

OFFICE OF ADULT SERVICES
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
IN- HOME AIDE SERVICES
SSA/IHA-10-001-S

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES FROM PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE

Question 1: Bid Opening Date: The IFB states the “the bid opening date is at 10:00am, January 28, 2010. The apparent awardees will be announced at the time.” Does that mean that you will announce apparent awardees at that time?

Response: Yes. We will announce the apparent awardees at that time.

Question 2: Para 2.14. Contract Affidavit (Attachment C) states “must be completed and submitted by the selected Bidder when notified of the recommendation for award”. Yet paragraph 2.15, second paragraph states, “Prior to award both the contract (I presume attachment D) and the Affidavit (I presume Attachment C) must be completed along with witnessed signatures...” My question is “Do we fill out Attachment C and submit with our proposal or do we wait until we’re informed of an award that we fill out attachment C and submit”?

Response: Attachment C (Contract Affidavit) is only completed by successful bidders only upon notification of selection. Attachment D (Contract) is completed by the Procurement Officer and forwarded to the successful Bidders only upon notification of selection.

Question 3: Para 1.8 (Bid Closing Date) states “the original bid Package, to be so identified, and 2(two) copies along with one (1) original Price Sheet (Attachment A) for each jurisdiction for which the vendor is submitting a bid.” Does this mean then that if we were going after three (3) jurisdictions, we will need an original bid package with an original price sheet and two copies for each jurisdiction – a total nine packages (original and two copies for each of the 3 jurisdictions)?

Response: No. The original Bid Package, to be so identified, and 2 (two) copies along with one 1 original Price Sheet (Attachment A)

for each jurisdiction for which the vendor is submitting a bid.
(See Section 1.8 Bid Closing Date) and (Section 4.8 Order of Submission)

Question 4: Under Para 4.1 (Bid Submission), it states the “Bidders must submit to the Issuing Office... an original bid Package (signed in Blue ink), to be so identified...” What constitutes “a Bid package”? Can I use The list of documents identified in the IHAS IFB Proposal Checklist (Attachment R) as the list of documents you require in a Bid Package?

Response: Yes. See Response #3.

Question 5: My understanding of the price quote is that the price quotes we put in the price sheet (Attachment A) will be good for the duration of the contract (May1, 1010 to April 30, 2015). There is no room for escalation to accommodate for inflation, etc. The IFB also requires us to abide by the Living Wage which gets updated on a yearly basis. When the living wage is updated and is increased, will we be able to ask for equitable adjustment?

Response: No. This is a Fixed Unit Price Contract. And should take into consideration cost of being increased.

Question 6: For individuals providing personal care services, will they be required to be CNA certified? How about aides performing Chore Services? Do they have to be CN's too?

Response: Anyone performing Personal Care Services i.e. direct contact with the customer needs to be CNA certified. Anyone only doing Chore Services does not need to be a certified CNA. A certified CNA can do both.

Question 7: Regarding reference letters, since you want this included with our proposal, sealed and unopened, we will not be able to make a copy of the original to include with our proposal copies. We can only attach the original reference letters we receive from the reference source with our original proposal package. Will this be acceptable?

Response: Yes. Include the references with the original Bid Package.

Question 8: Please confirm that it is one price sheet for each jurisdiction and then one original and two copies of the entire package.

Response: Yes. See Response #3.

Question 9: In Section 4.8 "Order of Submission", it lists each of the documents required and what order they are to be presented in the bid packages. The table also lists how many copies of each document are to be included. The table says that in each individual package, 2copies are required of the forms Bid/Proposal Affidavit, Certification Regarding Lobbying and Living Wage Affidavit of Agreement, each with an original signature.

Response: Yes, this is correct. Please follow the instructions that are in Section 4.8 Order of Submission.

Question 10 With the Hiring Agreement how does that provision apply to this requirement in the IFB requirements which says that at the time of the bid we should have at least five CNAs on staff?

Response: The Hiring Agreement will become effective concurrently with the award of the Contract. It is a requirement of the Bidder at the time of submitting their bid and throughout the life of the contract they have a minimum of one R.N. and five CNA's on staff. (See Section 3.4 Requirements). However, if the contractor experiences an opening or vacancy, consideration must be given to the requirements of the Hiring Agreement.

Question 11: If we have an opening that we are going to hire for and sent the request to DHR, they will send us someone.

Response: Yes. DHR will refer a person that meets the qualifications.

Question 12: If you interview someone and say this is not a fit?

Response: You must provide justification for refusing to hire a person who is qualified.

Question 13: If after the award, if we get a call from a county saying that they need someone to provide personal care within three days, There are some urgent requirements here, and I need to hire somebody, can I go to you and say I need someone within two or three days?

Response: No. We do not have people that fit the requirements for personal care. Those position need to be certified and have at least one year experience and undergone a criminal background check within 6 months. (See Section 3.4D)

Question 14: If the local DSS calls you and tells you they need a CNA to do the care you're given how long to respond back to the local DSS?

