



REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS (RFQ)

FOR

People with Lived Experience Department of Children and Families Offices of Monitoring and Applied Research and Evaluation

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF THE REQUEST FOR QUOTES

This Request for Quotes (RFQ) is issued by The Department of Children and Families (DCF). The Contract will be awarded in the State of New Jersey's eProcurement system, NJSTART (www.njstart.gov). The awarded Contractor is advised to read through all Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) located on the NJSTART Vendor Support Page for information.

1.1 PURPOSE AND INTENT

The Department of Children and Families (DCF), Office of Monitoring (OOM), and Office of Applied Research and Evaluation (ARE) is issuing this Request for Quotations (RFQ) to engage a Contractor to recruit People With Lived Experience (PWLE) to participate in focus groups, assist in focus groups to identify the priorities of PWLE for use by OOM and ARE to develop quality monitoring tools and processes, and remunerate PWLE for their participation.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The Office of Monitoring (OOM) has the responsibility of evaluating the performance quality of public service networks funded and overseen by the DCF. The goal is to ensure consistent delivery of services across the network, while regularly assessing aspects such as service quality, referrals, constituent experience, adherence to service models, and overall outcomes and services. To achieve this, the OOM will employ participatory, transparent, and reliable monitoring methods, incorporating the priorities identified by PWLE. Working in close collaboration with the OOM, the Office of Applied Research and Evaluation (ARE) will develop standardized assessment tools

to be utilized for monitoring purposes. The information gathered through these monitoring activities will then be used to pinpoint areas that require improvement or change within the service network.

1.3 ORDER OF PRECEDENCE OF CONTRACTUAL TERMS

The Contract awarded, and the entire agreement between the parties, as a result of this RFQ shall consist of: (1) the final RFQ, (2) State of New Jersey Standard Terms and Conditions, (3) the Quote. In the event of a conflict in the terms and conditions among the documents comprising this Contract, the order of precedence, for purposes of interpretation thereof, listed from highest ranking to lowest ranking as noted above.

Any other terms or conditions, not included with the Bidder's Quote and accepted by the State, shall not be incorporated into the Contract awarded. Any references to external documentation, included those documents referenced by a URL, including without limitation, technical reference manuals, technical support policies, copyright notices, additional license terms, etc., are subject to the terms and conditions of the RFQ and the State of New Jersey Standard Terms and Condition. In the event of any conflict between the terms of a document incorporated by reference the terms and conditions of the RFQ and the State of New Jersey Standard Terms and Condition shall prevail.

2.0 PRE-QUOTE SUBMISSION INFORMATION

The Bidder assumes sole responsibility for the complete effort required in submitting a Quote and for reviewing the Quote submission requirements and the Scope of Work requirements.

2.1 QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

DCF will electronically accept questions and inquiries from all potential Bidders.

- A. Questions should be directly tied to the RFQ and asked in consecutive order, from beginning to end, following the organization of the RFQ; and
- B. A Bidder shall submit questions only via email to Shana.Fletcher@dcf.nj.gov. Questions will not be accepted in person or by telephone concerning this RFQ. In the event that questions are posed by Bidders, answers to such questions will be issued by Addendum. Any Addendum to this RFQ will become part of this RFQ and part of any Contract awarded as a result of this RFQ.

2.2 BID AMENDMENTS

In the event that it becomes necessary to clarify or revise this RFQ, such clarification or revision will be by Bid Amendment. Any Bid Amendment will become part of this RFQ, and part of any Contract awarded. There are no designated dates for release of Bid Amendments. It is the sole responsibility of the Bidder to be knowledgeable of all Bid Amendments related to this RFQ.

3.0 QUOTE SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

3.1 QUOTE SUBMISSION

In order to be considered for award, the Quote must be received by the DCF, by the required date and time indicated. If the Quote opening deadline has been revised, Bidders shall be notified via email of the new Quote opening deadline. Quotes not received prior to the Quote opening deadline shall be rejected.

3.2 BIDDER RESPONSIBILITY

The Bidder assumes sole responsibility for the complete effort required in submitting a Quote in response to this RFQ. No special consideration will be given after Quotes are opened because of a Bidder's failure to be knowledgeable as to all of the requirements of this RFQ. The State assumes no responsibility and bears no liability for costs incurred by a Bidder in the preparation and submittal of a Quote in response to this RFQ or any pre-contract award costs incurred.

