

RFP19317 Temporary Professional Staff Services 2026

Questions and Responses

PROPOSALS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN MARCH 12, 2026, BY 5:00 PM CT

RFP19317

BUYER: State of South Dakota

POC: Kirsten Blachford
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Scope

Question:

1. Please confirm that this RFP is intended to establish a pool of qualified vendors to provide temporary professional staff resources by skill set, with specific scopes, durations, and deliverables defined through individual Work Orders, rather than requiring delivery of fixed, end-to-end project solutions.
2. Can the State confirm whether this RFP is intended for the future release of project-based engagements to be managed by the vendor, or for the provision of qualified professional resources on an as-needed basis?
3. Certain service areas reference federal programs, compliance, or regulatory requirements. Can the State clarify whether demonstrated federal program expertise is required to qualify in those service categories, or whether such experience would only be necessary if a specific work order includes federal program scope?
4. Is this staffing engagement or managed services?
5. Is this solicitation establishing a Master Services Agreement (MSA) with Task/Work Orders (WO) issued on an as needed basis?
6. Is this solicitation intended to establish a staff augmentation contract where DSS will direct assigned personnel, or a professional services contract where the contractor is responsible for delivering defined outcomes under each work order?

Answer: This RFP is intended to establish a pool of qualified vendors to provide temporary professional staff resources by skill set, with specific scopes, durations, and deliverables defined through individual Work Orders.

Question:

1. Work Order Scope: Are work orders expected to request individual roles (e.g., Project Manager, Data Analyst), or could they request complete project teams and full lifecycle delivery?
2. When work orders are issued under this contract, will they typically define specific roles/resources on a Time and Materials basis, or will they be structured as project-based deliverables (fixed-price), or a combination of both?

Answer: This will be dependent on the work order. Work orders can be a combination of time/materials and project based.

Question:

1. Are there specific DSS initiatives or functional areas anticipated to generate the highest volume of work orders during the contract term?
2. What are the specific job titles, number of positions, and required experience levels?

3. What is the expected duration of each engagement (e.g., 3 months, 12 months, multi-year)?
4. Can you please confirm consultants' titles for each given work areas under "Exhibit 1: Areas of work and Rates"?
5. Given that DSS oversees a broad range of programs and services, please clarify which specific programs and service areas are in scope for this solicitation? For example, does the scope include behavioral health, long-term services and supports (LTSS), child and family services, economic assistance programs, and / or professional services across Medicaid waivers / state plans and institutional facilities?
6. For each Areas of Work, which areas of work do you anticipate having the highest need for capacity?
7. Please elaborate on the Medicaid programs that will be in scope (e.g., MA, D-SNP, FFS, etc.).
8. Does DSS require or prefer specific actuarial, financial modeling, or econometric methodologies for rate setting, forecasting, or "what-if" analyses?
9. Are there required or preferred tools for analytics, forecasting, and dashboard creation?
10. For federal regulatory requirement analysis, please confirm what programs are in scope (e.g., Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, Child Support, etc.).
11. Are there specific evidence-based models currently in use (e.g., Home Visiting, Family First, care management models) that vendors must align to?

Answer: There are no set Work Orders currently. They are created on an as needed basis by the Divisions within DSS as are the Scopes of Work. No specific modeling or tools preferred at this time.

Question:

1. Multiple items under Section 3.0 SCOPE OF WORK mention "direct experience" with or related to DSS programs. Please confirm whether this RFP is open to all offerors with experience comparable to DSS programs and systems.

Answer: Yes.

Question:

1. Are there particular federal programs or compliance frameworks (e.g., Medicaid, SNAP, TANF) that DSS expects to be most relevant to upcoming work orders?

Answer: No.

Question:

1. Section 3.0 (Scope of Work) indicates that Offerors may respond to any combination of work areas and sub-categories and must use Exhibit 1: Areas of Work and Rates to indicate proposed services. As this is a Temporary Professional Staff Services contract and Exhibit 1 does not list labor categories:

- a. Is the Offeror expected to provide hourly rates for each sub-category listed in Exhibit 1? If so, could the Department provide the anticipated labor categories associated with each category/sub-category?
- b. May the Offeror define and propose its own labor categories aligned to the categories/sub-categories it elects to bid?
- c. Is the offeror permitted to modify Exhibit 1 to include job titles and corresponding hourly rates aligned to each category and subcategory?

2. Which rate structures should be provided in Exhibit 1 (e.g., onsite, hybrid, and/or remote)?

3. Project Management Tiers: Section 3.7 requires offerors to identify various levels of project management expertise (Project Director, Senior PM, Project Lead). Does the State require a separate hourly rate for each of these specific tiers in the Cost Proposal, or should they be grouped under the general 3.7 Project Management Support rate?

4. Should pricing in Exhibit 1 include only the sub-categories selected, or must pricing be provided for all sub-categories within a selected main category?

Answer: Offerors must submit the hourly rate for each professional resource topic area responded to including the sub-categories. The offeror can define and propose their own labor categories, but they must align with the categories and sub-categories in Exhibit 1. Exhibit 1 can be modified. One rate structure should be provided encompassing all rates.

Question:

1. Can the Department provide job descriptions and/or expected qualification requirements for the anticipated labor categories?

2. Ownership of Deliverables: Will DSS define and manage project scope, timelines, and deliverables internally, with vendor resources supporting execution, or will the vendor be expected to define scope, manage project execution, and deliver completed work products?

3. For service categories that reference Medicaid, PERM, federal grant compliance, or federal legislation impacts, will vendors be evaluated based on demonstrated prior federal program experience at the time of proposal submission, or only at the work order response stage?

4. If a vendor does not have direct federal program experience but possesses strong technical or analytical expertise, would the vendor still be eligible to provide services within those categories for work orders that do not require federal program interaction?

Answer: Each work order will have its own unique job description and qualification requirements. See <https://open.sd.gov/rfp.aspx> for past work orders.

Question:

1. Scope of Services: Is the proposer expected to provide staff resources on an as-needed basis only, or will the awarded vendor be responsible for managing and delivering full project engagements as a professional services provider?

Answer: Work orders to acquire professional services will be created on an as needed basis.

Question:

1. Engagement Model: Is this contract intended primarily as a staff augmentation model where resources work under the direction and supervision of DSS management, or will vendors be responsible for end-to-end project delivery, including project management, methodology, and accountability for deliverables?

2. Management and Supervision: Will proposed resources report directly to DSS project managers, or will they remain under the vendor's project management structure?

3. Please confirm whether services procured under this RFP are intended primarily to be staff augmentation (i.e., Contractor personnel working under the direction of DSS staff), project-based consulting services with Contractor-managed deliverables, or a combination of both depending on the Work Order.

4. To what extent will DSS retain responsibility for day-to-day task direction, prioritization, and supervision of Contractor personnel assigned under individual Work Orders?

Answer: This is a staff augmentation model where resources may work under the direction and supervision of DSS. This will be dependent upon the work order.

Question:

1. Could the State kindly provide examples of potential training required under area of work 3.8.4?

Answer: All previous RFP and contract information can be found at <https://open.sd.gov/rfp.aspx>.

Question:

1. May vendors propose additional related service offerings aligned with DSS mission needs but not explicitly listed?

Answer: Additional services may be offered but must be within the scope of areas.

Schedule of Activities

Question:

1. Please confirm the exact cutoff time and time zone for submission of offeror questions due on February 19, 2026.

Answer: 5PM CT

Question:

1. After requesting the SFTP folder by March 11, 2026, will DSS provide details regarding the SFTP host/URL, authentication method, file size limits, and file naming conventions?
2. Is there a page limit for the Technical Proposal?
3. Is there a maximum file size limitation for SFTP uploads, and will DSS confirm receipt of submitted proposals?
4. Is there a maximum page limit for the Detailed Response section? Are cover page, TOC, abbreviations, and references excluded from page count limitations?
5. Please confirm there is no page limit for this response.
6. Are there any restrictions on the file size that can be submitted?

Answer: Yes. Vendors will receive two emails for the SFTP information - directions and a password. There is not a file size limit or a naming convention required. DSS will confirm receipt if requested.

Question:

1. Would the Department consider extending the proposal submission deadline by one week to allow Offerors to prepare a more comprehensive response?
2. Could State of South Dakota please grant an extension to the due date?
3. In order to effectively respond to the solicitation, can the State please provide a one-week extension once the Q/As are posted?
4. Would the State consider granting an extension to the proposal submission deadline?

Answer: We are unable to extend the timeline.

Question:

1. Will the State please provide a recommended SFTP software for offerors to use?

Answer: Offeror will need to work with their own technical support staff to set up SFTP compatible software on offeror's end. While the State of South Dakota can answer questions, State of South Dakota is not responsible for the software required.

Question:

1. Will the State please allow an alternative submission method as many offerors do not have experience with SFTP software? This requirement may prevent fully qualified offerors the opportunity to submit a proposal.

