

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

SOLICITATION NUMBER: #518 – SNAP EBT Planning Consultant RFP

DATE: June 20, 2016

POINT OF CONTACT: Mark Close

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The following are questions submitted by Respondents regarding the EBT Planning Consultant RFP #518 issued by the South Dakota Department of Social Services in conjunction and on behalf of the North Dakota Department of Human Services. As required in Paragraph 1.10 of the RFP, the States have reviewed the questions and offer the following response. Terms used in this response have the meaning of the same terms when used in the RFP.

#	Sec	Pg.	Question	Response
1	General		Will the States please clarify if a contract resulting from this RFP will be executed separately with SD and ND?	There will be separate contracts and each State's contract template was provided in Addendum C and Addendum D. Refer to Question and Response #10, 37 and 42.
2	General		Will the State please identify when they expect the RFP for the EBT processor to be released?	It is tentatively scheduled for May 2017. Refer to Question and Response #24.
3	General		Will the State please verify that USDA FNS will need to review and approve the RFP prior to its release and that this review/approval could take up to 60 days?	That is correct.
4	General		What is the anticipated start date for the follow-on SNAP contracts?	It is tentatively scheduled for November 2017.
5	General		Who is the incumbent processor?	Fidelity National Information Services
6	1.1		In connection with RFP Section 1.1, we understand that the successful EBT planning or consulting firm and its principal officers are prohibited from competing for the re-procurement of "EBT services". Does the State consider it a conflict of interest if the successful (selected) EBT planning or consulting firm is already engaged as the systems integration vendor for one of the systems that will be required to interface with the selected "EBT Services"?	The States do not consider it a conflict of interest in the instance specified in the question.
7	1.5	4	For shipping purposes only, would you please provide telephone numbers for Mr. Close and Ms. Kramer?	Mark Close – 605-773-3165 Deb Kramer – 701-328-3272
8	1.12	5	This indicates that confidential information must be identified and justified within the executive summary. Does the listing of confidential information count in the two page limit for the executive summary?	No. The listing may be separate from the executive summary.
9	1.14		In connection with Section 1.14, the RFP indicates that "venue" will be in South Dakota and that the "laws of South Dakota shall govern." Section 2.0 indicates the State's terms in the Addendums will apply. Addendum D, indicates that for North Dakota, venue for any actions is exclusively in North Dakota and	The governing law and venue for the procurement will be South Dakota. The Addendums refer to the venue during the term of each State's contract period.

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			that its laws apply. Can the State clarify the intent and application of Section 1.14?	
10	2.0 and 6.7(7)		In connection with Section 2.0, the RFP indicates the States' standard terms in the Addendums will be included in the contract, and RFP Section 6.7(7) indicates by signing the proposal, the Offeror accepts all terms, conditions and requirements of the RFP. Will the State reconsider and allow Offerors to take exception and condition their proposals based upon reaching mutual written agreement on the final contract?	The States' specify in 6.10.1 that each agency will work with the highest ranked Offeror to negotiate a contract. Offerors are able to express in their Response to the RFP their exceptions and condition their proposals based upon reaching a mutual written agreement in the final contract. Refer to Question and Response #1, 37 and 42.
11	3.0	6	Do the States envision status reports as part of the scope of work? If yes, what frequency and in what format?	The frequency of the status reports will be mutually agreed upon between the States and the Offeror.
12	3.0	6	Do the States envision status meetings as part of the scope of work? If yes, how frequently, e.g., bi-monthly, quarterly, etc. and are conference calls acceptable?	The frequency may be proposed by the "respondent" and conference calls are acceptable.
13	3.0	6	Will the States please clarify that they are seeking an updated RFP to the existing RFP not a newly created RFP?	The States are in the process of developing the initial draft of the EBT Services RFP. The respondent would be responsible for the review of the draft and responsible to provide recommended changes or additions to the draft.
14	3.0	6	Do the States envision two distinct Statements of work (SOW) within the RFP, one each for SD and ND?	The States had not envisioned two separate Statements of Work.
15	3.0		The RFP states, "the following deliverables are required to be submitted in Offeror's proposal in response to this RFP. The Offeror will obtain any additional individual State information via email." Does [sic] the States expect the Offeror to submit the RFP, the Evaluation Plan, IAPD, and Acceptance Test Plan with the proposal and have discussions with the States prior to the submission date in order to develop these deliverables?	No. The States refer the Offeror to Section 5.2.3, Detailed Response.
16	3.1	6	Section 3.1, Page 6. This requirement states that the offeror would, "Review and provide recommended changes and updated drafts of the SNAP EBT Services RFP". Can you confirm that the initial draft of the SNAP EBT Services RFP will be completed outside of this engagement and that the offeror would be responsible only for providing recommended changes and providing updates to the initial RFP draft?	The States confirm that the initial draft of the SNAP EBT Services RFP will be completed outside of this engagement.
17	3.2	7	Will the consultant serve as a part of the evaluation team? If not, will the Consultant be required to review & comment on submitted proposals, or otherwise assist the evaluation team (other than providing the plan & training)?	The Offeror will not serve as a part of the evaluation team and will not review and comment on submitted proposals. Please refer to Section 3.2.
18	3.3	7	FNS handbook allows submission of an RFP simultaneously with, or after approval of, the IAPD. The sequence in the RFP reflects submission of the RFP prior to submission of the IAPD. Is that the intent?	The States cannot locate this reference, but refer the Offeror to Section 3.3 which states, "Each IAPD must meet all needs of the specific State program in order to be approved by FNS prior to release of the procurement RFP." The FNS Handbook 901, Section 3.2.6, states "State agency prepares and submits IAPD at