3.3 BIDDER ADDITIONAL TERMS SUBMITTED WITH THE QUOTE

A Bidder may submit additional terms as part of its Quote. Additional terms are Bidder-proposed terms or conditions that do not conflict with the scope of work required in this RFQ, the terms and conditions of this RFQ, or the State of New Jersey Standard Terms and Conditions. Bidder proposed terms or conditions that conflict with those contained the State of New Jersey Standard Terms and Conditions will render a Quote non-responsive. It is incumbent upon the Bidder to identify and remove its conflicting proposed terms and conditions prior to Quote submission.

3.4 QUOTE CONTENT

The Quote should be submitted with the attachments organized in following manner:

- A. Forms;
- B. Technical Quote;
- C. State Price Sheet;
- D. Organizational description;

- E. Brief description of experience with providing similar services in the areas indicated in the Scope of Work; and
- F. DRAFT recruitment strategy for PWLE.

3.5 FORMS, REGISTRATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS TO BE SUBMITTED WITH QUOTE

Bidders are required to complete and submit the following forms:

1. Written verification from the Vendor (also referred to as a quote) that includes the total cost, deliverables, and timeframe for the deliverables;
2. Ownership Disclosure form;
3. Disclosure of Investigations;
4. Disclosure of Investments in Iran;
5. Source Disclosure;
6. Macbride Principles Certification;
7. C. 51 political contribution disclosure;
8. C. 271;
9. Certification of non-involvement in Prohibited Activities in Russia or Belarus pursuant to P.L. 2022.;
10. Affirmative Action Certificate (this can now be completed online, and it takes @ 5 business days to update in NJ Start);
11. State of NJ Standard Terms and Conditions (SSTCs);
12. Proof of Business Registration;
13. Proof of insurance (ACORD form) listing the State as an additional insured, with the additional insured box check, and the amounts detailed in Section 4.2 of the SSTCs; and
14. Business Associate's Agreement (BAA).

All forms with the exception of the BAA can be found at:
<https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/purchase/forms.shtml>.

**** Please note, if difficulty is experienced downloading the forms, use Internet Explorer.**

All vendor forms should be submitted with your quote.

3.6 PRICE SHEET INSTRUCTIONS

The Bidder must submit its pricing using the Price Sheet accompanying this RFQ.

Any price changes including handwritten revisions, or "white-outs" must be initialed. Failure to initial price changes shall preclude a Contract award from being made to the Bidder pursuant to N.J.A.C. 17:12-2.2(a)(8).

The Bidder must submit an All-Inclusive Firm-Fixed price **PER EACH FOCUS GROUP** on price line one (1) for contract years one (1) through three (3).

The Bidder must submit an All-Inclusive Firm-Fixed price for the **ANNUAL TASK** as detailed on the price sheet on price line (2) two for contract years one (1) through three (3) on the supplied Price Sheet.

The **TOTAL PRICE** shall be used for evaluation purposes, and each price line will be reviewed for reasonableness.

4.0 SCOPE OF WORK

4.1 OVERVIEW

The Contractor will recruit between five (5) to ten (10) confirmed PWLE to participate in one (1) structured interview taking up to one (1) hour, and one (1) 90-minute focus group, per Service Line. The same PWLE are expected to participate in both the structured interview and the focus group. DCF's OOM and ARE will develop five (5) service lines per year requiring a total of 15 focus groups across three (3) years.

NOTE: The Vendor will likely need to make outreach to more ten (10) PWLE to ensure between five (5) to ten (10) confirmed PWLE participate.

ARE will lead the facilitation of the focus groups; however, the Contractor must provide a coordinator who is bilingual in English and Spanish (at minimum, multi-lingual preferred), recruit PWLE who speak both English and Spanish, and provide live interpretation during focus groups.

The Contractor shall submit a final recruitment strategy plan for PWLE within 30 calendar days of award to DCF's OOM and ARE for approval.

4.2 OUTREACH AND SCREENING

The Contractor shall complete outreach to PWLE to ensure that the designated individual has received the services specified in the identified Service Line. Once confirmation is obtained, the Contractor must utilize screening tools provided by ARE (Office of Applied Research and Evaluation) to assess the individual's readiness for participation in the focus group, taking into consideration their availability.