Answer: Proposals must be submitted as PDFs via Secured File Transfer Protocol (SFTP).

Question:

1. Will the state please provide step-by-step instructions on obtaining and using the SFTP software required for submission?

Answer: **SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL:** All proposals must be completed and received by the Department of Social Services as indicated in the Schedule of Activities. Proposals received after the deadline will be late and ineligible for consideration. Proposals must be submitted as PDFs via Secured File Transfer Protocol (SFTP). Offerors must request an SFTP folder no later than the date indicated in the Schedule of Activities by emailing Kirsten

Blachford at Kirsten.Blachford@state.sd.us. The subject line should read RFP19317 SFTP Request. The email should contain the name and the email of the person who will be responsible for uploading the document(s). Please note, offeror will need to work with their own technical support staff to set up an SFTP compatible software on offeror's end. While the State of South Dakota can answer questions, State of South Dakota is not responsible for the software required. All proposals may be signed in ink or digitally by an officer of the offeror legally authorized to bind the offeror to the proposal and sealed in the form intended by the respondent. Proposals that are not properly signed may be rejected. No proposal may be accepted from, or any contract or purchase order awarded to any person, firm or corporation that is in arrears upon any obligations to the State of South Dakota, or that otherwise may be deemed irresponsible or unreliable by the State of South Dakota.

Question:

1. The RFP references Exhibit 1: Areas of Work and Rates as part of the cost proposal. Can the State please confirm whether Exhibit 1 should be included within the Technical Proposal submission, or if it must be submitted separately as part of the Cost Proposal section only?

Answer: The State does not have a preference where Exhibit 1 is within the proposal as long as it is included.

Question:

1. Will the State conduct oral presentations or request best and final offers (BAFOs)?

Answer: If the State deems necessary.

Question:

1. If oral presentations are required, will they be conducted virtually or in person?

Answer: Virtually.

Question:

1. Is prior Medicaid, CMS, HHS, or federal grant experience required or strongly preferred for this category?
2. Does DSS require specific PM certifications or alignment with a State PMO framework or designated PM tools?
3. For grant writing services, may milestone-based or success-based pricing be proposed under individual Work Orders?
4. Will background checks or specific system clearances (e.g., HIPAA, CJIS) be required for personnel under certain Work Orders?
5. Are there established DSS or State branding and communication standards that vendors must adhere to?

Answer: This will depend on the work order.

Question:

1. If possible, please provide the comprehensive set of bidder questions and DSS answers for this solicitation.

Answer: The State will respond to offeror's inquiries via e-mail. In addition, all inquiries and the State's responses will be posted on the state's e-procurement system and the DSS website at <http://dss.sd.gov/keyresources/rfp.aspx>. Offerors may not rely on any other statements, either of a written or oral nature, that alter any specification or other term or condition of this RFP. Offerors will be notified in the same manner as indicated above regarding any modifications to this RFP.

5.2...

Question:

1. Based on our reading of the RFP, it appears that some of the information requested in Section 5.2.3.3 could reasonably be addressed at a more general level, while other elements may be better suited to a per-area or per-sub-area response. To reduce duplication and improve readability for evaluators, we wanted to confirm whether the following approach would be acceptable:

a. Address Sections 5.2.3.3.1 (Expertise in the Area(s)), 5.2.3.3.2 (General qualifications of possible staff), and 5.2.3.3.5 (Options or alternatives proposed) within each applicable Area of Work / sub-area response under Section 5.2.3.2; and

b. Address Sections 5.2.3.3.3 (Staffing capacity), 5.2.3.3.4 (Geographic presence), 5.2.3.3.6 (Employment qualification assessment), and 5.2.3.3.7 (Background screening) once on an overall level as part of Section 5.2.3.1, given that these items are generally consistent across areas of work.

2. Section 5.2.3.3.5 requests "a clear description of any options or alternatives proposed." In some cases, options or alternatives may apply broadly across multiple sub-areas within a given Area of Work. For clarity and readability, would it be acceptable for offerors to describe such options or alternatives once at the Area of Work level, rather than repeating similar language within each individual sub-area response, provided the applicability to the Area of Work level is clearly identified?

Answer: Yes.

Question:

1. In Section 5.2.3.3, it is mentioned, "Company and staff qualifications for each area the offeror proposes to offer services in. This can be included in 5.2.3.2. Specific staff resumes are not required at this time". Please confirm where the offeror should respond to the requirement.

2. Can you please confirm if we need to submit our Project Manager's resume within our response? Or do you want just some information as you need for other resources?

3. Should resumes be anonymized or submitted in a specific format?

4. Section 5.2.3.3.2 requests "General qualifications of possible staff." Could the State please clarify if by "possible staff" the State refers to key personnel managing the State's contract?

5. Section 5.2.3.3.2 requests "General qualifications of possible staff." Could the State please clarify if sample summaries of qualifications of potential candidates who will perform the services directly for the State are required?

6. Proposal Evaluation of Personnel: Section 6.3 states that the qualifications of proposed personnel will be subjectively evaluated, and the offeror should submit detailed information regarding experience and training. However, Section 5.2.3.3 says "Specific staff resumes are not required at this time." Could the State clarify if it prefers representative resumes of potential staff or simply high-level biographical summaries of current team members for the evaluation?

7. Could you please confirm if we need to submit actual candidate resumes? If yes, how many?

8. Do we need to submit the actual resumes for proposed candidates, or can we submit the sample resumes?

9. Do you need any resumes along with the submission. If yes, can it be a sample resumes or actual resumes are required.

10. Related to RFP Section "5.2.3.3.2 General qualifications of possible staff", are you looking for vendors to include staff member names or general qualifications by labor category?

Answer: Company and staff qualifications can be included in the specific point by point response. This does not need to call out specific staff or their resumes. Specifics will be required at the work order level.

Question:

1. RFP Page 11, Section 5.2.3.1: Can the State please confirm our response to Section 5.2.3.1 is an overall response to all areas of work and the State is not expecting a response to each area of work within Section 5.2.3.1?

2. In Section 5.2.3 and specifically 5.2.3.1, the RFP states that the narrative must include required information “for the areas of work the offeror proposes to offer services in. Should offerors provide separate narratives for each proposed work area, or may a consolidated narrative be submitted that collectively addresses all selected work areas?

3. If proposing in multiple service categories, should experience narratives be separated by category?

4. If responding to multiple categories, should Section 5.2.3.1 (narrative approach) be written as a single consolidated narrative across all categories, or separated by category?

5. Related to RFO Section “5.2.3.1 A complete narrative of the offeror's assessment of the work to be performed, the offeror's ability and approach, and the resources necessary to fulfill the requirements,” are you looking for vendors to describe their approach for each sub-area listed or our overall approach to supporting each area (e.g., Information Systems)?

Answer: This narrative can encompass all areas of work the offeror is proposing to offer services in.

Question:

1. RFP page 11, Section 5.2.3.2: Can the State please provide details for what content we should include in our response to Section 5.2.3.2 for each area and sub-area?

2. (5.2.3.2) A specific point-by-point response, by order of area and sub-area listed the offeror proposes to offer services in. Are we required to submit the technical approach for each order area and sub-area?

3. Please confirm whether Sections 5.2.3.1 and 5.2.3.2 are intended to be separate sections in the proposal, or whether the narrative requirements in 5.2.3.1 may be incorporated into the point-by-point responses required in 5.2.3.2.

4. Should Offerors submit a single consolidated technical approach covering all selected Areas of Work, or does DSS prefer separate narratives by each Area/Sub-Area?

5. Is Section 5.2.3.1 intended to provide a high-level overall approach across all selected categories, with Section 5.2.3.2 addressing category-specific and sub-category details?

6. If responding to multiple categories, should vendors provide qualifications separately for each category, or may qualifications be consolidated where expertise overlaps?

7. If vendors select only certain sub-categories within a main category, should 5.2.3.3 address staffing capacity specific only to those sub-categories?

8. Related to RFP Section “5.2.3.2 A specific point-by-point response, by order of area and sub-area listed the offeror proposes to offer services in,” please clarify the expectations for vendors’ proposal responses. Specifically, are vendors expected to describe their proposed approach for each listed sub-area?

9. The point by point response refers to responding to each category/subcategory we are bidding, correct?

Answer: 5.2.3.1 – this narrative can encompass all areas of work the offeror is proposing to offer services in. 5.2.3.2 – this is a specific point by point response the offeror is proposing to offer services in.

Question:

1. Please confirm if our understanding is correct that we have to provide a response to each subcategory? For example, if we are bidding for 3.1 Information system, we need to respond to each section under it, through 3.1.1 to 3.1.14, which means point by point.

Answer: The detailed response should include: A complete narrative of the offerors assessment of the work to be performed encompassing all areas of work the offeror proposes to offer services in. A detailed response by order of area and sub-area. This should include company and staff qualifications. Within this detailed response 5.2.3.3.1 – 5.2.3.3.7 should be included.