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				least 60 days before project initiation
19	3.4	8	Throughout the design and development phases, do you anticipate both States being on the same schedule or will they differ?	The States envision being on the same schedule.
20	3.4	8	Do the States envision a single conversion weekend for both States or separate conversion dates?	The States envision separate conversion weekend dates to not disrupt our current monthly issuance dates.
21	3.4	8	Section 3.4 of the RFP on page 8 states that the offeror will "review and development of test scripts necessary to fulfill federal testing requirements". Would the offeror be responsible for the development of all test scripts or do some already exist or will they be created by another party? How many test scripts would need to be created across the testing types?	The States have prior test scripts available that would need to be reviewed and modified as necessary. In addition the Offeror would be authoring new scripts as necessary to ensure the system functions as designed. The States are unable to estimate a volume of test scripts and look to the Offeror for recommendations.
22	3.4	8	Section 3.4 of the RFP on page 8 could be interpreted to state that the offeror will participate in, "Test administration, to include regression testing, fail safe testing, [and] acceptance testing". Later in the section the RFP provides a list of activities that the offeror will take primary responsibility for during system acceptance testing, including "review of specifications and plans" and "evaluation of overall testing" but they do not include hands-on testing or the authoring of test scripts. Can you confirm if the offeror's responsibilities will include the authoring and execution of test scripts?	The States envision that the Offeror would participate in all phases of testing to include hands-on testing.
23	3.4	8	The test plan is normally a processor deliverable, as are the scripts. Will the consultant review the processor-provided materials, or is the intent to have the consultant develop separate materials as part of this scope of work?	The Offeror would review the processor-provided materials and recommend/request additional test scripts as necessary.
24	3.4	8	Will the States share any preferred "high level" implementation schedule they would like to see for the conversion?	The high level Tentative Timeline is as follows: Initial RFP draft to FNS – January 2017 Release RFP - May 2017 Selection of EBT Vendor – August 2017 FNS contract approval – November 2017 Conversions – March or April 2019
25	3.4		Will the vendor be executing regression testing and fail safe testing on the EBT processor's system or just providing oversight of the execution by the EBT processor and reviewing results?	The vendor will be providing oversight and reviewing results.
26	4.3		In connection with RFP Section 4.3 and the request to have a bank provide a letter stating the vendor appears to have sufficient financial resources to assume the responsibilities under the contract and remain financially viable for the term of the contract, can the State indicate that is a "should" requirement? Our concern is that while we can very clearly demonstrate we meet the financial requirement, a bank may elect to provide different or more standard wording and we believe the RFP should be clear the State has full discretion to make the financial viability determination based on the information provided and not inadvertently restrict its discretion.	In Section 4.3, the States have listed as other viable options "...audited financial statements by an independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA), SEC Form 10-K's, and..." We then indicate that "In lieu of audited financial statements, the States will consider a copy of the Offeror's internal financial statements along with a letter from a financial institution...." The States are in agreement that we will make the financial viability determination based on the financial information provided.

