BIDDER QUESTIONS & DVHA RESPONSES

General Information:

Proposals are considered confidential during the bid review. Bidders should submit a redacted version of their proposal in the event we receive a public records request after the award has been made.

RFP Section Reference: *N/A – General Questions*

Question: Is it acceptable for the electronic file to be submitted in .pdf format?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Can both the technical components and cost components of the proposal be included on the same CD?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Is there a recommended page length?

Answer: No, there is no recommended page length.

RFP Section Reference: *Chapter 1, Information for the Bidder*

Section 2, Scoring Criteria

Question: This section also requests that the bidder "provide data on the numbers of individuals served." Please clarify what this is in reference to and how it relates to the scope of services requested in the RFP, which is primarily related to conducting research, not providing series to individuals. Is DVHA looking for a provider-based agency to perform the services requested in the RFP?

Answer: DVHA is not looking for a provider-based agency to perform the services requested in the RFP. This is a research project, not a service project. This item was inadvertently included in the RFP.

Question: Is the Contractor expected to complete the sentence shown in Section 2.2 in its response (number of direct FTEs)?

Answer: Yes.

BIDDER QUESTIONS & DVHA RESPONSES

Question: Please clarify and describe what type of response the State would expect in response to the question: "Indicate how this program fits into the organization's structure."

Answer: This section requires bidders to describe their organization, their organization's capacity to perform the scope of work described in this RFP and the way in which this project relates to the rest of the work being performed by the bidder for other entities.

Question: Please clarify and describe the type of response the State would expect in response to the question: "Organizational Quality – describe licensures or accreditations of the organization or other indicators of quality review that attest to the quality of bidder programs."

Answer: Licensures or accreditations may not be directly appropriate; however they should have another indicator of quality.

Question: Can DVHA please provide the point allocation or percentage for each area of criteria for this proposal evaluation?

Answer: Please refer to the scoring sheet below:

CRITERIA FOR SCORING	Total possible points
1 INFORMATION FROM THE BIDDER	
A. Quality of Bidder's Experience	**25**
• Provide a description of the bidder's contracting experience within the past five years providing like services are called out for in this RFP. Specify targeted outcomes, the number of years and geographic areas served by the bidder. • Describe the bidder's experience with DVHA. If not currently operating in a DVHA district, describe bidder's experience with like government agency. Please provide data on bidder performance on same or similar contracts, grants and collaborative activities.	
• Please provide data on the number of individuals served, funds expended and sources of funds for same or similar services to those called for in this RFP.	
B. Bidder's Capacity to Perform	**25**
• Provide a description of the organizational structure of the bidder. Provide a staff organizational chart that identifies the major operational components of the organization, and the lines of authority and responsibility. • Indicate how this program fits into the organization's structure. • Identify the members of the applicant's Board of Directors.	

BIDDER QUESTIONS & DVHA RESPONSES

• Organizational Quality – describe licensures or accreditations of the organization or other indicators of quality review that attest to the quality of bidder programs.	
• As this RFP includes a wide range of services to… DVHA recognizes that not all bidders will currently have the capacity (staff, staff training…) to offer these services at the onset of the contract period. Please include a detailed strategic plan as to how your company would build this capacity (include timelines, training plans if applicable) in your narrative.	
• Experience Managing Contracts/Grants of Comparable Scale/Scope/Complexity. (include information on these funds in the Summary of Funding form in Appendix B)	
2 TECHNICAL PROPOSAL/PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS	
A. Responsiveness to Specifications	**25**
• Provide a description of how bidder will respond to program goals, which research based approaches, will be employed and how the bidder will evaluate its performance and quality. • Describe how the bidder will ensure that all included services will be readily accessible and provided in a timely manner.	
• Describe how the bidder will work with district office(s), and other community stakeholders (providers, organizations, and individuals)	
• Describe how this program is supported by the bidder's mission and other policies of the bidder.	
B. Program Cost	**25**
Schedule A: Summary Program Costs • Use form Schedule A Budget Submittal Form to itemize your program costs.	
Schedule B: Detail of Expenses • In narrative form explain how figures for salary, benefits, phone, mileage, buildings and facilities were determined.	
Schedule C: Allocation Methods • In narrative form, describe your method for allocating your administrative costs **(not to exceed 13%).**	
Schedule D: Related Party Disclosure • In narrative form, disclose all related party relationships including cost purpose and approval process.	
OVERALL TOTAL SCORE	**100**

BIDDER QUESTIONS & DVHA RESPONSES

Question: Are "services" referring to vendor deliverables on page 10 under 2A?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Is DVHA seeking a particular type of vendor for this work? Based on the information requested in subsection A, "Quality of Bidder's Experience" it would appear that DVHA is looking for a local Vermont-based vendor (possibly a provider) to perform the research services being requested in this RFP. Is this correct?