Question:

1. Can the State please confirm company and staff qualifications and our response to Sections 5.2.3.3.1 – 5.2.3.3.7 are to be provided at the area level and not sub-area level?
2. When stating the number of employees with applicable skill sets, should vendors provide total enterprise-wide staffing numbers or only those aligned to the selected categories?
3. Are Sections 5.2.3.3.1 and 5.2.3.3.2 to be addressed for each subcategory?
4. Sections 5.2.3.3.3 – 5.2.3.3.6 seem to be more general discussions and not something to be discussed for each subcategory. Is this correct?

Answer: To be provided at the area level.

Question:

1. Is the State expecting documentation of formal HR screening policies, or a high-level narrative description of recruiting and vetting practices?

Answer: The state will accept either.

Question:

1. Is a cover letter, Certificate of Insurance (COI), or certification package required?
2. Must the Certificate of Insurance be submitted with the proposal, or only upon contract award?

Answer: 5.2.5 Certificate of Insurance is required to be submitted with the proposal.

Question:

1. For the point-by-point response, should vendors structure their response strictly following the numbering format (e.g., 3.1, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, etc.) for ease of evaluation?

Answer: Not required.

Geographic Coverage

Question:

1. Are there specific geographic coverage requirements across South Dakota that offerors must demonstrate?
2. Is it mandatory to have a presence in the state of Dakota?
3. To be responsive, is it mandatory to have a physical office in South Dakota? Please confirm.

Answer: No.

Question:

1. Is there any preference or evaluation consideration for firms established within South Dakota?
2. If we don't have any presence, what would be the impact?
3. Is there any preference for the geographic presence?
4. Does State of South Dakota provide any preference to (STATE) local vendors?
5. Section 6.1 references geographic presence and familiarity with South Dakota. Please clarify whether having a physical office in South Dakota is required, preferred, or simply evaluated as one of multiple factors. Additionally, is there a scoring advantage for in-state vendors?
6. Is there any preference or scoring consideration for in-state personnel?
7. Is there any local preference for this contract?
8. How much weightage (%) will be given to the local vendors?
9. Section 6.1.4 references "Availability to the project locale" as an evaluation criterion. Can the State clarify whether preference will be given to vendors with a physical presence in South Dakota, and how this factor will be evaluated for non-local vendors?
10. Do you have any local preferences that we should be aware of?
11. Is there a preference or scoring consideration for vendors with an in-state (South Dakota) presence?
12. Is geographic presence evaluated as a scored criterion, or informational only?

Answer: No/None

Presentations

Question:

1. If oral presentations are requested, will DSS provide an agenda and evaluation focus areas, and will they be conducted virtually or in person?

Answer: This will depend on the nature of the oral presentation requested.

Proposal

Question:

1. What is the required mode of submission (email, procurement portal, or physical)?

Answer: 1.5 Submitting Your Proposal: All proposals must be completed and received by the Department of Social Services as indicated in the Schedule of Activities. Proposals received after the deadline will be late and ineligible for consideration. Proposals must be submitted as PDFs via Secured File Transfer Protocol (SFTP). Offerors must request an SFTP folder no later than the date indicated in the Schedule of Activities by emailing Kirsten Blachford at Kirsten.Blachford@state.sd.us. The subject line should read RFP19317 SFTP Request. The email should contain the name and the email of the person who will be responsible for uploading the document(s). Please note, offeror will need to work with their own technical support staff to set up an SFTP compatible software on offeror's end. While the State of South Dakota can answer questions, State of South Dakota is not responsible for the software required. All proposals may be signed in ink or digitally by an officer of the offeror legally authorized to bind the offeror to the proposal and sealed in the form intended by the respondent. Proposals that are not properly signed may be rejected. No proposal may be accepted from, or any contract or purchase order awarded to any person, firm or corporation that is in arrears upon any obligations to the State of South Dakota, or that otherwise may be deemed irresponsible or unreliable by the State of South Dakota.

Question:

1. Does DSS prefer one combined PDF submission or separate PDFs (e.g., Technical Proposal, Cost Proposal, Exhibit 1, Redacted Copy)?
2. Do we need to submit one response document, including a cost Proposal?
3. Can we submit an additional redacted version of our response to hide the confidential information?
4. Please confirm whether we need to provide a single submission (technical and Exhibit 1)? Or do we need to submit two files?
5. Given that the Cost Proposal will be evaluated separately, should bidder submit Exhibit 1 as the final page of their overall proposal/in a single document or should bidders break out Exhibit 1 and submit pricing and rates separately?

Answer: Separate PDFs would be preferred.

Question:

1. The RFP allows digital signatures—can you confirm whether a standard PDF digital signature is acceptable?
2. Are digitally signed documents acceptable, or are original ink signatures required for the signature sheet and other documents

Answer: Yes, a standard digital signature is acceptable.

Question:

1. Personnel Qualification Submission: In Section 6.3, it states that the offeror should submit detailed information related to the experience and qualifications, including education and training, of proposed personnel. At the proposal stage, should we provide specific named candidate resumes, or are general qualifications and representative/sample resumes sufficient?
2. Personnel Submission: In Section 6.3, it states that the offeror should submit detailed information related to the experience and qualifications of proposed personnel. At the proposal stage, should we provide specific named candidate resumes, or are representative/sample resumes and general qualification profiles sufficient?

Answer: Please submit general qualifications of possible staff.

Question:

1. RFP Page 10, Section 4.6: Can the State please clarify where in our proposal outline we should respond to Sections 6.1.3 (record of past performance) and 6.1.7 (handling special project constraints)?

Answer: These can be added within the detailed response.

Question:

1. Would bidders who bid on each area be favored if they bid on only some areas?
2. Will an offeror's decision to propose services for only select work areas and sub-categories impact the evaluation of its proposal?

Answer: No.

Question:

1. Could you please clarify whether it is mandatory to bid on each sub-task area mentioned under a particular task area? Can we bid on partial sub-task areas?
2. May vendors respond to selected sub-categories within a main category, or must vendors respond to all sub-categories under a selected category?

Answer: Any combination of areas and sub-areas can be bid. Not all areas and sub-areas are required to be bid on.

Question:

1. Can you please confirm, except for the RFP Form and Exhibit 1, what are the other attachments or forms the State wants us to submit within the response?

Answer: Certificate of Insurance and References.

Question:

1. Can you please explain what 6.1.6 Familiarity with the project locale means? Where should we address that in our response?
2. Section 6.1.6 references "Familiarity with the project locale." Please clarify what specific criteria will be used to evaluate this factor?

Answer: This question is meant to help define how well the offeror knows our culture and population and could be included in the summary or detailed response.

Question:

1. Please confirm, shall we write NA for those categories that we are not planning to bid on?

Answer: All sections must be marked with a Y or N. See Exhibit 1.

Question:

1. In Exhibit 1: Areas of Work and Rates, it is mentioned The offeror does not have to offer in every type. For example, you may choose not to provide any services in area 3.6. Or in area 3.1 provide only in areas A-E, G, I, and L-N. Can you please clarify what areas A-E, G, I, and L-N mean?

Answer: Replace areas A-E, G, I.... with sections 3.1.1 – 3.1.14. The naming convention was changed for this RFP.

Question:

1. If a vendor marks "Yes" for a primary Area (e.g., Information Systems), must pricing be provided for every sub-category, or may vendors selectively support sub-areas?

Answer: The vendor may selectively support sub-areas.

Question:

1. Will vendors be eligible for Work Orders only in the Areas/Sub-Areas marked "Yes" in Exhibit 1?

Answer: Yes.

Question:

1. Can you please explain in detail, what type of Qualification State of Dakota is expecting from the proposed resources?
2. This section states "Record of past performance, including price and cost data from previous projects, quality of work, ability to meet schedules, cost control, and contract administration." We assume this is referring to the three referenced projects. Is this correct? What information do you want for cost control and contract administration?

Answer: The State is looking for the offeror to submit relevant information to show they can perform the requirements of work orders to include record of past performance, including price and cost data from previous projects, quality of work, ability to meet schedules, cost control, and contract administration.

Question:

1. Can you advise on how confidential/proprietary information should be labeled in the Executive Summary?

Answer: 1.13 Proprietary Information: The proposal of the successful offeror(s) becomes public information. Proprietary information can be protected under limited circumstances such as client lists and non-public financial statements. An entire proposal may not be marked as proprietary. Offerors must clearly identify in the Executive Summary and mark in the body of the proposal any specific proprietary information they are requesting to be protected. The Executive Summary must contain specific justification explaining why the information is to be protected. Proposals may be reviewed and evaluated by any person at the discretion of the State. All materials submitted become the property of the State of South Dakota and may be returned only at the State's option.

Question:

1. Should vendors submit both redacted and unredacted versions of the proposal at the time of submission?
2. The requirement states that Vendors "may" submit a redacted copy with the full response. Is this to be interpreted as a requirement?

Answer: Vendors can submit both a redacted and unredacted version of the proposal at submission. This would be preferred but not required.

