

**MHBE Policy and Procedure Technical Writer
RFP # BPM026112
Pre-Proposal Attendees List**

Start time: 1:05 pm

MHBE Staff:

- Raelene Glasgow, Procurement Manager
 - Caterina Pangilinan, Chief Compliance Officer/Chief Privacy Officer
 - Blake Baron, AAG
1. Solicitation closing Date – November 16, 2021 at 2 pm – **packages received after 2 pm will not be accepted**
 2. MBE Goal – 0%
 3. Final questions are due no later than November 02, 2021
 4. Proposals must be delivered or mailed to the Pratt Street Office – **Do not email proposals**
 5. Before a business entity can do business in the State of Maryland, it must be registered with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT). It is strongly recommended that any potential Offeror complete registration prior to the due date for receipt of Proposals. An Offeror's failure to complete registration with SDAT may disqualify an otherwise successful Offeror from final consideration and recommendation for Contract award. The SDAT website for registering a business is: <https://businessexpress.maryland.gov/>
 6. Adhere to all of Section 4 and ensure each section has the appropriate tab.

Firms Present

Infojini, Inc.
Sandeep Harjani

iQuasar LLC
Sterling, VA
Insha Farooq
Aijaz Yousuf

Ripple Effect
Danai Barnes

Margie Beaudry

Aditi Corp

Matilda Sandou

Thara Nair

Abrado Analytics

Lisa Van Wormer

Eleventh House Solutions

Wendy McDonough

Neoma Salvaje

Neil Hossier & Associates, Inc.

Tim Cooke

Cambridge Federal

Mike Ross

Kelli Clark

Rapid Strategy

Ron Meeting

Questions

1. The solicitation is a bit unclear: the access questionnaire did not populate. Please provide a copy of the access questionnaire as an attachment to your response to this email.

Answer: I am unclear what access questionnaire you are referring to, as I am not familiar with one being used in our RFPs. There are no questionnaires in the solicitation.

2. In one section of the questionnaire it states that MHBE seeks for a minority-owned business that has been 'certified' by the Maryland Department of Transportation. However, in a different section, it states that the company does not have to be minority owned. Please clarify. Analytic-Communications LLC is a minority-owned company however, certification with MDOT is still being processed.

Answer: This RFP does not have a MBE goal but it does not discourage participation from MBE certified firms. I have removed any language that may be confusing. Again, MBE firms are encouraged to participate, even though there is no goal attached. All vendors are welcomed to participate.

3. Is this contract a mixture of in-person and remote? If so, please provide percentage.

Answer: Given the current state of the pandemic, the contractor will work remotely a majority of the time with no fixed ratio of telework to onsite work. MHBE follows Executive Branch mandates and recommendations. Therefore, the status may be subject to change based upon state Executive branch mandates and recommendations. A majority of meetings will be held via Google Meets.

4. Will the contract costs be paid to the contractor before the beginning of the contract or distributed evenly throughout the six-month contract duration? If the latter, will the contractor have any input in the distribution dates?

Answer: A Purchase Order will be created once the successful vendor is chosen. However, Contractor's will be paid monthly as invoices are required to be sent in on a monthly basis. Unfortunately, the contractor will not be able to dictate to MHBE when funds will be distributed. Again, vendors will be paid as invoices are sent in.

5. Is this a new initiative? If not, please provide the names of the current vendor(s) providing the services.

Answer: Yes, it is.

6. Can you please let us know the previous spending of this contract?

Answer: There is no contract preceding this.

7. Please confirm if we can get the proposals or pricing of the incumbent(s).

Answer: There is no contract preceding this, so there are no incumbent(s).

8. Are there any pain points or issues with the current vendor(s)?

Answer: There is no contract preceding this.

9. Please confirm the anticipated number of awards.

Answer: This contract will go to a single vendor, so only one award.

Questions

10. Is this a full-time remote opportunity?

Answer:

11. On page 27 of the solicitation document section 4.4.2.6 (Experience and Qualifications of Proposed Staff), it is mentioned that "The Offeror shall identify the number and types of staff proposed to be utilized under the Contract." Can you please explain what this means?