Answer: The state is seeking a vendor who will best perform the tasks outlined in the scope of work. This will require expertise in Vermont and in the content area. All bidders, regardless of where they are based, should describe plan to ensure inclusion of Vermont expertise.

Section 3.1 Contract Term

Question: The RFP states that the contract term is "tentatively" six months. As pricing will be based on a six-month period of performance, will the contractor be expected to maintain the current bid rates should services be desired to extend beyond? Or would renegotiation be expected?

Answer: The term is estimated at six months, but bidders are encouraged to develop work plans than provide a longer or shorter time period if, in their experience, this is warranted for a project of this nature. Bidders can choose to do fixed price or time and materials bids for this scope of work. For all bids, the state reserves the right to negotiate the price.

RFP Section Reference: *Chapter 3, Section 1.1, Overview*

Question: The RFP indicates that the deliverable will be a "fully developed pilot program." Please clarify - what does DVHA mean by "fully developed pilot program"? We are interpreting it to be the deliverables enumerated in 1.4.1-1.4.5, but not the actual operations of the pilot. We understood the operational phase of the pilot program would be the scope of Phase II. Is that correct?

Answer: Indeed we are not expecting the operations of a pilot program but rather recommendations of the essential components of a pilot program which would happen in Phase II, with particular emphasis on 1.4.3 and 1.4.4.

BIDDER QUESTIONS & DVHA RESPONSES

Question: Is the deliverable referred to in this text, "a fully developed pilot program", within the scope of this RFP or will this be the deliverable within the subsequent Phase II RFP referred in Section 1.3, Scope of Work and Contractor Responsibilities?

Answer: The fully developed pilot program with implementation would be in Phase II.

RFP Section Reference: *Chapter 3, Section 1.2, Background*

Question: Is the envisioned pilot program intended to focus on all Vermont residents within the target geographic area or only those residents whose health insurer agrees to also participate?

Answer: Ideally, this would include all Vermonters within the target area.

Question: Who are the current and/or key stakeholders participating in the Population Health Work Group?

Answer: Representatives from Vermont's major hospitals, health and mental health providers, insurers, governmental agencies (including health care, public health, aging and disability, mental health), consumers and advocates. The complete list is available on the Vermont Health Care Innovation Project's website here: http://healthcareinnovation.vermont.gov/.

Question: Please clarify the anticipated role of the PHWG leadership team in the project, i.e. monthly oversight, progress reporting or a more active and directive role.

Answer: The PHWG leadership team will serve an active and directive role in this project. The leadership team will engage with the vendor in a collaborative learning process. In the beginning of the project, the leadership team will work with the vendor to refine the areas of investigation, review a detailed work plan and provide an overview of other PHWG activities to provide context. Throughout the project, the leadership team will meet with the vendor by telephone, or in person, and review documents as they are prepared.

Question: Health improvement strategies vary by life stage of the individual. Does DVHA anticipate restricting focus to adults and the elderly or a pilot program that would address population health improvement strategies across all ages?

Answer: The state does not want to limit this project to any one population at the outset. The research phase of this project should provide sufficient information to the state to

allow for restricting focus if that is the direction the state chooses for Phase II, the pilot program. Phase II is not within the scope of this RFP.

RFP Section Reference: *Chapter 3, Section 1.3, Scope of Work and Contractor Responsibilities*

Question: Will the State or the Population Health Work Group provide a list of "high priority audiences" that the award recipient can then augment?

Answer: The state will provide some suggestions in this area, but requests that the bidders offer their ideas for how best to perform this task. Bidders should include categories of people with whom they think they should engage to successful perform this research.

Question: While Phase II will be a separate contract, can VT AHS predict the general scope of work anticipated for Phase II?

Answer: Thisdepends upon the results of Phase I and the funding available through the VHCIP and other potential sources identified in Phase I.

Question: What is the anticipated go-live for Phase II?

Answer: This depends on the results of Phase I and the funding available through the VHCIP and other potential sources identified in Phase I.

Question: The list of attributes for a successful bid includes "gathering public input" and "engaging an audience in decision-making," yet the list of deliverables does not reference any expected public-decision making venues. Please clarify the intent of the program to include public engagement and input into site selection or definition of the AHC model.

Answer: For now, engagement will be primarily with: the PHWG and other work groups in the VHCIP; and stakeholders within the communities identified for research as VT exemplars.

BIDDER QUESTIONS & DVHA RESPONSES

RFP Section Reference: *Chapter 3, Section 1.4, Deliverables*

Section 1.4.1

Question: Will the assessment mentioned in Section 1.4.1 be used internally for the IOM roundtable on population health or will it be viewed externally?