Question:

1. Please confirm if Offerors should include their completed "Exhibit 1" under Proposal Tab 5.2.6 or submit it as a separate attachment to the Proposal Response?

Answer: Either or is fine.

Cost Proposal

Question:

1. Is there a preferred pricing format for Exhibit 1—single not-to-exceed hourly rates or minimum/maximum rate ranges? Or whether DSS expects consistency with historical DSS staffing vehicles?
2. Are there specified hourly bill/pay rates or rate card expectations?
3. Are there mark-up limits for vendors?
4. The pricing structure appears to emphasize professional services by requesting rates for a range of services rather than hourly rates by specific job titles. Could the State please clarify whether temporary staffing personnel services are permitted under this solicitation, and if so, how such services should be priced within the provided format?
5. Exhibit 1 lists sub-areas for pricing; however, no specific labor categories are identified under each sub-area. Since delivery of services under each sub-area may require multiple labor categories, please clarify how Offerors should structure pricing?
6. Are vendors permitted to propose blended rates for certain categories?
7. If the intent is to provide qualified resources, can the State clarify the rationale for requesting Not-to-Exceed (NTE) rates by deliverables rather than by defined resource roles or labor categories?
8. Do we need to provide the candidate hourly rate, or the services rate?
9. Should hourly rates be fully burdened inclusive of overhead, G&A, and profit?
10. Exhibit 1 identifies hourly rate or rate range by SOW category. Please confirm whether respondents are also required to include rates by labor category (e.g., Consultant, Managing Consultant, etc.)?
11. Should the “not to exceed hourly rate or rate range” reflect fully burdened blended rates or role specific rates?
12. Is there a required rate card format beyond Exhibit 1?

Answer: Offerors must submit the hourly rate for each professional resource topic area responded to. These rates can be shown as a maximum hourly rate per category, or a minimum – maximum range per category.

Question:

1. The RFP indicates pricing is fixed — please confirm whether any adjustment mechanisms exist consistent with State contracting practices.
2. Is pricing negotiable or fixed?
3. Could the State please clarify if a yearly rate adjustment (COLA adjustment) will be allowed?
4. Rate Adjustments: Section 7.1.2 states that pricing is “fixed during length of contract” (until May 31, 2029). Does the State allow for annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) or rate increases based on changes to federal or state statutory requirements during this three-year period?
5. Since rates are fixed through May 31, 2029, will there be any opportunity for rate adjustment due to market changes?
6. Please confirm whether the hourly rates submitted in Exhibit 1 are fixed for the full contract term (June 1, 2026, through May 31, 2029), with no escalation.
7. Is there flexibility to adjust proposed hourly bill rates during the contract term (e.g., annual escalation or periodic renegotiation)?
8. Are any rate adjustments or escalations permitted over the contract term, or are rates strictly fixed for all three years?

Answer: The pricing provided at proposal submission is what will be used for the duration of the contract.

Question:

1. Can DSS confirm whether per diem is reimbursed in accordance with State travel rates and whether travel requires pre-approval?

2. Can DSS clarify what qualifies as reimbursable travel versus non-reimbursable expenses?
3. What existing systems are currently in scope (e.g., MMIS, eligibility systems, EHR, case management, etc.)

Answer: Lodging, mileage, and meals will be reimbursed at state rates. See below link: <https://sdsos.gov/about-the-office/board-of-finance/bof-docs/Travel%20Reimbursement%20FY2026.pdf>

Question:

1. Will there be rate caps established by category, or should offerors propose market-based rates?
2. May vendors submit multiple rate tiers within a category (e.g., Junior/Senior/Specialist), or is DSS requesting a single maximum rate per category? Are rate ranges acceptable across all categories, or does DSS prefer fixed ceiling rates?
3. What weighting (if any) is applied to cost versus technical evaluation?
4. With respect to Exhibit 1: Areas of Work and Rates, can the State please clarify how vendors should provide rates for each subcategory?
5. Should vendors submit a single fully loaded hourly rate for each subcategory listed in Exhibit 1?
6. Does the State prefer that vendors provide a rate range for each subcategory rather than a fixed hourly rate?
7. Will evaluation criteria in Section 6.1 be weighted? If so, can scoring weights be shared?
8. If vendors respond to only selected sub-categories, should rates reflect only those skill areas, or must vendors maintain pricing coverage across the broader category definition?
9. Please confirm whether there is a specific score assigned to each subsection, or if all sections of the response are weighted equally in the evaluation of both the technical scope of work and the cost proposal.
10. For Exhibit 1 and Section 7.1, may offerors submit hourly rate ranges by role and experience level within each category, or does DSS expect a single not-to-exceed hourly rate per category regardless of role differentiation

Answer: Offerors must submit the hourly rate for each professional resource topic area responded to. These rates can be shown as a maximum hourly rate per category, or a minimum – maximum range per category. Pricing is fixed during the length of the contract. Evaluators will use subjective judgement in conducting a comparative assessment of the proposals by considering 6.1.1 – 6.1.8. (6.1.8 is the cost proposal)

Question:

1. Could the State please clarify whether, in the event that temporary staffing services are required (including sourcing, recruiting, screening, and vetting resources from the open market), suppliers would be permitted to propose pricing based on job roles and corresponding hourly rates by area of work instead of using the format outlined in Exhibit 1?
2. If vendors are required to submit rates for resources, will the State provide a structured rate template or labor category framework, or may vendors submit their own structured rate model?

Answer: Exhibit 1 is the preferred format but can be modified to show vendors specific pricing.

Question:

1. May vendors submit multiple rate tiers within a single subcategory (e.g., junior, mid-level, senior)?
2. Does the State permit vendors to submit multiple tiered hourly rates within a single subcategory (e.g., junior, mid-level, senior levels)?

Answer: Yes.

Question:

1. Without having a detailed scope of work for each category at this stage, can the State provide guidance on how vendors are expected to determine appropriate Not-to-Exceed (NTE) rates?

Answer: This RFP and subsequent contracts are meant to create a prequalified pool of vendors for possible work orders. Work orders are created on an as needed basis. DSS does not have a projected number of work order at this time or what they will entail.

Question:

1. Is it mandatory to submit resumes for all three experience levels for each position?

Answer: No.

References

Question:

1. Are commercial past performance references acceptable? Would a government reference be favored over them?
2. Are vendor or candidate references required? If so, how many and are government references mandatory?
3. Can firms provide commercial references?
4. Would you be accepting references from commercial entities?

Answer: Both are acceptable with no preference.

Question:

1. Is it mandatory to submit three references per category?
2. If we are bidding on 3-4 categories, can we use the same references for those categories as long as they cover the scope of work?
3. May the same references be used across multiple topic areas, or must separate references be provided for each?
4. If responding to multiple categories, are three total references sufficient, or are three references required per category?
5. May the same reference be used across multiple categories if the work performed covered multiple service areas?
6. Must references align directly to each category proposed, or can broader enterprise-level references be provided?

Answer: Three references per area is not required. References should encompass all areas the offeror is proposing to provide services in.

Question:

1. Can we use the subcontractor's references to demonstrate the experience?

Answer: References should be for the offerors company, not subcontractors references.

Question:

1. Are vendors allowed to include references from South Dakota Department of Social Services or other South Dakota State agencies?

Answer: Yes.

Question:

1. Will DSS be contacting references and notify offerors in advance before contacting submitted references?

Answer: DSS will contact offerors references but will not notify offerors in advance.

Scoring

Question:

1. For individual work orders, what selection method is anticipated (e.g., best value among pool, lowest rate, mini-RFP, or direct selection)?
2. What evaluation criteria will be used at the Work Order level?

Answer: Direct selection.

Question:

1. If available, can DSS provide additional detail regarding relative weighting or scoring methodology for evaluation criteria?
2. Are there scores for the evaluation criteria?

Answer: See RFP section 6.1.

Question:

1. If a vendor responds to only certain sub-categories within a main category, will evaluation be limited strictly to those selected sub-categories?

Answer: Yes.

Question:

1. If we don't have a Project locale, what would be the outcome in the evaluation criteria?

Answer: 6.1.6 references familiarity with the project locale. This question is meant to help define how well the offeror knows our culture and population.

Question:

1. Is there a minimum technical score required to be eligible for award?

Answer: Responses to work orders for vendors not selected and the evaluation criteria and scoring for all proposals are not public.

Question:

1. Will evaluation and ranking occur separately by category, or will vendors receive a single overall ranking across all categories submitted?

Answer: Vendors will receive a single overall ranking.

Resources/Staff/Employees/On-Site/Remote/Hybrid

Question:

1. Please confirm if the resources will be engaged on an as-needed basis through Work Orders or the suppliers are required to commit named resources at the time of submission?

Answer: Resources will be engaged on an as-needed basis through work orders. Specific names of resources are not required until submission of a work order.

