

September 14, 2012

Requisition # 03410-108-13

HSE – Health Care Rule Writing

1. Answers to Bidder's Questions :

Q: Is this RFP in place of the one that closed on July 13 (RFQ #03410-108-12), or in addition to it? If it is in addition, has a contract been awarded yet for the earlier RFP?

A: This RFP replaces the previous RFP of the same name that closed 7/13/2012. We went through with the RFP process and when it came time to open bids, we received zero bids. This is the re-posting of the same RFP (with a few modifications) and a new schedule. There has not been a contract awarded for this work yet.

Q: The Department desires the Contractor to train and mentor the Department's Rule Author(s) in how OPA works and how to best use it. About how many Rule Authors are being contemplated?

A: Six to eight.

Q: The Department desires the Contractor to partner with the Rule Author(s) to design the policy model. Since that activity occurs near the beginning of an OPA project, would the Author(s) be available for OPA training at the outset of the project?

A: Three to five Rule Authors who worked on the rule set to be implemented will be available for training.

Q: Does the Department also wish its Rule Authors to be responsible for actually transforming some of the rules from legislative documents into OPA format during the project? Or, is the desire for the Author(s) to be able to take over the rulebase as their own after the Contractor has completed it?

A: The successful vendor will be responsible for actually transforming all of the relevant rules. Authors will participate in the process to enable them to take over the rulebase after the transformation is complete.

Q: The Department desires the Contractor to assist the state with creating a process for posting the formal rules to the web for general review by the public. We see that program eligibility rules are already published to the web in a descriptive format, e.g. in <http://humanservices.vermont.gov/on-line-rules/esd/medicaid-4100/view> . The OPA rules could be posted as documents similarly. However, we are wondering what objective the state wishes to achieve

by this posting? Perhaps something more interactive would be more useful for that purpose

A: As we understand OPA, while it utilizes Word and Excel formats, the transformed rules do not necessarily lend themselves to be compiled into a narrative that can be codified and utilized by attorneys, staff, and members of the public. Therefore, we anticipate that we will need an OPA version of the rulebase and a narrative version for public consumption. We are asking the successful vendor to help us select an appropriate process for publishing the public narrative, such that: (1) consistency is maintained across the narrative and OPA versions; (2) the public is provided with the most functionality possible when they access the narrative online; and (3) the administrative burden of publishing the narrative is kept to a minimum.

Q: Section 1.2. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL refers to Attachment A which is not included in the RFP. Is Attachment A going to be provided through an amendment?

A: This section alludes to Attachment A, and you are correct, there is no Attachment A included. This sentence in Section 1.2 is actually referring to Section 1 and 1.1. To clarify, we are looking for a vendor who can take our new health-care rules narrative (authored in Word) and translate it into a format that can be consumed by OPA. The vendor would be responsible for ensuring that the translated rules are substantively identical to the rules narrative and that they actually work within the rules engine. We would like the engagement to include some transfer of knowledge, so that when we take over the administration of the rules engine, we will have the training, skills, and experience to be successful. This, however, is secondary to the first need, which is our primary concern. We would also like the successful vendor to help us select an appropriate process for publishing the public narrative, such that: (1) consistency is maintained across the narrative and OPA versions; (2) the public is provided with the most functionality possible when they access the narrative online; and (3) the administrative burden of publishing the narrative is kept to a minimum.

Q: The SOW contained in the RFP requires significant planning and analysis work to complete the proposal response. The timeframes specified in the RFP are not adequate for us to prepare our response given other initiatives in progress. Will the State consider extending the proposal due date at least 2 weeks to allow us to complete our response?

A: The State has considered this request and does not wish to extend any deadlines for multiple reasons. Two of which are: a) the State's desire to maintain its continued progress and meet its goals with existing deadlines that do not allow for any leeway and b) the State realizes that while this may seem daunting, there will be future work efforts that will require the State and a

contractor to find a way to meet deadlines and therefore use ingenuity and resiliency to address the issue.

Q: The RFP states “If a suitable offer is made in response to this Request for Proposal (RFP), AHS may enter into a contract (the Contract) to have the selected vendor (the Vendor) perform all or part of the Work.” What parts of the SOW may the State not have the vendor perform? How will the price be adjusted if aspects of the scope are not chosen?

(1.1.1.1)

A: The State has been working diligently on Health Care initiatives and thus, some preliminary scoping of this work may have been completed. Therefore it is possible that some work would be discussed and negotiated during contracting negotiations.