Answer: While the state would appreciate any IOM feedback on this work, we do not control the IOM processes. The state cant inform the IOM of this work so that they could include it if they wish---their committee process would determine inclusion.

a. Over what timeframe would DVHA desire to have all of the deliverables met?

Answer: The state would expect all deliverables to be met by March 31, 2015.

b. Who has supported DVHA with the other aspects of their SIM grant?

Answer: The state has several key state staff and contractors providing support for the SIM Grant. Contractor information is available on the Green Mountain Care Board and DVHA websites.

Question: Can you clarify the objective of the screening and assessment tools?

a. Is the screening tool to be used to identify key characteristics of a community or to identify communities where building an AHC is likely to be successful?
b. Is the assessment tool to be used to evaluate a program by noting strengths and weaknesses of a given approach?
c. Is it correct that the assessment tool would be used only to assess potential AHC sites in Vermont, or would the assessment tool be applied to exemplars outside of Vermont?

Answer: The screening tool is to identify the key characteristics of an AHC model that would be used to determine if an existing effort in VT has the initial elements and should be included in the assessment.

The elements of the screening tool would be developed by assessing the literature and exemplars outside of VT. It is anticipated that the screening tool would be used within VT and not outside. Since it is unlikely that the outside exemplars meet all the requirements of an AHC, the screening tool would also be used to assess relative strengths and weaknesses of exemplars and major gaps.

BIDDER QUESTIONS & DVHA RESPONSES

The screening tool is used to narrow down a broad list of potential key informants for interviews, and an assessment is used to identify specific sites that have (some of) the elements for developing a AHC.

The assessment tool will only be used in Vermont communities.

Question: Is there a preferred technology for the screening and assessment tools?

Answer: No.

Section 1.4.2

Question: This section pertains to areas outside of Vermont, but the bullet point requests identification of "4-6" sites for in-depth reviews in Vermont." Please clarify.

Answer: The intent is to identify exemplars outside VT. The bullet should have stated: Use the Assessment tool from 1.4.1 to recommend 4-6 sites for in-depth reviews.

Question: Has the State identified any specific community-level innovations currently in place within the State that may be logical candidates for research as Accountable Health Communities?

Answer: Yes, the PHWG has begun the identification of community-level innovations and will share that list with the selected contractor at the start-up of the project.

Question: Has the State identified any specific community-level innovations currently in place outside Vermont that may be logical candidates for research as Accountable Health communities?

Answer: There are a number of initiatives currently being promoted at the national level. These should be the starting point for this project. There is a need to define the potential elements of an AHC before determining which is most logical for additional research.

Question: Is it expected that, as a deliverable from this RFP, a proposed payment model for implementing and sustaining the Accountable Health Community in Vermont will be produced?

Answer: One of the key elements for exploration and research is to identify the variety of funding mechanisms. The research should also include an understanding of Vermont's funding landscape and therefore, which payment model and financial mechanisms, might be most appropriate given Vermont's context.

BIDDER QUESTIONS & DVHA RESPONSES

Question: In addition to the deliverables cited in Section 1.4, is it expected that the Contractor will submit a final report at the culmination of the project? If so, would this be due at the end of the anticipated six month contract period (March 31, 2015)?

Answer: Yes. The final report will include a final presentation to the PHWG.

Section 1.4.3

Question: Please provide additional details for section 1.4.3 on the expectations for "communication program for key stakeholders." Does this include a public relations campaign to educate the general public?

Answer: The intent is to have materials to describe the research effort and the characteristics of communities that we are seeking to assess.

Question: Section 1.4.3, bullet 4 refers to "as identified in 2(d) above." Please identify section 2 (d).

Answer: Section 2(d) refers to section 1.4.2.4 "Synthesize key gaps and developmental needs and issues in building an AHC."

Question: In section 1.4.3, the state is requesting the vendor to conduct an RFI and select potential sites.

Is DHVA delegating these tasks to the vendor execute? Or does DHVA expect the vendor to develop the tools and processes for the state to use in conducting the RFI and site selection?

Is the RFI to include the communication program, or is the vendor to develop a communication program for key stakeholders based on responses to the RFI?

Answer: Yes, the vendor would develop recommendations for the state and the state would implement as needed.

Question: Is the "national assessment" referring to general strengths and weaknesses communities face when developing an AHC? Or is it used as a benchmark (i.e. how does Vermont's health care delivery system compare to other communities)?

Answer: The national assessment is to: 1) identify what characteristics are considered necessary/important for an AHC; and 2) which community efforts are being promoted as possible leaders in developing an AHC.

BIDDER QUESTIONS & DVHA RESPONSES

Question: Is the national assessment to be completed by the vendor? If so, is the national assessment meant to be created using the assessment tool?

