

STATE OF ALASKA
Department of Health
Office of the Commissioner



HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE (HIE) SERVICES

RFP 2022-0600-5055

Amendment #1

August 5, 2022

This amendment is being issued to revise the deadline for receipt of proposals to **2:00 p.m. Alaska Time on August 24, 2022.**

It also serves to answer questions submitted by potential offerors and to provide additional important information. A subsequent amendment will be issued to answer additional offeror questions.

Offerors must use Submittal Form A – Offeror Information to acknowledge this amendment.

Note: The slide show from the Educational Meeting / Pre-Proposal Conference has been attached along with the RFP. A recording of this meeting is available upon request to the procurement officer.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jason Grove".

Jason Grove, CPPB
Procurement Officer
Phone: (907) 465-5842
Email: jason.grove@alaska.gov

Questions submitted by potential offerors and answers from the State:

Question 1: RFP Section 1.05 – The offeror confirms that they have current operational experience in providing HIE services in at least one state to demonstrate familiarity and experience comparable to those described by this request for proposal (RFP).

- a) We operate within many ACO's in the United States, however not a complete state.
- b) We provide provincial HIE in Canada and County wide HIE in Asia to name a couple.
- c) **Is a state completely mandatory bearing (a) and (b) above?**

Answer: The offeror must currently be providing HIE services *within* a state located in the United States, not necessarily the *entire* state.

Question 2: RFP Section 3.14 – local presence and offices. Altera Health will provide resources on-site at specific project milestones. We have executed so many projects 100% virtually over the pandemic we continue to practice this methodology to save on travel costs. The closest office to Anchorage is in Richmond, BC Canada. Should a requirement for an on-site managed services team be required for the contract term we can provide local staff to administer the system as part of normal operations.

- a) **For the initial implementation would remote + pre-determined travel intervals be acceptable?**

Answer: Yes.

Question 3: Will the selected vendor have access to the existing data via the current HIE?

Answer: If the contractor selected for award is not the incumbent, yes. Details will be worked out during the transition period of the awarded contract.

Question 4: Will the selected vendor be required to connect to the current HIE?

Answer: The awarded vendor is required to connect to regional and national HIEs to meet local health needs.

Question 5: Does the state expect, or will the state require that infrastructure in the form of connections to Alaska providers will be paid for within the budget identified in the RFP?

Answer: Yes. All direct and indirect costs associated with the performance of the contract must be included in the offeror's proposed costs.

Question 6: Must the prime contractor meet the Alaska preferred provider and offeror requirements in section 5.11 and 5.13 of the RFP, or could a subcontractor meet this requirement?

Answer: The prime contractor / offeror must qualify as an Alaska Bidder in order to receive the Alaska Bidder and Offeror preferences. Section 5.11 and the Alaska Bidder Preference Certification Form provide detail on the requirements to qualify as an Alaska Bidder. The form must be completed and submitted with the proposal in order to claim and receive the preferences.

Question 7: Could a subcontractor provide more than 50% of the IT products and services?

Answer: Yes. Please note that relying heavily on subcontractors could result in lengthy discussion and agreement in writing during the Clarification Period regarding how subcontractors will be held accountable for contract performance.

Question 8: Where is the HIE data currently stored, housed, and processed?

Answer: Data is currently stored, housed, and processed by CRISP Shared Services.

Question 9: Could you confirm that the HIE is currently using a Mirth system?

Answer: Confirmed.

Question 10: Will the incumbent AK HIE be submitting a proposal for this RFP?

Answer: The State assumes any incumbent may submit a proposal in response to an RFP.

Question 11: If we answer “no” to any questions on Submittal Form E, are we disqualified? Do we need to provide further explanation for every “Yes answer or just “Nos”?

Answer: Submittal Form E contains mandatory requirements that must be met to be considered responsive to the RFP. As discussed during the Educational Meeting held on July 18, these requirements are industry standard as it relates to what a contractor should be able to provide. Any “No” answer will cause the proposal to be considered non-responsive, and an explanation for each “Yes” answer must be given in accordance with the instructions on the Submittal Form.