Question:

1. Are firms required to provide health benefits? If so, will firms be reimbursed for this expense?
2. Are firms required to pay Holidays, PTO, Sick Leaves, etc., to the consultants placed? If so, will firms be reimbursed for this expense?

Answer: 19. Independent Consultant: While performing services hereunder, Consultant is an independent Consultant and not an officer, agent, or employee of the State of South Dakota.

Question:

1. Is the State looking for firms to source, vet, screen, and recruit the requested positions from the market or for firms to provide their inhouse personnel to perform the services?

Answer: The State does not have a preference.

Question:

1. Please confirm whether remote or hybrid work arrangements may be permitted for certain roles, subject to Work Order requirements, or if on-site presence within South Dakota is generally expected.
2. What are the expected work modalities for this effort? On-site, remote, or hybrid?
3. Can DSS clarify expectations related to onsite vs. remote work, and whether in-state presence is required or preferred?
4. For roles emphasizing "familiarity with the project locale," can remote resources support most work orders with periodic onsite presence?
5. Are resources generally expected to work onsite, remotely, or in a hybrid arrangement? If on-site, could the Department specify the primary work location(s)?
6. Will the roles be fully onsite, remote, or hybrid?
7. Are there any travel requirements for assigned personnel?
8. Are candidates permitted to work from outside the local city or state?
9. Does State of South Dakota accept remote staff within USA?
10. Are remote resources acceptable for most service categories, or are certain areas expected to require onsite presence?
11. If onsite resources are required, are there defined primary locations within South Dakota?
12. On-Site vs. Remote Expectations: Section 3.0 mentions that Work Orders may or may not require staff to be on-site. For the purpose of providing competitive "not to exceed" hourly rates in Exhibit 1, should offerors assume a predominantly remote delivery model, or will the State provide a baseline percentage of expected on-site work for Pierre, SD?
13. Will selected personnel be required to work on-site, hybrid, or fully remote?
14. Will assignments primarily be remote, on-site in Pierre, SD, or hybrid?
15. Is the default work mode expected to be onsite, hybrid, or remote?
16. Are there any roles that are strictly onsite only?
17. Is remote work acceptable unless a Work Order explicitly requires on-site presence? If on-site is required, what are the primary locations?
18. Will remote participation be encouraged to minimize reimbursable travel costs?
19. Does the state anticipate that any of the work performed under this contract vehicle will require onsite work?

Answer: Work orders may or may not require staff of the qualified vendor(s) selected to be on-site. This will be noted in each Work Order sent, though most work orders do not require on-site. Primary work locations would likely be Pierre or Sioux Falls, SD.

Question:

1. Please confirm if this is an on-site or offshore requirement?
2. Does State of South Dakota accept remote & offshore staff?
3. For the Communication Services roles, are offshore resources allowed, if they can work during U.S. hours?
4. Is offshore support permitted for this engagement?

Answer: Work orders may or may not require staff of the qualified vendor(s) selected to be on-site. This will be noted in each Work Order sent. The Vendor must provide its services to the State as well as storage of State Data solely from data centers located in the continental United States. The Vendor will not provide access to State Data to any entity or person(s) located outside the continental United States that are not named in this Agreement without prior written permission from the State. This restriction also applies to disaster recovery; any disaster recovery plan must provide for data storage entirely within the continental United States.

Question:

1. Is US citizenship or permanent residency mandatory for candidates?

Answer: Candidates must be legally able to work in the United States.

Contract

Question:

1. The umbrella contract stage, does DSS prefer named key personnel, or are role-based staffing pools sufficient with resumes provided at the work-order level?

Answer: Role-based staffing pools sufficient with resumes provided at the Work Order level.

Question:

1. In the RFP, Attachment A – Agreement with the state notes that it does not need to be signed at this time. Does this form need to be submitted, with our proposal, nonetheless?

Answer: It does not. This is a copy of our standard contract.

Question:

1. Is the execution of Attachment B (Business Associate Agreement) required for all work orders or only those involving PHI?
2. Does DSS anticipate that some roles or service categories under this RFP will not require access to PHI or other sensitive data?

Answer: The execution of the Business Associate Agreement will be within the Master Contract. Work orders awarded will follow the Master Contract terms. There may not be PHI in every work order.

Question:

1. Will this contract continue to operate under a multi-vendor award structure similar to RFP8461 and RFP13379?

Answer: Yes.

Question:

1. We understand that RFP19317 replaces RFP8461 and RFP13379. Could the Department please provide the number of vendors currently supporting services under RFP8461 and RFP13379? Additionally, we kindly request access to the awarded proposal responses and corresponding cost proposals from these prior contracts, if available.
2. Is this solicitation a re-compete of an existing contract or a new requirement? If this is a re-compete, could you please share the name of the current incumbent vendor(s)?
3. Can the State identify the current incumbent vendor(s) providing Temporary Professional Staff Services under the existing contract?
4. Can you please share the no. of positions served in previous 2 years under this contract?
5. Is this solicitation establishing a new contract vehicle, or is it replacing/renewing an existing contract? If replacing an existing contract, could the State identify the current or most recent vendor(s)?
6. Is this solicitation establishing a new contract vehicle, or is it replacing/renewing an existing contract? If replacing an existing contract, could the State identify the current or most recent vendor(s)?
7. RFP19317 replaces RFP8461 and RFP13379. Please provide the list of incumbent contractors and vendors associated with those RFPs.
8. Can the Department share historical spend data and the most frequently requested positions under the previous RFP contracts?
9. Could State of South Dakota please confirm the anticipated number of work orders per year?
10. Is there an estimated number of work orders anticipated annually under this contract?
11. Which service categories does DSS expect to have the highest demand?
12. Over the past three years, approximately how many staff augmentation or work order requests were issued by service category?
13. Does the State anticipate issuing a similar number of work orders under this contract as in prior years? If possible, could the State provide an estimated volume by service area?

14. What is the typical or minimum duration of work orders anticipated under this contract?
15. Can DSS provide an estimated annual volume of Work Orders or anticipated funding allocation under this umbrella contract?
16. Are there specific DSS divisions or programs expected to generate the majority of Work Orders? If yes, please provide information on those divisions or programs

Answer: There are no set work orders at this time. All previous RFP and contract information can be found at <https://open.sd.gov/rfp.aspx>.

Question:

1. What is the estimated annual or project budget?
2. Could you please provide the estimated annual budget for this contract?
3. Are historical Work Order volumes or approximate annual spend available for reference?
4. Can you please allocate an estimated budget for this contract?
5. What is the annual monetary spent value of the current contract since inception?
6. What is the current or historical total contract value and annual spend under the incumbent contracts?
7. Is there an overall not-to-exceed budget ceiling for the contract term (June 1, 2026 – May 31, 2029)?
8. Will Work Orders include a defined not-to-exceed ceiling amount or funding cap?
9. Can you share the budget earmarked, or last fiscal year's external vendor spend, for the various Areas of Work in this RFP?

Answer: There is not a specific budget for this RFP. See <https://open.sd.gov/rfp.aspx> for last RFP expenditures.

Question:

1. We understand that the intent is to award the contract to multiple vendors. Could the Department please indicate the anticipated number of awards?
2. How many vendors are currently on the Pre-Qualified Vendor List (PVL), if applicable?
3. Will this contract be awarded to a single vendor or multiple vendors?
4. How many firms is the State of South Dakota looking to award?
5. Approximately how many vendors does DSS anticipate awarding under this solicitation? Will all responsive and qualified vendors be placed in the pool, or does DSS anticipate limiting awards?
6. Does DSS intend to award contracts to multiple vendors per service category, or will a single vendor be selected per category?
7. Is there an anticipated maximum number of qualified vendors DSS plans to award under this RFP?
8. Is there an anticipated maximum number of vendors the State intends to award contracts to?
9. How many resources are currently engaged in the current contract?
10. How many vendors is agency planning to select?
11. How many vendors does the State anticipate qualifying under this RFP?
12. Is this solicitation intended to result in a multiple-award contract?
13. Is this solicitation intended to function as an IDIQ-style umbrella contract with multiple awardees, or will DSS make a single award per functional area?
14. Will DSS award contracts by category (e.g., Information Systems, Data Governance, PM Support) or establish a vendor pool across all selected areas?
15. How many vendors does DSS anticipate awarding per service category?
16. Will multiple vendors be awarded per category, and is there a limit to the number of qualified vendors per topic area?
17. Will DSS establish a pre-qualified vendor pool per category under a master agreement, or issue separate contracts per awarded vendor?

Answer: All qualified vendors would be awarded. Between RFPs 8461 and 13379 there were about 75 contracts.

Question:

1. Incumbent Information: Is there an incumbent vendor currently providing these services? If so, could you please share the incumbent vendor name(s) and the scope of services currently being performed?
2. Could you please clarify who the incumbents are on the existing contracts and provide the pricing information?
3. Incumbent Information: Is there an incumbent vendor currently providing these services? If so, could you please share the incumbent vendor name(s) and a brief description of the services currently being performed?
4. Can DSS provide a list of vendors currently contracted under RFP8461 and RFP13379?
5. Is there an incumbent currently performing this work? If so, please provide the name of the contractor and the contract number.
6. Can the State please provide historical workload data for all positions?