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27	4.3	9	Will the states accept offeror signed balance sheets and financial statements demonstrating financial stability to satisfy this requirement? Banking institutions will not sign any letter regarding sufficient resources as they do not understand the nature of the RFP and its obligations.	Refer to Question and Response #26.
28	4.3	9	We are a wholly-owned subsidiary of a publicly-traded company. Is it acceptable to submit our parent company's Form 10-K, which contains audited financial information for our company?	Yes.
29	4.3	9	We have a number of associate consultants with which we have had a long-term relationship. These individuals function as independent consultants, although they are incorporated for tax purposes. Their firms are a single person, with no employees, no central offices, etc. They work under the direction of our Project Executive. The RFP would require them to incur considerable expense for either "audited financial statements" or the alternate materials. Would the states be willing to consider these individuals as "contracted staff" as opposed to "subcontractors" for the purposes of this requirement? As the Prime contractor, we would be fully liable for their actions throughout all phases and aspects of this project.	The States agree that we would be willing to consider these individual as "contracted staff" as opposed to "subcontractors".
30	4.4	9	This section states that we must provide information on "at least three previous or current service/contracts". The last sentence of the first paragraph states that we must "provide this information for any service/contract that has been successfully completed, terminated..." Do the States want a minimum of three or an entire list of all contracts completed in the last three years?	The States are requesting a minimum of 3 to include current and/or previous service/contracts.
31	4.5	9	Do the States want references for each individual proposed? If yes, how many references for each?	The States have requested references only for the Offeror's proposed Project Manager.
32	4.5		The scope of work appears to be for planning and test oversight services so it is unclear what effort is associated with other project phases including design and development, installation, and operations phases. Please clarify desired services during DDI and operations.	The States are clarifying that we are procuring only those services required to meet Section 3.0.
33	5.1.1	10	This section states that offerors are to provide one copy of the entire proposal, including attachments and the cost proposal, on one CD. However, Section 5.2.4 regarding the Cost Proposal states that only one original hard copy and four electronic copies are required. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please confirm that the Cost Proposal is NOT to be included on the same CD as the Technical Proposal. 2. Please confirm the number of Technical and Cost Proposals required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Technical – 1 Original + 12 copies + 1 CD (submitted to both SD and ND) 	<p>The States confirm that the Cost proposal is not to be included on the same CD as the Technical Proposal.</p> <p>As additional clarification: Each State should receive a sealed envelope clearly marked as "Technical Proposal" that contains 1 CD or flash drive of the entire proposal, including all attachments in PDF format. Each State should receive 1 original and 12 hard copies of the Technical Proposal.</p> <p>Each State should receive a sealed envelope clearly marked as "Cost Proposal" that contains 1 CD or flash drive of the cost proposal.</p>

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			Cost – 1 Original + 4 CDs (submitted to both SD and ND)	
34	5.2.1	10	Para 5.2.1 refers to the inclusion of the RFP Form. Do we use the RFP Form on page 1 of the RFP or Addendum B?	Addendum B
35	5.2.3.2	10	This section states that offerors should provide a specific point-by-point response to each requirement listed in Section 3.0 and 4.0. However, there are several requirements in Section 4.0 that do not appear to require a response (such as 4.1, 4.2, 4.7, and 4.10). Should offerors simply acknowledge that they have read the requirement?	The Offerors should acknowledge the requirement.
36	6.1.3	11	This section refers to the record of past performance, including price and cost data from pervious projects. Is this information offeror's should provide in response to Section 4.4 or will this information be gathered as part of reference checking?	The Offerors should provide this information in response to Section 4.4.
37	6.6		Section 6.6 appears to indicate that if a Offeror includes supplemental terms in its proposal, the supplemental terms will be included in the contract but later on if the State determines those supplemental terms conflict or diminish the State's rights, the supplemental term(s) will be void. Will the State reconsider its position and allow a negotiation of terms and conditions? Will the State reconsider its position and advise Offerors prior to contract signing what supplemental terms conflict and will not be included in the contract?	Refer to Question and Response #1, 10 and 42.
38	6.10.1		RFP Section 6.10.1 contemplates a negotiation with the highest ranked Offeror relative to a "compensation level that is reasonable and fair to the agency...." Can the State confirm its funding or estimate for the services? Can the State further explain its intended approach to compensation?	It is the States' intention to evaluate the Offeror's response to the technical requirements as well as cost.
39	Schedule A		Could you please describe the content needed in the columns marked "#Task hours & Rate" and "Travel hours & Rate" in "Schedule A – Cost Proposal" form? Is the state expecting a blended rate for each task and the total number of hours estimated for each task? Should the blended rate be inclusive of travel costs?	The States' preference is to see a break out of the estimated task hours and the fee rate as listed in the Cost Proposal. Should the Offeror prefer to provide a blended rate the States would need additional commentary to clearly indicate how the Offeror arrived at the estimated costs.
40	Addendum A – Certification Regarding Lobbying	15	Is this form required with the proposal submission?	Yes.
41	Addendum A	15	There are no instructions as to the placement of Addendum A, can it be provided as an attachment?	Yes.
42	Addendum C & D		How are conflicting terms in the Addendums reconciled?	Refer to Question and Response #1, 10 and 37.