Note that Submittal Form E has been modified to clarify that for the Prior Experience requirements, a 500-word maximum for each requirement is allowed. The rest of the requirements remain at a 250-word maximum each.

Question 12: Would you identify what information in vendor proposals will be made available through FOIA? If we mark something confidential (like pricing) will you adhere to that?

Answer: This is determined on a case-by-case basis. In accordance with Section 7.11 of the RFP, offerors must clearly identify the information in their proposal they wish to be held confidential (please do so in a separate document in your proposal) along with the reasons for confidentiality. The procurement officer must then agree to in writing to hold that information confidential.

In general, for technical proposals procurement usually defers on the side of holding information confidential if there is enough information left in the proposal for an outside party to reasonably review the proposal and determine how it was scored. For pricing / cost proposals, detailed pricing may be held confidential but not the overall amount being evaluated for scoring purposes. When that overall amount is translated into the actual contract, it is also public information.

Question 13: What does “25 per deliverable” specially mean for page limits?

Answer: It means that each Deliverable submission that is required by the RFP (Section 3.08 and 4.11) is limited to 25 pages (one side of paper equals one page).

Question 14: Disclosure of Proposal Contents

- 1) SEC 7.11 states: “Trade secrets and other proprietary data contained in proposals may be held confidential if the offeror requests, in writing, that the procurement officer does so, and if the procurement officer agrees, in writing, to do so. The offeror’s request must be included with the proposal, must clearly identify the information they wish to be held confidential, and include a statement that sets out the reasons for confidentiality.”
 - a. How should this request be included with the proposal (within submitted documentation, separate document, etc.)?

Answer: This should be included as a separate document included with your proposal submission.

Question 15: Documents for Inclusion in Proposal Response

- 1) SEC 8 has a list of attachments included in the RFP and draft deliverables for inclusion with the submission, however, they appear to be mixed together (e.g. it appears that the Standard Agreement Form does not need to be signed and returned as part of the proposal, but will be signed if selected as part of the contracting process).
 - a. Please provide a clear list of the required (e.g. submittal forms) and optional (e.g. potential modifications of the indemnification clause or standard contract provisions) documents for submission. Please also include how the optional modifications should be provided (should all be separate documents)?

Answer: Section 8 has been modified to remove the draft deliverables portion as Section 3.08 and 4.11 already identify which draft deliverables must be submitted with the proposal. Of the attachments listed in Section 8, the Submittal Forms must be included with the proposal.

The Standard Agreement Form – Appendix A does not need to be signed, it is provided to identify the standard contract provisions Department of Law requires in all state contracts and any requested changes to those provisions must be done in accordance with Section 7.04 of the RFP. The document will be the start of the resulting contract that is fully signed. Appendix B – Service Level Agreements (SLA) will become part of the resulting contract, as will Appendix C – Business Associate Agreement (BAA).

Important Note: Offerors must adhere to Section 1.06 of the RFP if requesting any material changes to the RFP as those cannot be made after the deadline for receipt of proposals. Regarding indemnification, requested changes must be approved by Department of Risk Management, but be aware Risk Management will likely not approve any changes, particularly in the context that the State is not legal allowed to indemnify anyone and will not allow a cap on damages related to indemnification (including tort).

Question 16: Submittal Form A: Offeror Information:

- For the Addenda Acknowledgment section, can you please provide clarification for how to appropriately handle completing this section? Is this to be completed prior to submitting the first draft of the proposal or if there are revisions during the clarification period?
- For the Federal Requirements section, can you please provide additional context around what this section is intended to capture? A number of federal requirements are specifically called out within the RFP attachment and in the Submittal Form E Mandatory Requirements section. Are you asking for a comprehensive list including those? Only federal requirements not already explicitly called out in the RFP attachments?

Answer: The addenda acknowledgement section is for acknowledging amendments to the RFP. Any such amendment will specify whether offerors must acknowledge that amendment withing Submittal Form A.