Response: You have 24 hours in which to respond to the verbal request either accepting or declining the request. (See Section 3.2.A.1)

Question 15: The Hiring Agreement is requesting that we offer full-time employment. Often these are just, for four, six hours a week. We can't guarantee any one person full-time employment.

Response: We will send you a packet with a job order in it. When your hiring situation comes about, if it is not for full-time employment, then you are exempt from participating for that particular job at that particular time.

Question 16: Are we required to complete the Hiring Agreement?

Response: Yes. It states that you agree to consider filling a minimum of blank of the job openings with local department referred candidates provided the local Department refers qualified candidates within three working days. You need to make sure you put a number in the blank.

Question 17: How are they going to handle the reference letters, three sealed references letters?

Response: If they are sent to you and they are in separate envelopes put them in the original Bid package. We will make the copies.

Question 18: Can a local supervisor give you a reference letter?

Response: No. Reference letter cannot be from a DHR employee.

Question 19: Reference letters, do you need a separate reference letter per jurisdiction?

Response: No. You do not need a separate reference letter per jurisdiction. (See Section 4.7 References)

Question 20: When we bided previously we submitted the three references, Is there any way to get them back?

Response: No. We do not keep copies.

Question 21: What happens at the bid opening date?

Response: All the Bids will be opened and placed on a roster per

jurisdiction. The roster will show the lowest bid offered which will result in the highest place on the roster of available contracted providers for that jurisdiction, and continue in descending order.

Question 22: Is it okay to fill out some of these forms on the computer?

Response: Yes. You can complete the forms on the computer, print and save them.

Question 23: A question about the health insurance reimbursement on page 9. In cases where clients are eligible for Medicare or Medicaid or other health insurance.

Response: In cases where client are eligible for Medicare, Medicaid, or other health insurances Contractors are required to submit request for those covered services to those or any other program from which a referred client is eligible for benefits, and from whom the Contractor is eligible to receive reimbursement. Contractors will only invoice the LDSS for services not reimbursable through other programs.

Question 24: Normally a client is 20 hours a week?

Response: No. We cannot guarantee referrals or the number of hours.

Question 25: Subprime contractor, I read it was a no-go, but then I saw there were some possibilities.

Response: No. bidders cannot subcontract the core services.

Question 26: Reciprocal procedures, there was a paragraph in there about reciprocal procedures if you do this and we do that, we don't need to be concerned about it?

Response: Reciprocal Preference means that a preference will be given to the lowest possible responsible Bid from a Maryland firm over that of a nonresident firm if the State in which the nonresident firm is located gives a resident business preference. (See Section 5.2 Reciprocal Preferences)

Question 27: What happens on the day the bids are awarded? Do you need to be present?

Response: You do not need to be present when the bids are being opened. The apparent awardees will be announced at that time. A notice of the recommended awardees will be provided to all Bidders as soon as all bids are reviewed. (See Section 1.5)

Question 28: If awarded can I budget a certain amount?

Response: No. If awarded a contract you will be placed on a roster. (See Section 1.1)

Question 29: Will you please spell out the major differences between the bid that was done before and the one that we're working on today.

Response: No. Please respond to the current bid. There have been some changes.

Question 30: Just to clarify about the three years experience. If our business is not going to be three years until like April and the contract will not be awarded until May 1st, do we qualify for applying for the bid?

Response: Submit your proposal and all supporting documents for evaluation.

Question 31: The state requires that only licensed aides, certified nursing assistants provide personal care for their clients.

Response: Yes. That is correct.

Question 32: References, where are the references coming from?

Response: Your references should come from your clients.

Question 33: The three years experience. If part of the experience is with another type of provider, like nurse staffing company.

Response: Proof of three years of experience shall be demonstrated by submitting with the Bid copies of the Bidders license for the past three years. (See Section 3.4.A Bidder Requirements)
Submit your proposal and supporting documents for evaluation.

Question 33: Do you have a summary of hours for the RN supervision or evaluation? Attachment K lists the chore and personal care hours by county that were requested in 2008. Do you have that breakout for the RN supervision or evaluation either?

Response: **No. It varies. The smaller jurisdictions tend to use the nursing evaluation more than the larger jurisdictions because they might have a nurse on staff.**

Question 34: How about the people who already have these contracts, already under contract, if they bid are they going to automatically get these contracts again?

Response: **No.**

Question 35: Attachment J is requesting four different names Project Manager, Emergency Contact, Quick Response and CNA Coordinator/Scheduler. Can they be the same person?

Response: **Yes. They can all be the same person.**

Question 36: With the living wage going into effect and the calculating of your process for services, we were paying our aides at one rate but now with the living wage that means we have to bump everything up. Could we lose a contract based on the ranking on your roster?

Response: **No. The roster is set up, the lowest to the highest. (See Section 1.1)**

Question 37: How are you going to rank all of the bids?

Response: **We will use the Cost Sheet (Attachment A) the Composite Weighted Hourly Rate.**