



REQUEST FOR INFORMAL PROPOSAL (RFIP)

Solicitation Number: 0615-162

RFIP TITLE:

Alaska Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) Plan

Issued By
STATE OF ALASKA
Department of Health & Social Services
350 Main Street, Room 6
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1149
or
PO Box 110650
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0650

Issue Date:
June 30, 2015

Closing Date:
July 10, 2015
4:00 PM Alaska Prevailing Time

Jon Geselle
Procurement Officer
Phone: 907.465.6264
Fax: 907.465.6421
Email: jon.geselle@alaska.gov

Introduction

The Alaska Department of Health & Social Services, Section of Epidemiology seeks to hire a contractor to update and revise the State Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Prevention Plan.

Term of Contract

The term of the contract will be from the date of award through January 31, 2016.

Contract Budget:

The total budget for the completion of this project is estimated at no more than \$25,000. Proposals priced at more than \$25,000 will be considered non-responsive and be rejected.

Deadline for Receipt of Proposals and Addresses:

Offerors must submit one proposal either via email or by mail. Proposals must reference in the address or email subject line the RFIP number and project name. Proposals must be received no later than 4:00 P.M., Alaska Time on July 10, 2015 or the proposal will be considered non-responsive and be rejected.

Cost proposals must be submitted in a separate sealed envelope or be a separate attachment when submitting by email. No portion of the cost proposal shall be included within the body of the proposal.

If submitting a proposal via email, the technical proposal and cost proposal must be saved as separate PDF documents and emailed to **hss.procurement.proposal@alaska.gov** as separate, clearly labeled attachments, such as "Vendor A – Technical Proposal.pdf" and "Vendor A – Cost Proposal.pdf" (Vendor A is the name of the offeror). The email must contain the RFIP number in the subject line.

If submitting the proposal by mail the sealed package must be addressed as follows:

Alaska Department of Health & Social Services
Contract Support Team
Attention: Jon Geselle
Request for Informal Proposal (RFIP) Number: **0615-162**
Project name: ***Alaska Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) Plan***
350 Main Street, Room 6
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1149

Contact Person

Any technical or procedural questions regarding this RFIP should be addressed to the Procurement Officer using the contact information listed on the cover page of this document. All questions must be received in writing no later than 1:30 P.M., Alaska Time on July 6, 2015. No further questions will be allowed after this date.

STANDARD PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Required Review

Offerors shall carefully review this solicitation without delay, for defects and questionable or objectionable matter. Questions, objections, or comments must be brought to the attention of the Procurement Officer. A protest filed based upon any omission, error, or the context of the solicitation will be disallowed if not brought to the attention of the Procurement Officer prior to the scheduled RFIP closing date. Verbal contact must be followed up with written notification.

Conflict of Interest

Each proposal shall include a statement indicating whether or not the firm or any individuals working on the contract has a possible conflict of interest (e.g., employed by the State of Alaska) and, if so, the nature of that conflict. The Commissioner, Department of Health and Social Services, reserves the right to cancel the award if any interest disclosed from any source could either give the appearance of a conflict or cause speculation as to the objectivity of the program to be developed by the offeror. The Commissioner's determination regarding any questions of conflict of interest shall be final.

Current grantees that propose to provide technical assistance to a group of grantees will be precluded from submitting a proposal unless a written statement of refusal of grant funds is attached. All proposals submitted by current grantees must indicate that grant awards will not be accepted for the duration of the contract and/or any quarterly advance that has already been received will be returned upon award of contract. Proposals submitted by current grantees without this statement shall be deemed non-responsive.

Authorized Signature

An individual authorized to bind the offeror to the provisions of the RFIP must sign the proposal. By signing their proposal, the offeror certifies that the proposal remains valid for at least ninety (90) days from the proposal receipt deadline.

By signing the proposal, the offeror certifies that all services provided under this contract by the contractor and all subcontractors shall be performed in the United States. Failure to comply with this requirement may cause the state to reject the bid or proposal as non-responsive, or cancel the contract.

