

Amendment #1 - Issued February 20, 2020
RFP 200000579 - 1115 Independent Evaluator

- Response to Questions Received
- Extension of Proposal Deadline

Question/ Answer#	Section Reference	Questions Received / Clarifications Provided
Q-1 A-1	Sec. 1.04, pg 4	<p>If an applicant meets all of the qualifications listed on page 14 other than direct experience with completing an 1115 waiver evaluation, are they ineligible to apply for this procurement?</p> <p>Neither Sec. 1.04 Minimum Qualifications on page 4, nor Sec. 2.04 Performance Expectations on page 14 make reference to "completing an 1115 waiver evaluation". The first minimum qualification listed under Sec. 1.04 states: "Three (3) years of experience, within the last five (5), working with State governments or CMS to design and implement an independent waiver evaluation. This experience must include stakeholder collaboration towards independent evaluation." Sec. 2.04, staffing requirements, states "The successful contractor must employ and maintain sufficient and qualified staff which can meet the criteria listed below... 1. Experience working with federal programs, especially with 1115 Demonstration Waivers and with Medicaid, and with MMIS data". Specific to your question, this section doesn't state completing an 1115 waiver evaluation. Just experience working with 1115 Waivers.</p>
Q-2 A-2	Sec. 1.02, pg. 4 Sec. 2.02, pg. 13	<p>The contract term and budget is a bit unclear. The RFP mentions 2023 as the final year, but also 2026 (which aligns with the final deliverable). Meanwhile, the budget is specified as covering four years. Is the budget through 2023? How will the budget for the remaining years be set – is it part of this proposal?</p> <p>The State Fiscal Year is defined as beginning July 1 and ending June 30. CMS approved the 1115 Demonstration Waiver effective January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2023. However, year 1 (2019) has passed, leaving years 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 remaining in the approved Demonstration period. While the final demonstration year is 2023, we estimate that final reports and deliverables will occur in August of 2025 (i.e., State Fiscal Year 2026). Important to note, the majority of the Contractor's work will take place during the Demonstration's approved waiver years when surveys and hypotheses data is collected and analyzed. The final reports in 2025 (or SFY 2026) will just be using the data already collected for use in preparing final reports. The budget is authorized through all performance years of the resulting contract, through June 30, 2026. Sec. 1.02, pg. 4 of the RFP has been updated to reflect four year term changed to five year term.</p>
Q-3	Sec. 2.05, pg. 17	<p>The first deliverable is review, assessment, and comment on the State's evaluation design draft. However, no timeframe was provided as to when the State expects this review to be submitted other than within the 60-day comment period. Please provide your best estimate of the delivery date of this review by the Contractor.</p>

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A-3		The contractor's first task is to assess/comment on the Evaluation Design (ED). This review allows the contractor to provide recommendations on the ED before CMS's final approval. The research section will work with the Contractor to complete this task in a timely manner. This would ideally occur within the first 30 days when the state issues Notice of Intent to Award of a resulting Contract. You can reference the RFP Schedule on page 7 for further clarification.
Q-4 A-4	Cover Page, pg. 1	On the RFP cover page, there is an Important Notice that if the solicitation was received from the website, "you must register with the procurement officer" and "failure to contact the procurement officer may result in the rejection of your offer". Is there a process to register with the procurement officer? Additionally, once the Offeror has "registered" with the procurement officer, would it be considered having fulfilled the requirement for contacting the procurement officer? By contacting the Procurement Officer, the Offeror has been successfully registered as an interested party and all future amendments and information pertinent to the solicitation will be sent to all interested parties.
Q-5 A-5	Sec. 1.04	Please provide additional guidance on how the requirement to provide evidence of the minimum prior experience requirements should be met. Sec. 1.04 provides the minimum qualifications necessary. The Evaluation Design (attached as a separate document to the RFP solicitation), pages 49-50, provides an extensive list of the qualifications sought in an IE. Based on this robust list, an Offeror should be able to provide applicable prior work experience; however, ensuring that Sec. 1.04 minimums are met is critical to the responsiveness screening process.
Q-6 A-6	Sec. 1.07	Can the Offeror's proposal include attachments to its proposal as part of a single PDF within the Technical Proposal or should attachments to the proposal be presented as separate attachments (not included within the PDF with the Technical Proposal narrative response)? Yes, the Offeror's technical proposal may include attachments as part of a single PDF within the Technical Proposal electronic file submitted.
Q-7 A-7	Sec. 1.08	Can the content for the Offeror's Certification be included as part of its signed Transmittal Letter, which will appear as the first page of its Technical Proposal? If not, where should the Offeror's Certification be included within the Technical Proposal? Within the signed transmittal letter is a great place to include Offeror's Certification.
Q-8 A-8	Sec. 1.08(d)	Can the Offeror's Conflict of Interest statement be included as part of the Offeror's Transmittal Letter which will appear as the first page of its Technical Proposal? If not, where should the Offeror's Conflict of Interest statement be included within the Technical Proposal? Within the signed transmittal letter is a great place to include Offeror's Certification.