Answer: If a vendor intends to have others working with them, these individuals must be identified and their resumes and experience stated and supplied in the Proposal.

12. Can you please let us know what is the level of effort or the number of FTEs equivalent required for this opportunity?

Answer: Given time constraints for anticipated MHBE staff workloads, one to 1.5 FTE's are anticipated to effectively achieve the workload. Currently, MHBE has over 70 policies and procedures and seeks to develop and/or revise IT policies and procedures which are not included in above policy and procedure count. In the event that the offeror utilizes more than one FTE, a lead FTE would be responsible for coordinating the project.

13. On page 20 it states, "Experience with desktop publishing tools." Can you clarify which desktop publishing tools are required or can the contractor recommend the appropriate tools (e.g., Microsoft Word)?

Answer: MHBE utilizes Microsoft 365.

14. On page 21 it states, "it is anticipated that revised policies may take up to a maximum of 8 hours of work per policy and procedure and the development of a new policy and procedure will take up to 16 hours of work." Does this estimate include the time to schedule meetings and meet with stakeholders? How many rounds of feedback are anticipated? How many individuals will be providing feedback? Is this estimate an average or a ceiling?

Answer: Meeting time is included in the estimates. Given the various levels of complexity of policies and procedures, a hard stop on the number of hours cannot be determined. For example, some policies and procedures may only require grammatical/formatting /minimal changes which require one or two short meetings, while others may require 3 or 4 meetings and iterations in order to be completed. MHBE's policy review teams consist of the manager responsible for the policy, SMEs, compliance and legal who attend and provide both written and verbal feedback.

15. Given the wide range of potential policy topics, would you be open to a solution that provided multiple qualified individuals who could support different policies with one main point of contact?

Answer: Yes. However, project management within the team would be the responsibility of the Offeror.

16. On 57 you have estimated 1,500 hours for an 8-month period of performance which equals approximately 215 hours per month. Given that 215 hours is greater than full-time would you be willing to have more than one individual support this effort?

Answer: Yes. However, project management within the team would be the responsibility of the Offeror.

17. Are there separate reports required for the federal funding?

This Contract contains federal funds. The source of these federal funds is Medicaid. The CFDA number is 93.778. Execution of a Contract awarded as a result of this RFP indicates the Contractor's agreement with all federal funding terms and conditions that apply to contractors receiving federal funds from Medicaid, including the provisions described in RFP **Attachment G**.

Answer: MHBE retains the right to request documented evidence of contractor's initial and periodic screening of staff working on this project. There are debarment sanctions that require screenings to ensure none of our contractors are on any debarment lists.

18. Will you accept DocuSign or will we need to have original signatures; for example on the Transmittal Letter?

Answer: Yes.

19. Regarding the section below, will it be acceptable to provide examples of a proposed Work Plan and description? To protect a firm's intellectual property.

"The Offeror shall give a definitive **section-by-section** description of the proposed plan to meet the requirements of the RFP, i.e., a Work Plan. The Work Plan shall include the specific methodology and techniques to be used by the Offeror in providing the Policy and Procedure Technical Writer BPM026112 Bb required services as outlined in RFP Section 3, Scope of Work.

The description shall include an outline of the overall management concepts employed by the Offeror and a project management plan, including project control mechanisms and overall timelines. Project deadlines considered Contract deliverables must be recognized in the Work Plan. "

Answer: All applicant's responses will be reviewed per their submitted work plan. It's ok to give examples but MHBE needs to know what the Offeror will conduct the work proposed. Try to get your work plan as clear as possible, so MHBE understands the work you propose to do.

20. In the process of re-launching my firm, and unable to provide references because I've been working for another company?

References (Submit under TAB F)

At least three (3) references are requested from customers who are capable of documenting the Offeror's ability to provide the services specified in this RFP. Each reference shall be from a client for whom the Offeror has provided services within the past five (5) years and shall include the following information:

1. Name of client organization;
2. Name, title, telephone number, and e-mail address, if available, of POC for client organization; and
3. Value, type, duration, and description of services provided.