Q: This section states “Tentatively, the period of performance of the work to be performed as a result of this RFP is a 3 month contract from the date of commencement. DVHA has the option to continue to contract with the successful bidder pursuant to this RFP for up to two additional years.” Does the State expect all rules to be defined within a 3-month duration? What services could be included in the subsequent 2 years?

(1.3.3.1)

A: Our goal is to convert all of our health-care rules and have them uploaded in OPA in time to test our new Integrated Eligibility System (estimated July, 2013 for testing) and “go live” by October, 2013. Services that may be included in the subsequent 2-year period might include: (1) changes to the health care rules, required after the initial work is completed and prior to implementation, or (2) conversion of additional program rule sets (e.g., SNAP and TANF) that we anticipate uploading into OPA prior to the end of 2015.

Q: The scope of work in the RFP is very generic and does not include details about project inputs, the number of rules required or how the final rules will be determined. It is very difficult to create a fixed price without these metrics. Can the State provide additional clarity to the scope of work to ensure all vendors have the same interpretation of the scope of work?

(3.1)

A: The scope includes transformation of all of the state’s rules relating to administration of its health benefits programs. This includes the new Exchange and MAGI Medicaid rules, SSI-related Medicaid rules, and long-term care rules. This amounts to approximately 350 pages of narrative text, formatted in table and outline style.

Q: Typically, business rules are written in conjunction with a larger system development initiative to work with automated work flows, logic, etc. How does

the State envision the rules defined by this project to work into the larger VIEWS project? How does the State envision testing the rules in an established test environment?

(3.1)

A: The state is engaged in several interrelated IT procurements. We are working with Oracle to implement our new HIX system. We anticipate posting an RFP for a systems integrator, who will help to implement business requirements for a new Integrated Eligibility Solution that we are currently developing with Gartner. OPA will be implemented as the rules engine supporting both of these efforts.

Q: Can the State include specific approval criteria for the rules deliverables?
(3.1)

A: This would be something that would need to be defined with the selected vendor during contract negotiations. Bidders are expected to define a proposed strategy of best practices for deliverables.

Q: This section indicates the vendor will “Partner with the Department’s Rule Author(s) to design the policy model.” Can the State clarify the number, experience and role the Department’s Rule Author(s) will take on the project? Can the percentage of time available for this project also be specified?
(3.1.1.1)

A: The rule authors who are developing the rulebase that is the subject of this RFP are (1) attorneys who focus their practice on health care eligibility and (2) experienced health-care eligibility staff who have expertise in rules development and implementation. Three or four state employees will be assigned to this project. They are all familiar with OPA, but have no direct experience working with the product. This will be their primary assignment for the duration of the project.

Q: This section also states, “The staff would like a ground up education about the OPA.” Can the state define the specific training requirements required by the RFP? Does this requirement include on the job training or a more formalized training plan.
(3.1.1.1.)

A: While the vendor will have sole responsibility for completing the transformation, we would like this engagement to serve as an opportunity to develop in-house experience with OPA, such that state staff can take over the rulebase upon completion. The primary objective of the engagement, however, is completion of the rules transformation.

Q: In order to provide the State with an acceptable proposal, would you consider a two-week extension, with a new due date of October 15th?

A: The State has considered this request and does not wish to extend any deadlines for multiple reasons. Two of which are: a) the State's desire to maintain its continued progress and meet its goals with deadlines that do not allow for any leeway and b) the State realizes that while this may seem daunting, there will be future work efforts that will require the State and a contractor to find a way to meet deadlines and therefore use ingenuity and resiliency to address the issue.

Q: RFP Paragraph 1.7.8.2: "Send seven (7) identical copies of each Program Proposal you are submitting and include" The sentence appears to be incomplete. Please clarify.

A: The State would like each bidder to submit seven (7) copies (hardcopy) of their proposal – the sentence lacks a colon after the word "include". The next page shows that we request an electronic copy of your proposal in redacted and original format.

Q: Appendix B – Summary of Funds: There doesn't appear to be an explanation in the RFP for this form. Please clarify.

A: This form is used in place of a financial statement. Please fill out your Federal Tax ID #, the dates of your fiscal year, and the financial information to the best of your ability.

Q: Would it be possible for the State to provide an editable version of the RFP document including all appendixes (Word and Excel format)?

A: The State prefers to only release PDF versions of the RFP and other documents.