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Q-9 A-9	Sec. 8	<p>Please confirm if the Offeror can place its proposal header and footer on each of the completed RFP Attachments (e.g., 2, 4) required to be submitted as part of its proposal.</p> <p>Offeror may place its proposal header and footer on each of the completed RFP attachments. However, please note that Attachment 5 - Template Standard Agreement Form (with Appendices) is just shown as an "example" of what State of Alaska Contract may resemble for future reference, and is not for filling out or completing by Offeror at this stage.</p>
Q-10 A-10	Sec. 8	<p>Several measures in the Summary Table of Evaluation Questions, Hypotheses, and Measures in the evaluation design (1115_Evaluation_Design_.pdf) mention collecting "Baseline data at start of waiver".</p> <p>Have any beneficiary or provider survey data supporting the survey-based measures been collected for regions included in the Demonstration Year 1 implementation?</p> <p>No. The beneficiary or provider survey data to support these measures will be determined by the Contractor and the State, then collected by the Contractor. The "Stakeholder Survey Section" of the Evaluation Design, pages 40 - 42, provides a full background of methods and survey questions. This is the section the State recommends the Contractor use for survey/data collection.</p>
Q-11 A-11		<p>If we are an out-of-state Organization forming a consortium with an Alaska-based partner, will we be eligible for the Alaskan Bidder Preference? If so, what requirements would the consortium need to meet in order to qualify for this preference?</p> <p>The consortium will be required to verify the Alaska Bidder Preference if this is a preference claimed within the Offeror's proposal response.</p>
Q-12 A-12	Sec. 2.05, pg. 19	<p>We notice that there is an evaluation design due to CMS on March 31, and that you anticipate the evaluation contract will be in place March 30. Can you clarify the timeline we should expect for the review and finalization - how quickly do you anticipate getting CMS comments?</p> <p>The State received CMS comments on January 29 and the state has 60 days to respond to these comments. The Contractor's first task is to assess/comment on the Evaluation Design before CMS's final approval. The research section will work with the contractor to complete the review in a timely manner. This would ideally occur within the first 30 days after the state issues Notice of Intent to Award a Contract. You can reference the RFP Schedule on page 7 of the RFP.</p>
Q-13 A-13		<p>If we do not currently have an Alaska business license, is the expectation that we would need to have one in place when the proposal is due, or just before the final contract is awarded?</p> <p>An Alaska Business License is required prior to executing a contract.</p>
Q-14		<p>Has the State or the department conducted an evaluation of a Demonstration Waiver of this magnitude in the past? If so, are there any lessons learned that we should know for this work?</p>

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A-14		The Division of Behavioral Health has not conducted an evaluation of a Demonstration Waiver of this magnitude. The 1115 is a major Division redesign enabled through federal authority. So, no previous Waiver experience exists. However, a variety of others states have conducted evaluations, so one may be able to glean information from the CMS Website.
Q-15 A-15		How do you anticipate the content of the mid-point assessment and interim evaluation report will differ? These reports will differ largely depending on the data. The Drivers Diagram/Evaluation Hypotheses, pages 12 - 30 of the ED, include a significant amount of data/hypotheses information that will be collected during the 5 year Demonstration Waiver. Once the evaluation is underway and the data is collected and analyzed then these report outcomes can be assessed and then differences between the two reports may be noted. The reports will be a minor effort in comparison with the data/hypotheses sections.
Q-16 A-16	Sec. 2.01(f), pg. 12	Will you provide a map of the regions referenced on p. 12? There is a map of the regions provided on page 12 of the Evaluation Design.
Q-17 A-17	Sec. 2.04, pg. 15	The acronym "ED" is used for the first time on p. 15 – does this reference the Evaluation Design? Yes.
Q-18 A-18		What should we know about State staff availability for contributing expertise, participating in meetings, and reviewing/providing feedback on deliverables? The first several months will require State expertise with the array of data/deliverables required in the Evaluation Design. The research unit staff will be available during this time period and throughout the Demonstration. Also, read through this Q & A and you can see similar answers to this question. However, the contractor is an Independent Evaluator, the reason CMS requires a non-State of Alaska entity to complete the evaluations. So, for the integrity of the evaluation, the Contractor and State must keep the independent concept in mind.
Q-19 A-19		Who will be responsible for reviewing deliverables, such as the interim and final summative evaluation reports? What should we know about State engagement in this review? For example, are reports primarily reviewed by the team we are working with most closely, or do communications and policy staff play a role as well? The interim and final summative evaluation reports will be reviewed only briefly by the state and will be submitted to CMS for full review. The resulting Contractor is an Independent Evaluator, the reason CMS requires a non-State of Alaska entity to complete. So, for the integrity of the evaluation the Contractor and State must keep the independent concept in mind. The State will be engaged with this work. The research and systems staff will provide Medicaid Claims and enrollment data, in addition to other State data sets that may be determined useful for the IE. The State will be available to answer all questions. Policy staff is not likely to be needed by the Contractor but can be made available if need be.

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Q-20 A-20		<p>Do you anticipate any site visits or other monitoring from CMS that we should be prepared to participate in?</p> <p>Currently, DBH doesn't have scheduled monitoring or CMS site visits. However, a travel budget is added in anticipation of site visits that are likely to occur during the Demonstration.</p>
Q-21 A-21		<p>Does Alaska participate in the national surveys mentioned on p. 16? If so, at what intervals (i.e., yearly, biannually, etc.) and when will they be administered during the duration of the contract?</p> <p>Yes, Alaska does participate in the National Surveys. The intervals will depend on which National Survey referenced. These surveys are only background/support data for certain measures. The 1115 Evaluation Design is entirely Medicaid. So MMIS data will be primary. The Summary Table on page 23 of the Evaluation Design lists all data sources.</p>
Q-22 A-22	<p>Sec. 1.03, pg. 4</p> <p>Section 1.12, pg. 10</p>	<p>Can the proposal deadline be extended?</p> <p>Yes, we are extending the deadline for proposal submission from February 25, 2020, 4:00PM Alaska prevailing time to a new deadline for proposal submission on February 28, 2020, 4:00PM Alaska prevailing time. All other dates following the proposal deadline have shifted the same number of days accordingly.</p>