

Request for Information



State of Alaska
Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Finance and Management Services

Date Issued: August 10, 2020

DIVISION OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE – EWIC MOBILE APPLICATION

Introduction:

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Public Assistance (DPA), is seeking letters of interest from qualified offeror capable and interested in providing a mobile application which enables a participant to view their real-time Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits amounts; benefit expiration dates, approved WIC products, locations of vendors and clinics. The App also scans food for acceptability and allows shoppers to request additional foods be added to Alaska's Approved Products List (APL).

Background Information:

The Alaska WIC program transitioned from paper WIC benefits to electronic WIC benefits (eWIC) during 2019. In February 2019 a WIC App was used to support participants in their shopping experience. The WIC App has proven to be an invaluable program management tool not only for participants but for clinics, vendors, and State staff as well in helping to identify and resolve problems experienced during check out. For more information on eWIC in Alaska go to State of Alaska WIC site at [The New eWIC](#).

Scope of Work

DHSS, DPA, WIC Program currently has an electronic benefits (eWIC) smart phone Application service. DPA wants to continue with a WIC mobile application to support and enhance the WIC experience for its participants.

The offeror will provide a WIC mobile application that makes shopping easier for WIC participants by: identifying what foods can be purchased with WIC benefits, account balances, benefit expiration dates, vendor and clinic locations. The WIC app will help participants utilize their benefits and increase knowledge by providing, recipes, "life hacks", nutrition education, and blasts that provide information on Alaska specific issues. The WIC App will also allow for foods to be scanned and submitted for consideration of inclusion on the Approved Products List (APL).

The goal of the project is to continue with a WIC mobile application to provide a seamless way to support positive shopping experiences for participants, increased rates of WIC food redemptions, increased WIC participant retention, and easy accessibility of nutrition education services through use of smart phone application technology.

Deliverables

1. Participants can verify their real-time benefit balances;
2. Allows the user to scan product barcodes to confirm product eligibility against their currently available benefits;

3. Allows front and back images of packaging to be sent easily even with limited connectivity in the store;
4. The App must provide a list of all authorized products with images when available;
5. Food recipes with focus on food products available through WIC;
6. Provide resources and content from not-for-profit food advocates like No Kid Hungry, Cooking Matters, Talking is Teaching, (and others) to help WIC participants gain food resource management skills;
7. Able to produce custom banners and push notifications to alert participants of product recalls, government notices (clinic closures), food policy changes, food changes, Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) announcements, agency surveys and any essential information the agency needs to make participants aware of;
8. Ability to push crisis information out to participants such as COVID-19 updates quickly and efficiently;
9. Reminder notifications to alert the user when the end of current month benefit period is approaching. Remaining benefits will display along with recipes specific to the food subcategories in the participant's remaining balance;
10. Store and clinic locations with turn-by-turn directions;
11. Appointment reminders and food calculators for cereal, fresh fruit and produce and whole wheat products sold in ounces which permits users to efficiently calculate quantities to maximize their redemption in those areas;
12. Mobile education platform to give access to nutrition lessons developed by WIC agency staff and the library of developed lessons;
13. Data Sharing Agreement contract with DHSS, DPA, WIC program;
14. Meets Alaska security requirements as certified by Archer control certified application.

Response Information:

To participate with a response to the RFI, offerors must indicate their interest by submitting an electronic response (.pdf format is preferable) with the following information:

Interested offerors must submit an electronic response, 3 pages maximum, with the following information:

- Offeror's Name;
- Authorized signer;
- Mailing & physical address;
- Phone number;
- Email address;
- A description of how the offeror meets or exceeds the experience requirements;
- A brief summary of any concerns regarding the project as described. What potential obstacles should be anticipated?

Minimum Qualifications:

The offeror's statement should address how they satisfy the following minimum requirements and experience, necessary to provide the services outlined in the RFI:

- The offeror must have five (5) years in the last five (5) of experience providing eWIC Apps for at least 10 other EBT enabled WIC States or Tribal entities
- The offeror must have experience providing the above functionalities during the time frame listed in the bullets above and for the number of States/entities

Submit an electronic response no later than 2:00 pm, Alaska Prevailing Time, August 20, 2020, to the attention of:

Matt Meienberg, Procurement Specialist

Phone: (907) 465-5293 E-mail: matt.meienberg@alaska.gov

BIDDERS/OFFERORS WITH DISABILITIES: The State of Alaska complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services, and/or special modifications to submit a Letter of Interest should contact the Procurement Specialist named above, no later than August 14, 2020.

Important Notice:

This RFI does not extend any rights to prospective offeror's or obligate the State to conduct a solicitation or purchase any goods or services. Nor will the State be financially responsible for any costs associated with the preparation of any response for the requested information. This RFI is issued for the sole purpose of obtaining information as described in this notice. However, the information obtained from this request may be used to prepare a purchase, contract, or solicitation in the future.