The Contractor shall maintain a comprehensive record of focus group participants for the purpose of remuneration, including their full names as well as any aliases used during the focus groups. Additionally, the Contractor must keep a record of all recruitment activities conducted.

The Contractor shall be available to conduct focus group sessions outside of regular business hours if PWLE are unable to attend during regular business hours.

4.3 FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

The Contractor shall:

- A. Participate in an informational session to learn about the specific service line and/or focus group process prior to a focus group with OOM and ARE;
- B. Participate in an approximately one to two (1-2) hour practice session with OOM and ARE prior to the focus group;
- C. Co-facilitate by providing live interpretation during a 90-minute focus group;
- D. Join virtual or in person focus groups 30 minutes before start time to set up; and
- E. Participate virtually on a computer, laptop, or tablet.

NOTE: The Vendor will not participate in the structured interview. These interviews will occur between the PWLE and the monitor from OOM. Vendors will receive a list of participant's names from OOM for the purpose of remuneration.

4.4 RENUMERATION FOR PWLE

The Vendor shall remunerate PWLE in the amount of \$35.00 per participant at the conclusion of the one-hour interview and remunerate PWLE in the amount of \$50.00 per participant at the conclusion of each 90-minute focus group.

4.5 DATA COLLECTED FROM FOCUS GROUP

The Vendor shall review findings provided by ARE and OOM for accuracy in a debriefing session for 90 minutes approximately two (2) weeks after each focus group and provide feedback if any inaccuracies are noted.

5.0 GENERAL CONTRACT TERMS

The Contractor shall have sole responsibility for the complete effort specified in this Contract. Payment will be made only to the Contractor. The Contractor is responsible for the professional quality, technical accuracy and timely completion and submission of all deliverables, services or commodities required to be provided under this Contract. The Contractor shall, without additional compensation, correct or revise any errors, omissions, or other deficiencies in its deliverables and other services. The approval of deliverables furnished under this Contract shall not in any way relieve the Contractor of responsibility for the technical adequacy of its work. The review, approval, acceptance, or payment for any of the deliverables, goods or services, shall not be construed as a waiver of any rights that the State may have arising out of the Contractor's performance of this Contract.

5.2 CONTRACT TERM AND EXTENSION OPTION

The base term of this Contract shall be for a period of three (3) years.

5.3 OWNERSHIP OF MATERIAL

Data usage, storage, and protection of Personal Data are subject to all applicable international, federal and state statutory and regulatory requirements, as amended from time to time, including, without limitation, those for HIPAA, Tax Information Security Guidelines for Federal, State, and Local Agencies (IRS Publication 1075), New Jersey State tax confidentiality statute, the New Jersey Privacy Notice found at NJ.gov, N.J.S.A. § 54:50-8, New Jersey Identity Theft Prevention Act, N.J.S.A. § 56:11-44 et. seq., the federal Drivers' Privacy Protection Act of 1994, Pub.L.103-322, and the confidentiality requirements of N.J.S.A. § 39:2-3.4.

The Vendor shall:

- A. Ensure the security and confidentiality of all data;
- B. Erase all confidential files within 30 days after final data files have been approved by OOM;
- C. Keep information related to the identity of PWLE confidential;
- D. Agree not to publish, reproduce, or otherwise divulge such information in whole or in part or in any form, or authorize or permit others to do so; and
- E. Immediately notify, in writing, the State's authorized representative in the event there is reason to suspect a breach of this requirement.

The State is the Owner of any data sets. The Vendor has NO data rights and should not share or publish from state data sets without written permission. The Vendor shall not retain sample or data files beyond the time that is necessary to finalize data.

6.0 QUOTE EVALUATION AND AWARD

6.1 RECIPROCITY FOR JURISDICTIONAL BIDDER PREFERENCE

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 52:32-1.4, the State of New Jersey will invoke reciprocal action against an out-of-State Bidder whose state or locality maintains a preference practice for its in-state Bidders. The State of New Jersey will use the annual surveys compiled by the Council of State Governments, National Association of State Procurement Officials, or the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing or a State's statutes and regulations to identify States having preference laws, regulations, or practices and to invoke reciprocal actions. The State of New Jersey may obtain additional information as it deems appropriate to supplement the stated survey information.