Aggrieved Respondents

An interested party shall attempt to informally resolve a dispute with the Procurement Officer. If the attempt is unsuccessful, the interested party may protest the solicitation or the award of a small procurement in accordance with Title 2 of the Alaska Administrative Code (AAC) 12.695.

ADA Certification

The State of Alaska complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services,

and/or special modifications to submit a proposal should call the Procurement Officer named above to make necessary arrangements.

By signing their proposal, the offeror certifies compliance with the ADA of 1990 and that program; services and activities provided to the general public on behalf of the state under a contract resulting from this solicitation comply with the ADA of 1990, CFR, Part 35, Subpart B 35.130 of the federal government.

Business License

Offerors must have a valid Alaska Business License (ABL) or application on file for one, by the date of award in order to provide services in the State of Alaska.

Offerors should contact the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, Division of Occupational Licensing, P.O. Box 110806, Juneau, Alaska 99811-0806, for information on these licenses.

Note: The Alaska Business License is not required if the vendor is located out of state and performs a service outside the State of Alaska.

Insurance Requirements

The successful offeror must provide proof of workers' compensation insurance prior to contract approval.

The successful offeror must secure the insurance coverage required by the state. The coverage must be satisfactory to the Department of Administration Division of Risk Management. An offeror's failure to provide evidence of such insurance coverage is a material breach and grounds for withdrawal of the award or termination of the contract.

Offerors must review form APPENDIX B1 in the attached EXAMPLE –Standard Agreement, for details on required coverage. No alteration of these requirements will be permitted without prior written approval from the Department of Administration, Division of Risk Management.

Federal Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion Lower Tier Covered Transactions

Expenditures from this contract may involve federal funds. The U.S. Department of Labor requires all state agencies that are expending federal funds to have a certification filed in the proposal (by the offeror) that they have not been debarred or suspended from doing business with the federal government. Certification regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion Lower Tier Covered Transactions **(included in this document) must be completed and submitted with your proposal.**
<https://www.epls.gov/>

STANDARD CONTRACT INFORMATION

Contract Approval

This RFIP does not obligate the state until a contract is signed and approved by both parties. If approved, it is effective from the date of approval by the DHSS. The state shall not be responsible for work done, even in good faith, prior to DHSS approval of the contract.

Nondisclosure and Confidentiality

Contractor agrees that all confidential information shall be used only for purposes of providing the deliverables and performing the services specified herein and shall not disseminate or allow dissemination of confidential information except as provided for in this section. The contractor shall hold as confidential and will use reasonable care (including administrative, physical and technological security) to prevent unauthorized access by, storage, disclosure, publication, dissemination to and/or use by third parties of, the confidential information. "Reasonable care" means compliance by the contractor with all applicable federal and state law, including the Social Security Act, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ("HIPAA"), the Health Information Technology for Economical and Clinical Health Act ("HITECH Act"), and 45 C.F.R. Parts 160 and 164 ("Privacy and Security Rule"). The contractor must promptly notify the state in writing if it becomes aware of any storage, disclosure, loss, unauthorized access to or use of the confidential information.

The contractor shall comply with the business associate requirements set forth in HIPAA, the HITECH Act, and the Privacy and Security Rule if the contractor will be using or will have access to the protected health information (as defined in 45 C.F.R. 160.103) of DHSS, as part of the services performed by the contractor. The contractor shall be required to agree to the terms of, and sign, the HIPAA Business Associate Agreement as a condition of this contract if the contractor will be using or will have access to the protected health information of DHSS, as part of the services performed by the contractor.

Confidential information, as used herein, means any data, files, software, information or materials (whether prepared by the state or its agents or advisors) in oral, electronic, tangible or intangible form and however stored, compiled or memorialized that is protected health information (as defined in 45 C.F.R. 160.103); or classified confidential as defined by State of Alaska classification and categorization guidelines (i) provided by the state to the contractor or a contractor agent or otherwise made available to the contractor or a contractor agent in connection with this contract, or (ii) acquired, obtained or learned by the contractor or a contractor agent in the performance of this contract. Examples of confidential information include, but are not limited to: technology infrastructure, architecture, financial data, individually identifiable health information, trade secrets, equipment specifications, user lists, passwords, research data, and technology data (infrastructure, architecture, operating systems, security tools, IP addresses, etc).