Answer: See <https://open.sd.gov/rfp.aspx> for current vendor contracts.

Question:

1. What was previous spending, and what is the anticipated budget for this effort?
2. What is the estimated budget for the contract?
3. What has been the approximate annual spending under the current or previous contract?
4. Could the State provide total expenditures over the past three years for similar professional services covered under this RFP?
5. Is there an anticipated or estimated budget allocation for this umbrella contract?
6. If applicable, could the State provide incumbent vendor utilization or spending levels over the past three years?
7. Could you please confirm whether a budget has been allocated for this requirement?

Answer: See <https://open.sd.gov/rfp.aspx> for previous spending. There is not a set budget for this RFP as work orders are on an as needed basis.

Question:

1. What is the anticipated start date or onboarding timeframe?

Answer: Projected umbrella contract start date is 06/01/2026. Work orders are created on an as needed basis.

Question:

1. Will the Statement of Work remain unchanged from the prior contracts, or have there been substantive updates or revisions?

Answer: There are no major changes to the statement of work.

Question:

1. Is there a maximum cumulative contract value for the umbrella agreement, or is it fully dependent on issued Work Orders?

Answer: Contract value is fully dependent on awarded work orders.

Question:

1. Are extensions or renewal options beyond May 31, 2029 anticipated?
2. Are rate escalation clauses permitted if the contract term is extended?
3. If the contract is extended beyond the initial term, would DSS consider rate adjustments for extension periods, or would the original awarded rates remain in effect?

Answer: No. A new RFP will be published to replace.

Question:

1. Can DSS confirm whether this contract functions as a pre-qualified vendor pool under which competitive work orders will be issued?

Answer: Correct.

Question:

1. Are bidders allowed to provide exceptions to the contract terms and conditions? If so, in what section should they be provided?

2. Does DSS permit offerors to submit proposed contract exceptions or redlines with their proposal, or must offerors accept the RFP and attachments as written at the proposal stage?

3. May offerors submit exceptions to contracts terms in their proposal? If so, where should those exceptions be placed?

4. Will DSS please confirm the Offeror and DSS will have the opportunity to negotiate and mutually agree upon final agreement terms after award before either party is bound to the final signed agreement resulting from this procurement?

5. Will DSS please confirm DDS and the Offeror will have the opportunity upon award to negotiate intellectual property (IP) terms that are applicable to and appropriate for the Offeror's proposed solution (for example, COTS, SaaS, pre-existing, independently developed, and/or third party IP), primarily to ensure Offeror and third party IP is not inadvertently transferred?

Answer: Bidders can submit exceptions or 'redline' the contract terms and conditions. This will be reviewed by BIT and our Legal Division post award and prior to signing the contract. This can be provided in a separate document from the proposal.

Question:

1. In the event of a conflict between the umbrella contract and the terms of an individual Work Order, which document will govern?

Answer: The umbrella contract.

Question:

1. May Work Orders include terms that supplement or further define the umbrella contract (e.g., duration, deliverables, acceptance criteria, or performance measures), provided they do not materially conflict with the master contract?

Answer: Yes.

Information Technology Security Policy (ITSP)

Question:

1. Should Attachment D – Information Technology Security Policy be signed and submitted alongside our Proposal? Unlike the other attachments included in the RFP, the signature block in Attachment D does not indicate “NO SIGNATURE REQUIRED AT THIS TIME”.
2. Do we need to provide a completed and signed Attachment D Acknowledgement with the response? Please confirm.
3. Do we need to provide the completed and signed BIT Attachment 2 with the response? Please confirm.
4. Along with Technical Proposal and Cost proposal, do we need to submit the BIT Attachment Document 2?
5. Could the State of South Dakota kindly confirm whether BIT Attachment 2 is required post-award? If it is required pre-award, could you please confirm whom we should list under ‘BIT Contact’ and where this document should be included within the outline proposal?
6. Is the BIT Security Acknowledgement Form (Attachment 2) required to be executed at the time of proposal submission, or will it be required only upon contract award and prior to commencement of work?

Answer: No. It will need to be signed with the contract if awarded.

Q: Does DSS maintain enterprise architecture, application standards, or reference architectures that vendors must align with? If so, please share.

A: Please reference Attachment D – Information Technology Security Policy.

Bureau of Information and Telecommunications (BIT) Clauses

Question:

1. For security incident notification, can DSS confirm the designated contact and whether the 12-hour notification window includes weekends and holidays?

2. Attachment B (Business Associate Agreement) and Attachment C (Bureau of Information and Telecommunications Required IT Contract Terms) contain conflicting requirements concerning the timeframe to report the attempted or successful unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, or destruction of information or interference with system operations in an information system. Will the State please clarify its reporting requirements?

Answer: A designated contact will be provided at the time of the contract. The clause indicates when a vendor becomes aware of a security incident it does not take into consideration when the incident occurred.

Question:

1. Are background checks, drug tests, or security clearances required for candidates?

2. Background Check Costs: Section 10.1.4.1 and Section XIX of Attachment C state that the State requires fingerprint-based background investigations performed by the State with law enforcement support. Is the offeror responsible for the direct costs of these background checks, or does the State cover the processing fees for the selected personnel?

3. Are background checks required for all personnel, or only those accessing sensitive systems or data?

4. Are there minimum background screening requirements DSS expects vendors to meet (e.g., criminal, federal exclusion lists, HIPAA compliance)?

5. Will fingerprint-based background checks be required for all Contractor personnel proposed under this contract, or only for those with access to DSS systems, PHI, or other sensitive data?

Answer: The State requires any person who writes or modifies State-owned software, alters hardware, configures software of State-owned technology resources, has access to source code or protected Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or other confidential information, or has access to secure areas to undergo fingerprint-based background investigations. These fingerprints will be used to check the criminal history records of both the State of South Dakota and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. These background investigations must be performed by the State with support from the State's law enforcement resources. The State will supply the fingerprint cards and prescribe the procedure to be used to process the fingerprint cards. Project plans should allow 2-4 weeks to complete this process.

Work Orders

Question:

1. When fixed-bid work orders are requested, will DSS provide a standard SOW template and acceptance criteria?

Answer: All Work Orders will include a statement of work and acceptance criteria.

Question:

1. Is there a fixed response window for candidate submission (e.g., 48 hours)?
2. How soon after selection is onboarding expected?
3. Will interviews be conducted virtually or onsite?
4. What is the expected decision timeline?
5. Will skills tests or case evaluations be part of the selection process?
6. Is there a typical response window for Work Orders beyond the stated fourteen (14) business days?
7. Will vendors be required to maintain a bench of pre-identified personnel available immediately upon Work Order award?
8. What is the expected average duration of a Work Order (short-term surge vs. long-term placement)?

Answer: There is no guarantee of work. Work Orders to acquire professional services will be created on an as needed basis.

- Offerors selected as qualifying vendors in each of the topic areas below will be contacted when specific work orders are identified.
- This includes submitting information about the qualifications of the personnel proposed by the offeror to perform the requirements of the work order for evaluation by DSS.
- Qualifying vendors are expected to respond to work order requests within fourteen (14) business days. Specific work orders will dictate time for qualified vendors(s) to submit responses to the work order.

Work orders may or may not require staff of the qualified vendor(s) selected to be on-site. This will be noted in each Work Order sent.

Interviews may be conducted virtually or on-site dependent on the Division.

Question:

1. What is the typical candidate evaluation process (e.g., interview steps) and expected turnaround time after candidate submission?
2. How will Work Orders be competed among awarded vendors (e.g., best value, lowest rate, technical fit)?
3. Work Order Distribution: Section 2.5 states that the total contract amount will be determined based on approved Work Orders and there is “no guarantee of work.” If multiple vendors are awarded for the same topic area, how will the Department determine which vendor receives a specific Work Order?
4. Can the State clarify the typical evaluation criteria used at the work order level (e.g., resume quality, availability, rate, past performance)?
5. Will interviews be required for all proposed candidates under a work order?
6. How has incumbent performance been evaluated with respect to deliverables, service levels, and timelines?
7. At the Work Order level, will vendors be required to submit specific resumes for proposed personnel?

Answer: Each submission would be evaluated for the work order with top candidates selected. These candidates may have an interview and will have references checked. Turnaround time would typically be 30 days.

Question:

1. What positions were requested frequently in the past? What positions do you anticipate requesting frequently under this effort?

Answer: Project Manager is a likely position for work orders. All previous RFP, contract, and work order information can be found at <https://open.sd.gov/rfp.aspx>.

Question:

1. Will vendors be ranked within each service area for future Work Orders?
2. If multiple vendors are used, how are job orders distributed among them?
3. Are multiple awards anticipated, and if so, how will task orders be distributed?

Answer: All qualified vendors will be sent work orders. They will not be ranked when sent out.