A Bidder may submit information related to preference practices enacted for a State or Local entity outside the State of New Jersey. This information may be submitted in writing as part of

the Quote response, including name of the locality having the preference practice, as well as identification of the county and state, and should include a copy of the appropriate documentation, i.e., resolution, regulation, law, notice to Bidder, etc. It is the responsibility of the Bidder to provide documentation with the Quote or submit it to the Using Agency within five (5) business days after the deadline for Quote submission. Written evidence for a specific procurement that is not provided to the Using Agency within five (5) business days of the public Quote submission date may not be considered in the evaluation of that procurement but may be retained and considered in the evaluation of subsequent procurements.

6.2 CLARIFICATION OF QUOTE

After the Quote Opening Date, unless requested by the State as noted below, Bidder contact with the Using Agency regarding this RFQ and the submitted Quote is not permitted. After the Quotes are reviewed, one (1), some or all of the Bidders may be asked to clarify inconsistent statement contained within the submitted Quote.

6.3 STATE'S RIGHT TO CHECK REFERENCES

The State may also consult with clients of the Bidder during the evaluation of Quotes. Such consultation is intended to assist the State in making a Contract award that is most advantageous to the State.

6.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following evaluation criteria categories, not necessarily listed in order of significance, will be used to evaluate Quotes received in response to this RFQ. The evaluation criteria categories may be used to develop more detailed evaluation criteria to be used in the evaluation process.

6.5 TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used to evaluate and score Quotes received in response to this RFQ:

- A. Personnel: The qualifications and experience of the Bidder's management, supervisory, and key personnel assigned to the Contract, including the candidates recommended for each of the positions/roles required;
- B. Experience of firm: The Bidder's documented experience in successfully completing Contract of a similar size and scope in relation to the work required by this RFQ; and
- C. Ability of firm to complete the Scope of Work based on its Technical Quote: The Bidder's demonstration in the Quote that the Bidder understands the requirements of the Scope of Work and presents an approach that would permit successful performance of the technical requirements of the Contract.

6.6 PRICE EVALUATION

For evaluation purposes, Bidders will be ranked from lowest to highest according to the total Quote price located on the State-Supplied Price Sheet accompanying this RFQ.

6.7 QUOTE DISCREPANCIES

In evaluating Quotes, discrepancies between words and figures will be resolved in favor of words. Discrepancies between Unit Prices and totals of Unit Prices will be resolved in favor of Unit Prices. Discrepancies in the multiplication of units of work and Unit Prices will be resolved in favor of the Unit Prices. Discrepancies between the indicated total of multiplied Unit Prices and units of work and the actual total will be resolved in favor of the actual total. Discrepancies between the indicated sum of any column of figures and the correct sum thereof will be resolved in favor of the correct sum of the column of figures.

6.8 BEST AND FINAL OFFER (BAFO)

DCF may invite one (1) Bidder or multiple Bidders to submit a Best and Final Offer (BAFO). Said invitation will establish the time and place for submission of the BAFO. Any BAFO that does not result in more advantageous pricing to the State will not be considered, and the State will evaluate the Bidder's most advantageous previously submitted pricing.

DCF may conduct more than one (1) round of BAFO in order to attain the best value for the State.

BAFOs will be conducted only in those circumstances where it is deemed to be in the State's best interests and to maximize the State's ability to get the best value. Therefore, the Bidder is advised to submit its best technical and price Quote in response to this RFQ since the State may, after evaluation, make a Contract award based on the content of the initial submission.

6.9 CONTRACT AWARD

Contract award will be made with reasonable promptness by written notice to that responsible Bidder, whose Quote, conforming to this RFQ, is most advantageous to the State, price, and other factors considered.

7.0 IMPORTANT DATES

Questions are to be submitted to shana.fletcher@dcf.nj.gov by **July 17, 2023, 3:00 p.m. E.T.**

Quotes must be submitted to shana.fletcher@dcf.nj.gov by: **July 28, 2023, 3:00 p.m. E.T.**

We look forward to your response to this request for quotes.

Sincerely,
Shana Fletcher
Manager, Office of Procurement
Department of Children and Families