If confidential information is requested to be disclosed by the contractor pursuant to a request received by a third party and such disclosure of the confidential information is required under applicable state or federal law, regulation, governmental or regulatory authority, the contractor may disclose the confidential information after providing the state with written notice of the requested disclosure (to the extent such notice to the state is permitted by applicable law) and giving the state opportunity to review the request. If the contractor receives no objection from the state, it may release the confidential information within 30 days. Notice of the requested disclosure of confidential information by the contractor must be provided to the state within a reasonable time after the contractor's receipt of notice of the requested disclosure and, upon request of the state, shall seek to obtain legal protection from the release of the confidential information.

The following information shall not be considered confidential information: information previously known to be public information when received from the other party; information freely available to the general public; information which now is or hereafter becomes publicly known by other than a breach of confidentiality hereof; or information which is disclosed by a party pursuant to subpoena or other legal process and which as a result becomes lawfully obtainable by the general public.

Payment of Invoices

Invoices are to be mailed directly to the Contract Administrator at the address on the Standard Agreement Form (contract document). The state will pay all invoices within thirty (30) days of payment approval by the Project Director.

BACKGROUND, SCOPE AND LOCATION OF WORK

Background

The Alaska Department of Health & Social Services, Section of Epidemiology HAI Prevention Plan was developed in 2009 as part of a federal grant requirement and to provide guidance to the new Alaska HAI program. Over the past few years, the needs for the AK HAI program have rapidly changed and evolved along with our federal partners. We began this process by developing the AK HAI Prevention Plan and convening a multidisciplinary Advisory Council (AK ICPAC) to promote infection prevention activities for Alaska, specifically focused on hospitals. We have worked with partner organizations and the AK ICPAC to support health care facility enrollment with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) national database (National Healthcare Safety Network-NHSN) to report HAIs and promote practices to reduce targeted infections. We also have continued to update and keep relevant information related to HAIs on our state website: <http://www.epi.alaska.gov/id/hai/default.htm>. However, the 2009 Plan was based on a boilerplate CDC template and as such, was not well customized to the Alaska healthcare landscape. Additionally, because of the rapid deadline for completion, relationships with statewide partners had not been fully developed.

Since 2009, national reports from the CDC and new emerging HAIs have expanded our work to include reporting, surveillance and reduction strategies for emerging multi-drug resistant organisms (MDROs) and Ebola readiness. In addition, we still have work to do in some areas of previously targeted HAIs because (nationally and AK) we have not yet reached our reduction goals.

In summary, we are in need of a revised AK HAI Prevention Plan that will provide a roadmap to the next step of our maturity as expected by our state and federal partners.

Scope of Work

The contractor will work with the Alaska Section of Epidemiology HAI Coordinator to deliver a revised AK HAI program plan over a 2-4 month period of time (up to approximately 250 hours).

Consultant will prepare the following deliverables:

- Minimum of one site visit to Anchorage, Alaska to interface with the AK ICPAC, and Public Health leadership.
- Facilitate a group decision process (example: Nominal Group or Delphi Method) to identify, prioritize and rank HAI priorities for the AK HAI Prevention Program Plan (plan) with AK ICPAC, Public Health Leadership and Infection Preventionists (IP).
- Provide expertise as needed to include interfacing with additional partners involved in antimicrobial stewardship activities or healthcare-associated infection prevention work in AK health care facilities in the revised Plan process.
- Define core values for the revised Plan and align them with the AK DPH values <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Director/Pages/about.aspx> using relevant tools and techniques.
- Work with Coordinator to schedule meetings and prioritize tasks in this process to revise plan.
- Incorporate priorities from work with the stakeholders, existing resources and defined core values to revise the existing Plan.
- Deliver an interim Plan within 90 days of contract.
- Deliver the final Plan prior to contract expiration.