Question:

1. Are there anticipated minimum or maximum assignment durations for typical work orders?

Answer: No.

Question:

1. What is the typical lead time expected for candidate onboarding after work order award?

Answer: This will be dependent upon each work order.

Question:

1. Are Work Orders competed among all awarded vendors in a category, or can DSS issue direct awards to a selected qualified vendor?
2. Will Work Orders be competitively issued among all qualified vendors within a category, or may DSS directly assign Work Orders at its discretion?

Answer: Work orders are almost always competitively issued among all awarded vendors in that category.

Question:

1. Will evaluation criteria for individual Work Orders differ from the criteria used to establish the initial qualified vendor pool?

Answer: The evaluation criteria for individual work orders will be specific to the statement of work.

Question:

1. For staff augmentation-style Work Orders, will DSS define role descriptions and vendors provide resumes, or will vendors propose named personnel?

Answer: DSS will define role descriptions in each specific work order. Qualified vendors will provide a response to the work order with named personnel and their resumes.

Question:

1. Will DSS utilize a standard Work Order template for engagements under this contract, or will Work Orders be developed independently by individual DSS divisions?

Answer: A standard work order template will be used.

Question:

1. Based on past vendor engagements, how would you describe the attributes of an ideal vendor partner with which to collaborate, aside from core capabilities required to adequately execute the work?

Answer: An ideal vendor would submit a strong proposal satisfying 6.1.1 – 6.1.8, experience and reliability, and qualifications that exceed requirements.

Question:

1. Please confirm DSS will provide role skills and experience requirements when task orders are issued.

Answer: Confirmed.

Billing

Question:

1. Is there a standard invoice or State voucher template vendors must use for billing under work orders?

Answer: No.

Question:

1. Payment Structure: Will work orders be primarily time-and-materials based (hourly resource billing), or will there be fixed-price / milestone-based deliverables requiring outcome accountability?

2. Will Work Orders primarily be Staff augmentation (hourly resource-based), Statement of Work (SOW)-based deliverables or both?

3. Is this contract intended primarily as a staff augmentation contract (hourly resource placement), a deliverables-based consulting contract, or a hybrid model depending on Work Orders?

Answer: Most work orders resulting from this RFP will be based on an hourly cost, but qualified vendors may be asked for fixed bid proposals in limited circumstances.

Question:

1. Under what circumstances will DSS request fixed-bid proposals, and will detailed requirements and acceptance criteria be provided in advance?

Answer: There may be limited circumstances when DSS will request fixed-bid proposals. This will be dependent upon the specific work order. Detailed requirements and acceptance criteria will be provided in the work order.

Question:

1. What is the expected payment cycle (e.g., Net 30) upon submission and approval of invoices?

Answer: 7. Contract Amount and Payment: State will make payment for services upon satisfactory completion of the services. The TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNT will be determined based on approved Work Orders. The State will not pay Consultant's expenses, including but not limited to travel, lodging and meals, as a separate item. Payment will be made pursuant to itemized invoices submitted with a signed state voucher. Payment will be made consistent with SDCL Ch. 5-26. Any overpayment of this Agreement shall be returned to the State within thirty (30) days after written notification to Consultant.

8. Billing: Consultant agrees to submit a bill for services within (30) days following the month in which services were provided. Consultant will prepare and submit a monthly bill for services. Consultant agrees to submit a final bill within 30 days of the Agreement end date to receive payment for completed services. If a final bill cannot be submitted in 30 days, then a written request for extension of time and explanation must be provided to the State.

Insurance

Question:

1. The Cyber Liability Insurance section lists the coverage amount as "\$_____." Please confirm the required minimum coverage limit.
2. Cyber Liability Limits: Section II of Attachment C mentions that the Vendor will maintain cyber liability insurance with limits in an amount to be specified. Could the State provide the minimum required limit for this insurance category so it can be accurately reflected in our certificate of insurance or cost modeling?

Answer: Minimum required coverage limit is \$3,000,000.00.

Question:

1. Could you please confirm if we need to provide a sample or an actual certificate of Insurance? If so, Could you share the name and address that need to be addressed in the Certificate Holder section?

Answer: Please provide an actual certificate of insurance preferably in the form of an Acord. In Description of Operations: The State of South Dakota, its officers and employees are additional insured for General Liability when required by written contract.

Certificate Holder:
The State of South Dakota
Department of Social Services
700 Governors Dr
Pierre, SD 57501

Question:

1. Will DSS please revise the RFP to add a reasonable limitation of liability (LOL) that includes a cap on direct damages (except for certain reasonable carveouts), primarily to encourage bids and competitive pricing and provide a reasonable apportionment of risk for procurements of this size and complexity?
2. Will DSS please revise the RFP to add a disclaimer of indirect and consequential damages, primarily to encourage bids and competitive pricing and provide a reasonable apportionment of risk for procurements of this size and complexity.

Answer: See 2.7 insurance coverage.

Subcontractors

Question:

1. Are subcontractors permitted, and if so, are disclosures, flow-down requirements, and subcontractor COIs required at proposal submission?
2. Can a firm subcontract with various primes?
3. Can a firm bid both as a prime contractor and as a subcontractor?
4. Are firms allowed to onboard subcontractors?
5. In the event firms are allowed to use subcontractors, could the State please clarify if references for services they have performed can be used to meet the references requirements?
6. Can firms add subcontractors at a Work Order level?
7. Will DSS allow subcontractors or partner firms to support Work Orders, subject to approval?
8. SME Support for 3.10 Communication Services: Section 3.10 covers a wide range of services from videography to media relations. If a vendor provides these services through a specialized sub-unit or partner, will the State require these specific individuals to undergo the same fingerprint-based background checks as IT personnel, even if they do not have access to the State's core information systems?
9. Is it mandatory to deliver the services through in house technical consultants?
10. Can we provide services through our temporary consultants?

Answer: Consultant may not use subcontractors to perform the services described herein without the express prior written consent of the State. Consultant will include provisions in its subcontracts requiring its subcontractors to comply with the applicable provisions of this Agreement, to indemnify the State, and to provide insurance coverage in a manner consistent with this Agreement. Consultant will cause its subcontractors, agents, and employees to comply with applicable federal, tribal, state, and local laws, regulations, ordinances, guidelines, permits and other standards and will adopt such review and inspection procedures as are necessary to assure such compliance. The State, at its option, may require the vetting of any subcontractors. Consultant shall assist in the vetting process.

Financials

Question:

1. If an Offeror does not have audited financial statements, will this negatively affect the evaluation?
2. Is it mandatory to submit audited financial statements?
3. Is it mandatory to submit most recent audited financial statements with the response?

Answer: This is not a requirement currently.

Question:

1. May an Offeror submit unaudited financial statements in lieu of audited statements?
2. Can we submit unaudited financial statements?
3. Will the State please allow non-audited financials to be submitted for the proposal process?
4. Can we submit our unaudited financial statements with response and we can submit the audited FS at the latter stage?

Answer: If requested this may be an option.

Question:

1. The RFP states that the Offeror may be required to submit its most recent independently audited financial statements. Please confirm whether audited financial statements are required at the time of proposal submission or only upon request during evaluation or prior to award.
2. Can we submit our internally audited financial statement along with the D&B Report and/or good standing with the financial institution to satisfy the audited financial statements requirement?
3. Will audited financial statements be required at submission or only upon request? Will they be protected from public disclosure under SDCL provisions?
4. Given the length of our audited financial statements, can Bidders provide these documents by link only?

Answer: Financial statements are only required upon request.

Question:

1. For work orders funded in whole or in part by federal programs (e.g., Medicaid, grant-funded initiatives), can the State clarify whether contractors will be responsible for direct federal reporting, certification submissions, or audit responses, or whether such responsibilities remain with DSS?
2. In the event of federal review or audit (e.g., CMS or other oversight entities), what level of contractor participation is anticipated?
3. For work orders supported by federal funds, will additional federal flow-down clauses or compliance certifications be incorporated at the work order level? If so, can the State provide general guidance regarding the nature of such requirements?
4. Section 3.1.14 requires "Knowledge of Federal Requirements for DSS." Can DSS clarify which federal agencies and programs are most critical (e.g., CMS, ACF, FNS, USDA) and whether specific certification experience (e.g., Medicaid MMIS certification, PERM audits) is preferred?

Answer: This will be dependent upon the specific work orders.

Question:

1. Section 4.4 states that the offeror may be required to submit a copy of its most recent independently audited financial statements. As a privately held organization we cannot release our financials on a public platform. Could the state please provide an exception to this or provide us with a dedicated email wherein we can send our financials directly to the state?

Answer: In the event that financials are required they will be requested to be sent to a dedicated email and will be considered proprietary information.

Miscellaneous

Question:

1. Are there any challenges or pain points experienced with the current vendors?
2. Are there any pain points or issues with the current vendor(s)?

Answer: No.