Answer: References are a part of the Minimum Qualifications and must be included. All Offerors must provide references so MHBE can follow up on the work proposed in the Work Plan. These will help the agency make a well-informed decision.

21. Financial Capability (Submit under TAB H)

An Offeror must include in its Proposal a commonly-accepted method to prove its fiscal integrity. If available, the Offeror shall include Financial Statements, preferably a Profit and Loss (P&L) statement and a Balance Sheet, for the last two (2) years (independently audited preferred).

In addition, the Offeror may supplement its response to this Section by including one or more of the following with its response:

1. Dunn and Bradstreet Rating;
2. Standard and Poor's Rating;
3. Lines of credit;
4. Evidence of a successful financial track record; and
5. Evidence of adequate working capital.

I am not sure what the question was, however, the purpose of this requirement is to ensure that all Offerors have the skills/experience necessary to perform the work and have the financial stability to complete the work.

22. In the Proposal section, should each TAB be given its own page?

Answer: Yes

23. Is there potential for an extension of the base term of 8 months?

Answer: No. the fiscal year ends June 30 and this contract must end at that time. We are following the fiscal year.

24. Based upon the statement below, how many total hours do you anticipate this project to take?

“Therefore, no quantity guarantees will be given as to the total hours of contracted services to be awarded or number of projects.”

Answer: There is no stated number of hours although 1 to 1.5 FTEs are estimated.

25. How many departmental writers do you anticipate will be contributing to this project?

Answer: The average policy review team has 5 members, though the initial work of documenting/explaining the policy and procedure is the responsibility of the department lead.

26. Suggestion: A revision/edit component should be worked into every step of the Policy and Procedure Development.

Answer: Yes.

27. The proposal submission process is extremely elaborate, is there any way to simplify this process to ensure ease of submission on the proposer, as well as ensure that the reviewer gets all the information required to make a fully-informed decision?

Answer: The RFP meets the requirements of the State of MD procurement regulations. MHBE is seeking the expertise of Technical Writers to assist with this project. It is a collaborative effort. MHBE has an understanding of what is needed, the Offerors have the skills to get it done. So, your experience is what is being sought.

28. Regarding the two statements below, does the proposer need to provide proof of insurance at the time of bid, or ten (10) days after the notice to proceed?

Certificates of Insurance duly issued and certified by the insurance company and evidence of the payment of premiums shall be furnished to the Procurement Officer within ten (10) business days after notice of recommended Contract award.

4.4.2.11 Certificate of Insurance (Submit under TAB I)

The Offeror shall provide a copy of its current certificate of insurance showing the types and limits of insurance in effect as of the Proposal submission date. The current insurance types and limits do not have to be the same as described in Section 3.5. See Section 5.5 for the required insurance certificate submission for the recommended Offeror.

Answer: Certificate of Insurance must be provided within 10 days after notice to proceed but before the award is made.

29. Is there an anticipation of this contract being repeated?

Answer: If another contract is needed after this, a new procurement will be conducted and a solicitation issued to all vendors.

30. Will the winner of this contract be working with government employees or the contractors?

Answer: Primarily, work will be done with the employees but there are a few contractors who are subject matter experts on policies.

31. Do you have an idea of how many policies are large scale versus minor policies?

Answer: The majority of them are about four pages long and some are in an older format of having the policies and procedures combined. MHBE is now splitting them. A few IT policies are larger than others.

32. Where will the policies ultimately reside?

Answer: Policies reside on the agency's intranet and also on the agency's internal drive. Policies are also located on the BeeHive (the agency's website). The contractor will have access to the policies but will work with the Administrative Assistant, who will ensure they are published.

32. Is this going to be a full-time remote project?

Answer: Currently, most work is being done remotely. Until that changes, work will be done remotely.

Conference end time: 1:55 pm