PHASE I

- Conduct at least one site visit to facilitate group process with AK ICPAC and Public Health Leadership.
- Review IP priorities, compile results and incorporate into interim report.
- Review any remaining partners' priorities, compile results and incorporate into interim report.
- Review and revise tools and techniques as needed to facilitate work and define core values.
- Coordinate activities and timeline with HAI Coordinator.

- Compile all results, rank priorities and present interim report.
- Interim report should include timeline and specific milestones or goals based upon the Plan.
- Interim report will be evaluated by the HAI Coordinator and leadership team before PHASE II. Plan should reflect facilitated group priorities, core values and resources to implement.

PHASE II

- Revise tools and techniques as needed to define core values.
- Integrate priorities with core values from interim report to revised plan.
- Present interim report/plan to HAI Coordinator and Public Health Leadership.
- Present interim report/plan to AK ICPAC.
- Revise and incorporate any needed changes into the final Plan as completed in PHASE II.
- Facilitate vote or approval for plan.
- Send final plan to HAI Coordinator, prefer electronic version that is easy to edit or revise if needed.

PHASE III

- A comprehensive state HAI prevention plan will have been revised to reflect our core values, prioritize our work and give guidance to our maturing HAI program.
- Contractor will supply tools utilized in the process to the HAI Coordinator.

Location of Work

Initial work will be performed on site in Anchorage, Alaska (DHSS, Epidemiology). Subsequent work can managed at the contractor's work site via teleconference and computer (internet).

By signature on their proposal, the offeror certifies that all services provided under this contract by the contractor and all subcontractors shall be performed in the United States.

If the offeror cannot certify that all work will be performed in the United States, the offeror must contact the procurement officer in writing to request a waiver at least 10 days prior to the deadline for receipt of proposals.

The request must include a detailed description of the portion of work that will be performed outside the United States, where, by whom, and the reason the waiver is necessary.

Failure to comply with this requirement or to obtain a waiver may cause the state to reject the proposal as non-responsive, or cancel the contract.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

In order to be deemed responsive, offerors must demonstrate a minimum of:

- 5 years of experience with a state or local health department HAI program, and
- 2 references from previous employers with a minimum of one client that is in a similar scope as outlined in this RFIP.

Vendor must list the **page number(s)** showing that minimum responsiveness has been met. Evidence of meeting minimum prior experience must be shown in the Experience & Qualifications section of the offeror's proposal. **An offeror's failure to meet these minimum prior experience requirements will cause their proposal to be considered non-responsive and their proposal will be rejected.**

Note: Please provide the start and end dates, including month and year, in which the minimum requirements were satisfied.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The total number of points used to score proposals is 100. All proposals will be reviewed to determine if they are responsive. They will then be evaluated using the criteria set out below.

Understanding of the Project (8 POINTS)

Understanding will be an eight percent (8%) evaluation factor. Offerors should provide a concise narrative statement that illustrates their understanding of the requirements of the project and the project schedule.

Methodology (15 POINTS)

Methodology will be a fifteen percent (15%) evaluation factor. Offerors should provide a concise narrative statement that sets out the methodology they intend to employ if awarded the contract, illustrating how this methodology will serve to facilitate group discussion, rank priorities, integrate core values and mission as needed to accomplish Phases I-III to deliver a revised State HAI Plan on schedule.

Management Plan (12 POINTS)

Management Plan will be a twelve percent (12%) evaluation factor. Offerors should provide a concise narrative statement that sets out the management plan they intend to follow, illustrating how they will facilitate group discussion, rank priorities, integrate core values and mission as needed to accomplish Phases I-III to deliver a revised State HAI Plan on schedule.

Experience & Qualifications (15 POINTS)

Experience and qualifications will be a fifteen percent (15%) evaluation factor. Proposals should demonstrate the applicable education and experience of the personnel designated to work on the project. Offeror shall also demonstrate additional experience as outlined below:

- List any HAI program related publications or awards won for work performed for clients in the past.