Question:

1. Would the DSS provide all the required equipment to perform the tasks mentioned in this solicitation?
2. Will the State provide system access, equipment, and development environments, or is the vendor expected to provide hardware?

Answer: Contractor will not use State equipment or supplies.

Question:

1. Are there any required vendor certifications (e.g., MBE/WBE, GSA schedule, state registrations)?
2. Do we need a license to do business in South Dakota at the time of submission or is it required post award? If so, which licenses?
3. If licenses are required, can we submit evidence that they are currently in process?
4. Do we need a certificate of good standing pre-award or post-award?

Answer: 44. Authority to Execute: Consultant has obtained all licenses, certifications, permits, and authorizations necessary to perform the services under this Agreement and currently is in good standing with all regulatory agencies that regulate any or all aspects of Consultant's performance of the services. Consultant will maintain all required certifications, licenses, permits, and authorizations during the term of this Agreement at its own expense.

Question:

1. Are E-Verify, I-9, or EEO compliance mandatory?
2. Are there any referenced local or federal labor law clauses?
3. Are there any local preference or state/city registration requirements?
4. Are there any set-aside requirements (e.g., minority-owned, veteran-owned)?

Answer: 24. Assurance Requirements: (For Federally funded contracts only). The Consultant agrees to abide by all applicable provisions of the following: Byrd Anti Lobbying Amendment (31 USC 1352), Executive orders 12549 and 12689 (Debarment and Suspension), Drug-Free Workplace, Executive Order 11246 Equal Employment Opportunity, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972, Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970, Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Pro-Children Act of 1994, Hatch Act, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 as amended, Clean Air Act, Federal Water Pollution Control Act, Charitable Choice Provisions and Regulations, Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Religions at Title 28 Code of Federal Regulations Part 38, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, as applicable; and any other nondiscrimination provision in the specific statute(s) under which application for Federal assistance is being made; and the requirements of any other nondiscrimination statute(s) which may apply to the award.

Question:

1. Is there a designated Contract Manager or PMO structure for managing vendor engagements?

Answer: Yes, Kirsten Blachford @ Kirsten.Blachford@state.sd.us

Question:

1. New Service Categories: If an offeror is awarded a contract for specific sub-categories within a Topic Area (e.g., 3.1.1 through 3.1.5), is there a process to add additional sub-categories (e.g., 3.1.6) later in the contract term if the offeror's capabilities expand?

Answer: An Amendment to the original umbrella contract could be amended to add expanded areas and sub-areas.

Question:

1. Security Training Timeline: Section XXIV requires all staff to complete annual cyber-security training at the time of hire. Will the State provide the specific training modules/curriculum, or is the contractor expected to provide a training program that meets the State's standards?

Answer: The State will provide the specific training.

Question:

1. For rate ranges (minimum–maximum), how will DSS evaluate competitiveness?
2. If vendors submit multiple tiered rates or a rate range for a subcategory, how will the State evaluate pricing for award determination at the master contract level and at the individual work order level?

Answer: Competitiveness will be based on specific work order submissions. Rates will be reviewed with a variety of other factors.

Question:

1. Can the State please provide all updates in red or a highlighted font within the amended solicitation to clearly demonstrate the exact changes made?

Answer: This solicitation was not amended. There are no updates in red or highlighted font.

Question:

1. Can the State please ensure that all questions provided to the government are responded to? We understand that some may appear to be duplicates between vendors, however this ensures all questions are accounted for.

Answer: All questions are accounted for in this document. Duplicate questions are encompassed in the same Q and A block.

Question:

1. Are there any mandatory minimum qualifications, certifications, years of experience, or education requirements that must be met by proposed staff within each service category or sub-category? If so, can the State please provide the specific qualification criteria applicable to each category?

Answer: There are no specific qualification criteria.

Question:

1. Can the State provide a high-level overview of its primary technology stack (e.g., cloud provider, application platforms, reporting tools)?
2. Does the State utilize Agile, Waterfall, or hybrid project management methodologies?
3. What primary technology platforms, systems, or cloud environments are currently utilized by DSS?
4. Has DSS formally adopted a data governance framework or specific data governance tools?
5. Is Medallion Architecture currently implemented, or is this a future-state objective? What data platforms are in use?

6. What enterprise reporting and BI tools are currently standardized across DSS (e.g., Power BI, SSRS, Tableau)?

7. Section 3.3 emphasizes "Medallion Architecture" for data warehousing. Is DSS currently using or planning to implement Medallion Architecture on a specific platform (e.g., Databricks, Azure, AWS)?

8. Please share DSS's data warehousing environment, including the Medallion Architecture.

9. What is DSS's current enterprise reporting environment, including tools, tenant requirements, and development standards (SQL, Power Query, DAX)?

10. What governance or catalog tools must a vendors use, and how integrated should governance be with warehousing and analytics?

11. What marketing, digital communications, website, social media, and monitoring platforms are in use today (e.g., CMS, hosting, analytics)?

12. Does DSS anticipate needing reactive/crisis communications support (e.g., incidents, policy changes)?

Answer: This can be discussed with vendors when they are awarded a work order.

Question:

1. Is DSS seeking vendors with prior Medicaid or public health system experience?

Answer: Please refer to section 3.0 Scope of Work.

Question:

1. Will the State provide debriefings to unsuccessful vendors?

Answer: No.

Question:

1. Is registration with the South Dakota Secretary of State required at the time of proposal submission?

2. Can out-of-state vendors complete registration upon notice of intent to award?

3. Is registration with the city required prior to award?

Answer: Yes, registration with the South Dakota Secretary of State is required for most for-profit and non-profit business entities (LLCs, corporations, partnerships) operating in the state. Out-of-state businesses must register as a foreign entity before conducting business to avoid penalties.

Question:

1. Additionally, does the indemnification provision extend to federal funding disallowances or findings not directly attributable to contractor error?

2. Will DSS please revise the RFP to confirm the Consultant's indemnity obligations only apply to such claims to the extent Consultant is at fault, primarily to ensure Consultant is not penalized for performing its obligations to the State under the Agreement or at the State's direction?

3. Will DSS please revise the RFP to limit termination for breach to a material breach of a material obligation, primarily to ensure the severity of the remedy is limited to appropriate situations?

Answer: 11. Indemnification: Consultant agrees to indemnify the State of South Dakota, its officers, agents, and employees, from and against all claims or proceedings for actions, suits, damages, liabilities, other losses or equitable relief that may arise at least in part as a result of an act or omission in performing services under this Agreement. Consultant shall defend the State of South Dakota, its officers, agents, and employees against any claim, including any claim, action, suit, or other proceeding related to the claim. Consultant's obligation to indemnify includes the payment of attorney fees and other costs of defense. In defending the State of South Dakota, its officers, agents, and employees, Consultant

shall engage other professionals, subject to the written approval of the State which shall not be unreasonably withheld. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the State may, in its sole discretion and at the expense of Consultant, engage attorneys and other professionals to defend the State of South Dakota, its officers, agents, and employees, or to assist Consultant in the defense. This section does not require Consultant to be responsible for or defend against claims or proceedings for damages, liabilities, losses or equitable relief arising solely from errors or omissions of the State, its officers, agents or employees.

Question:

1. If federal funding reductions result in termination of a work order, will payment be made for services satisfactorily performed through the effective termination date?
2. Will DSS please revise the RFP to confirm that, in the event of a termination under this provision, Consultant also will be entitled to partial payment for work in progress as of the date of termination and costs incurred as a result of the early termination (in addition to the listed payment for services/deliverables completed and costs incurred up to the date of termination), primarily to ensure Consultant is made whole?
3. Will DSS please revise the RFP to add a minimum 30-day cure period before terminating for breach, primarily to allow a reasonable opportunity to address the issue before terminating?
4. Will DSS please revise the RFP to confirm termination under this provision will be treated as a termination for convenience and Consultant will be entitled to the same payments and reimbursements as described in Section 12 (Termination)?
5. Will DSS please revise the RFP to increase the minimum notice period from 5 to 30 days, primarily to allow sufficient time for wind down and transition of the services?

Answer: 15. Funding: This Agreement depends upon the continued availability of appropriated funds and expenditure authority from the Legislature for this purpose. If for any reason the Legislature fails to appropriate funds or grant expenditure authority, or funds become unavailable by operation of law or federal funds reductions, this Agreement will be terminated by the State upon five (5) business days written notice. Consultant agrees that termination for any of these reasons is not a default by the State nor does it give rise to a claim against the State or any officer, agent or employee of the State, and Consultant waives any claim against the same.

Question:

1. Is there any notarization required?
2. Online notary workable, if required?

Answer: Historically there has not been a need, but each work order is unique to the Division that publishes.

Question:

1. Do we need statements within the proposal response agreeing to the certifications listed in section 1.6-1.10 and Standard Terms & Conditions listed in section 2 OR is the submission of a proposal response assumed as agreement to all certifications, terms, and conditions

Answer: The submission of a proposal with page 1 signed is agreement to.