanding of the effort and their plan to address the scope of work.

Q. Page 17 (Cost Form) provides spaces for listing multiple team members. Other sections of the proposal suggest that the AID is looking for an individual consultant. Will the AID accept a team-based approach to fulfilling the contract requirements (e.g. splitting the estimated 40 hours/week between a project manager and business analyst), provided the needs of the AID described in Section 3.1 of the RFP can be achieved?

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A. The bidder has the option to put forward one or more candidates to satisfy the contract requirements.

Q. Is the AID seeking a contractor to provide hourly assistance (e.g., up to 2,000 hours per year) or will the resulting contract be a fixed fee based on an agreed-upon scope of services and deliverables?

A. The fixed-fee contract is based on the vendor's all-inclusive hourly rate with a maximum of 2,000 billable hours for the first year's effort.

Q. Is the AID amendable to a proposed approach where some work (where appropriate) is conducted offsite at the contractor's office location or is it the AID's expectation that all work is performed onsite at State offices? If a combination of onsite/offsite work is acceptable, does the AID have a targeted percentage of the work that should be conducted onsite?

A. The state is amicable to an arrangement where some of the work can be performed off-site. The state has no set expectations in terms of percentages or ratio.

Q. Does the AID have an established budget for this project and, if so, can the budgeted amount be made available to proposers?

A. The state has developed a budget that is being used to support the state's grant proposals. However, at this time, the budget is not being made available.

Q. What is the anticipated project start date?

A. No specific date can be given at this time due to state appropriation and procurement schedules. Our goal for contract award and start up is April 2012.

Note Regarding Vendor Interviews: As stated in the RFP, AID will interview the top five (5) candidates based upon the combined score (technical evaluation & price proposal). The state reserves the right to revise the number of candidates, or range of candidates, interviewed based on technical and price proposal scoring results. These interviews will be conducted by telephone with the person(s) named in your proposal who will be working on the project. We anticipate those interviews to be conducted March 1, 2, or 5. The vendor will be contacted by

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email and/or telephone regarding scheduling the interview. Please assure that the contact information provided on the Cover Page is sufficient for AID to make this contact and set up the interviews.