- Graduate degree in healthcare/ epidemiology
- Certification infection control (CIC) is preferred

Cost (40 POINTS)

Cost will be a forty percent (40%) evaluation factor. The lowest priced proposal will receive the maximum number of points allocated to cost. Other proposals for cost point allocation will be determined by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Lowest Cost Proposal} \times \text{Maximum Points for Cost}}{\text{Cost of Each Higher Priced Proposal}} = \text{TOTAL POINTS for cost}$$

Alaska Offeror's Preference (10 POINTS)

If an offeror qualifies for the Alaska Bidder Preference, the offeror will also receive the Alaska Offeror's Preference. The preference will be ten percent (10%) of the total available points. This amount will be added to the overall score of each Alaska offeror after evaluation of proposals.

5% Alaskan Bidder Preference

An Alaska Bidder Preference of five percent will be applied prior to evaluation. The preference will be given to a person who:

- (a) holds a current Alaska business license and;
- (b) submits a proposal for goods or services under the name on the Alaska business license and;
- (c) has maintained a place of business within the state staffed by the offeror, or an employee of the offeror, for a period of six months immediately preceding the date of the proposal and;
- (d) is incorporated or qualified to do business under the laws of the state, is a sole proprietorship, and the proprietor is a resident of the state or is a partnership, and all partners are residents of the state and;
- (e) if a joint venture, is composed entirely of entities that qualify under (a)-(d) of this subsection.

5% Alaska Veteran Preference

An Alaska Veteran Preference of five percent will be applied prior to evaluation. The preference will be given to an offeror who qualifies under AS 36.30.170 (b) as an Alaska bidder and is a:

- (a) sole proprietorship owned by an Alaska veteran;
- (b) partnership under AS 32.06 or AS 32.11 if a majority of the partners are Alaska veterans;
- (c) limited liability company organized under AS 10.50 if a majority of the members are Alaska veterans; or
- (d) corporation that is wholly owned by individuals and a majority of the individuals are Alaska veterans.

In order to receive the Alaska Veteran Preference, proposals must include a statement certifying that the offeror is eligible to receive the Alaska Veteran Preference.

PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT

The Department wishes to discourage unnecessarily lengthy and costly proposal preparation; however, all proposals must contain the following information in the following format. Proposals should be limited to the requested information and shall consist of six parts – Cover Letter, Understanding, Methodology, Management, Experience & Qualifications and Cost.

All pages must be consecutively numbered.

Cover Letter

An individual authorized to bind the offeror to the provisions of the RFIP **must** sign the proposal. The cover letter should contain the offeror's complete name, mailing address, email address, telephone number; a statement confirming that the proposal is valid for ninety (90) days from the closing date for receipt of proposals; a statement confirming that the offeror will comply with all provisions of the RFIP; if applicable, provide notice that the offeror qualifies as an Alaska Bidder; provide an Alaska Business License number or certificate (if applicable); and a statement relating to any perceived or potential conflict of interest.

Cost Proposal

The Cost Proposal must be submitted on the form provided in this document. **Only one copy of the Cost Proposal need be submitted and must be submitted in a separate, sealed envelope or as a separate e-mail attachment. No portion of the Cost Proposal shall be included within the body of the proposal. Failure to comply with this requirement may cause the state to reject the bid or proposal as non-responsive, or cancel the contract.**

COST PROPOSAL

Note: The purpose of the cost formula is to provide a mechanism for offerors to submit costs per project phase in a manner that DHSS can evaluate and score and then use to establish billing rates for the resultant contract. Please enter your cost in the spaces provided below for completing each deliverable.

Phase I

Consultant Rate (\$_____) x Hours for Completion (_____ hours) = \$_____

Phase II

Consultant Rate (\$_____) x Hours for Completion (_____ hours) = \$_____

Phase III

Consultant Rate (\$_____) x Hours for Completion (_____ hours) = \$_____

Travel Costs for completion of project = \$_____

Total Project Cost (not to exceed \$25,000) \$_____

This page must be completed and submitted with all offers and received by the State at the time and date set for receipt of proposals.