For the federal requirements section, only those requirements not called out in the RFP regarding the proposal, proposal evaluation, or contract resulting from this RFP. It is rare for this section to be completed by offerors because federal requirements regarding a proposal, proposal evaluation, or contract resulting from this RFP would be identified in the RFP, but if the State has missed something the federal requirements section is intended to capture that.

Question 17: When can we anticipate receiving the competitors list?

Answer: The list of companies who attended to educational / pre-proposal meeting on July 18 has been posted along with the RFP.

Question 18: Would the Department of Health entertain a proposal that decouples the technology from the services requested in the RFP?

Answer: No. The offeror must be able to meet all the RFP requirements and per Section 1.13 of the RFP, alternate proposals will be rejected.

Question 19: In Submittal Form A, is the State looking for specific information from the vendor applicant regarding federal requirements?

Answer: See the answer to Question 16.

Question 20: Please clarify what roles we are expected to staff and are they dedicated roles (for example, dedicated clinical support director)? Are vendor services members required to be in-state or this is desired?

Answer: Offerors have the discretion to decide which staff to provide to service this contract and where they are located. Outside of key executive leadership, if they are critical to the performance of this contract, they should be identified in the Critical Team Members section of Submittal Form A. These positions don't have to be dedicated to Alaska but cannot be removed or replaced from this project, or their positions, unless approved in writing by the project director or procurement officer.

Question 21: Submittal Form H – Cost Proposal

- 1) Table 2-HIE Services Cost:
 - a. Is it safe to assume that the participant implementation should only represent costs incurred by the HIE/vendor (and not on the participant side)?
 - b. Please explain how to use the Quantity (variable based on population) columns (D, G, J, M, P).
- 2) Instructions for Table 1 is inconsistent between SEC 4.10 and Submittal Form H excel file. Excel file instructions state that “payment for each deliverable will not be made until each deliverables D001-**D022** are submitted and approved...”. Sec. 4.10 states that payment for each deliverable will not be made until each deliverables D001-**D014** are submitted and approved...”
 - a. Which is the correct set of instructions?

Answer: Participant implementation should only represent costs incurred by the HIE/vendor.

In Columns D, G, J, M, and P the offeror must enter the number of lives to be serviced in total for the year. This is multiplied by the corresponding cost column to arrive at the total cost per yearly cost per line item for the given year.

Submittal Form H and Section 4.10 have been edited for clarity and consistency.

Question 22: Please clarify what is expected from a services perspective. Page 14 refers to staffing including but not limited to Management staff, Clinical staff, Technical staff. Is Alaska looking for the awarded vendor to staff these positions on behalf of the HIE and be dedicated fulltime to Alaska (in an outsourced model)?

Answer: We are looking to have the contractor staff these positions on behalf of the HIE in a manner sufficient to support the required HIE services. They do not have to be dedicated fulltime to Alaska but they must be able to ensure the contract requirements are met at all times. Failure to meet the contract requirements (including SLA requirements) will result in corrective action by the State, including up to finding the contractor in default and terminating the contract.

Question 23: Would the vendor be making new connections with the health systems, hospitals, and clinics, or are these existing connections that will be connected to the new provider?

Answer: The offeror should assume that they will be making new integration connections.

Question 24: Are most new connections anticipated to be supported through a single hub connection (e.g., Cerner) or created individually with each location?

Answer: It is likely to be a combination of a hub or single connection depending on the vendors involved.

Changes to the RFP

Section 1.03 Deadline for Receipt of Proposals:

Updated to reflect the revised deadline for receipt of proposals.

Section 1.08 RFP Schedule:

Updated to reflect the revised deadline for receipt of proposals.

Section 8 - Attachments

Section 8 has been modified to remove the draft deliverables portion as Section 3.08 and 4.11 already identify which draft deliverables must be submitted with the proposal. Of the attachments listed in Section 8, the Submittal Forms must be included with the proposal.

Submittal Form E

The first paragraph of the form has been modified to clarify a 500-word maximum is allowed for the prior experience requirements and a 250-word maximum is allowed for the other requirements.

Submittal Form H and Section 4.10

Updated as indicated in the answer to Question 21.

End of Amendment #1