Answer: Yes the national assessment is to be completed by the vendor. The review of the literature will identify the domains of the assessment tool which will be applied to external exemplars and VT exemplars.

Section 1.4.4

Question: For section 1.4.4, can the State please clarify the "potential for a pilot" deliverable?

a. Is the thought that, based upon some of the "best practices" the contractor identifies for creating an AHC, it proposes a single (or handful) of AHCs to implement in addition to identifying potential funding opportunity?

b. Or does is the implementation of the pilot occur during the "Phase 2" of funding, not to be completed in this project (1.3, pg. 32)?

Answer: Recommendations about the scope and characteristics of a pilot occurs in Phase I. Implementation of the pilot will occur in Phase II.

RFP Section Reference: *Chapter 3, Section 2, Program Costs/Payment Provisions*

Section 2.1

Question: Will the SIM grant also fund Phase II? Or is external funding required for pilot program operations? What portion of funding has been obtained for Phase II? Does DVHA anticipate requesting pilot funding in its budget request for FY16?

Answer: Funding for Phase II depends on the results of Phase I, the SIM funding available and other sources of funding as identified in Phase I.

Question: The last sentence of the paragraph states that the Contractor will be paid at the billable rates for services performed. Is it correct that this is only for personnel costs and other Direct Operating Expenses will be billed as expensed?

Answer: Bidders should propose a budget that is either fixed price or time and materials. Regardless of the format, the bidder should follow the template provided in the RFP, which identifies costs by category.

BIDDER QUESTIONS & DVHA RESPONSES

RFP Section Reference: *Schedule A, Summary of Costs (Page 44)*

Question: If a bidder has an indirect rate agreement with the federal government, may the bidder's approved indirect rates be used to calculate the summary of costs in Schedule A? If yes, can the bidder change the budget category names in Schedule A to reflect the bidder's cost categories as approved in their indirect rate agreement?

> **Answer:** If you are bidding with hourly rates please factor this into your rate.

Question: Can for-profit bidders include a fee/profit in their pricing? If yes, where should it be included in Schedule A?

> **Answer:** If you are bidding with hourly rates please factor this into your rate.

Question: Would the State consider treating Schedule A as confidential since it includes salary information for bidder staff?

> **Answer:** Yes salary information will be confidential. Please submit a redacted version with your proposal so we may share outside the bid review team if we receive FOIA request.

Question: The instructions to Schedule A ask to "structure your budget based on the federal fiscal year, October through September", but the contract term is 6-months. Can DVHA confirm that they are only asking for a 6-month budget?

> **Answer:** Yes please prepare a six-month budget.

Question: Is Schedule A required for submission with a proposal, or will fully-loaded hourly rates by staff person be permissible? Is it acceptable for a bidder not to include indirect allocations, but instead explain their fully inclusive rates?

> **Answer:** If bidders intend to be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred Schedule A is required and the indirect allocation detail. If submitting hourly rates, please specify what the rates entail.

Question: Is Schedule A required to be submitted as a sealed envelope/container separate from the bidder's response to the technical components of the solicitation?

> **Answer:** No.

BIDDER QUESTIONS & DVHA RESPONSES

RFP Section Reference: *Summary of Funds (page 41)*

Question: Please provide a narrative description of the purpose of the Summary of Funds form.

> **Answer:** It is beneficial to review team to have this information up front as we need to understand what other federal and/or state funding the bidder is receiving (if any) for reporting purposes.

Please also provide detailed completion instructions for each field including:
(a) Source of Funds (identify in this section as federal or state funding)
(b) Contract/grant total award (identify the total amount of the funding received by federal or state grants).

Question: The form asks for a summary of funds received during the current fiscal year. Can you be more specific? Is this meant to be all funded grants and contracts or only work related to SIMS funding? Would an A-133 report suffice?

> **Answer:** Yes, the summary of funds form is meant to be inclusive of all federal or state grants and contracts. An A-133 is acceptable to submit.

Question: If a bidder agrees to submit a fixed price bid, is Appendix A required to be submitted by the bidder?

> **Answer:** If the bidder chooses to submit a fixed price schedule A is not required but all other forms in Appendix A are required.

RFP Section Reference: *Rate Sheet (page 38)*

Question: The Rate Sheet asks for Program and proposed hourly rates. What is to be listed under program? Is this where DVHA wants job titles and the corresponding hourly rate for salary only since fringe is broken down on Schedule A, as well as the Other Direct Operating Expenses?

> **Answer:** Bidders can provide a fixed price or time and materials budget. If time and materials, the bidders should provide personnel, hourly rates and other anticipated costs noting this work is funded through a federal cooperative grant (State Innovation Models) and there are federal restrictions.