CHECKLIST

IMPORTANT NOTE TO OFFERORS: This checklist is provided to assist offerors and the Procurement Officer in addressing and/or locating specific requirements identified in the RFIP for the offeror's proposal. **Offerors must complete and return this form.** Completion of this form does not guarantee a declaration of responsiveness.

Offeror:

1. Evidence that the offeror holds a valid Alaska business license. (**Note:** Proof of business license is not required at time of proposal submission but is required prior to contract award if any of the services will take place in Alaska).

Evidence is provided on page #_____.

2. Evidence that the budget does not exceed \$25,000.00. (cost plan submitted separately)

Evidence is provided on page #_____.

3. Evidence that the offeror meets the minimum prior experience requirements.

Evidence is provided on page #_____.

4. Evidence that the proposal has been signed by an individual authorized to bind the offeror to the provisions of the RFIP.

Evidence is provided on page #_____.

5. Evidence that the offeror has included a conflict of interest statement in the proposal.

Evidence is provided on page #_____.

6. Evidence that offeror has signed and returned the *Certification Regarding Debarment Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion Lower Tier Covered Transactions* form.

Evidence is provided on page #_____.

Request for Informal Proposal Evaluation Sheet

RFIP #0615-162

Total Number of Points = 100

Evaluator Initials _____ Date _____

Proposal Company Name: _____

Understanding of the Project – 8 Points

Offerors should provide a concise narrative statement that illustrates their understanding of the requirements of the project and the project schedule.

Evaluator Comments:

Total Points for Understanding: _____

Methodology – 15 Points

Offerors should provide a concise narrative statement that sets out the methodology they intend to employ if awarded the contract, illustrating how this methodology will serve to facilitate group discussion, rank priorities, integrate core values and mission as needed to accomplish Phases I-III to deliver a revised State HAI Plan on schedule.

Evaluator Comments:

Total Points for Methodology: _____

Management Plan – 12 Points

Offerors should provide a concise narrative statement that sets out the management plan they intend to follow, illustrating how they will facilitate group discussion, rank priorities, integrate core values and mission as needed to accomplish Phases I-III to deliver a revised State HAI Plan on schedule.

Evaluator Comments:

Total Points for Management Plan: _____

Experience and Qualifications – 15 Points

Experience and qualifications will be a fifteen percent (15%) evaluation factor.

Proposals should demonstrate the applicable education and experience of the personnel designated to work on the project. Offeror shall also demonstrate additional experience as outlined below:

- List any HAI program related publications or awards won for work performed for clients in the past.
- Graduate degree in healthcare/ epidemiology
- Certification infection control (CIC) is preferred

Evaluator Comments:

Total Points Experience: _____

Grand Total: _____

**Certification Regarding Debarment,
Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion
Lower Tier Covered Transactions**

This certification is required by the regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 29 CFR Part 98, Section 98.510, Participant's responsibilities.

The regulations were published as Part VII of the May 26, 1988 Federal Register (pages 19160-19211).

(BEFORE COMPLETING CERTIFICATION, READ THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE WHICH ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CERTIFICATION)

(1) The prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds certifies, by submission of this bid, that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.

(2) Where the prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds is unable to certify to any of the Statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this Proposal.

Name and Title of Authorized Representative

Signature

Date

Instructions for Certification

1. By signing and submitting this Proposal, the prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds is providing the certification as set out below.
2. The certification in this class is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the Department of Labor (DOL) may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.
3. The prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds shall provide immediate written notice to the person to whom this Proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
4. The terms "covered transaction," "debarred," "suspended," "ineligible," "lower tier covered transaction," "participant," "person," "primary covered transaction," "principal," "Proposal," and "voluntarily excluded," as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the person to which this Proposal is submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.
5. The prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds agrees by submitting this Proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the DOL.
6. The prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds further agrees by submitting this Proposal that it will include the clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions," without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.
7. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may but is not required to check the List of Parties Excluded from Procurement or Non-procurement Programs.

8. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
9. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the DOL may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment