

**MARYLAND STATE TREASURER'S OFFICE
Louis L. Goldstein Treasury Building
80 Calvert Street, Room 109
Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
FOR
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR
QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICES FOR EBT IMPLEMENTATION
FOR MARYLAND WIC PROGRAM AND USVI WIC PROGRAM**

November 14, 2014

- Q-1. **Section 1.08** (Pg 2) - Will the State allow the Technical Proposal and the Cost Proposal to be packaged in the same container e.g., box, if the copies of the cost proposal are in a separate sealed envelope contained within the delivery box?
- A-1. Yes. Offerors must submit to the Procurement Officer the Technical Proposal and the Price proposal in separately sealed envelopes. Each envelope must include the RFP Title, RFP number and the Offeror's name and address. The Proposals may be contained within the same box (container) as long as they are clearly marked and separately sealed.
- Q-2. **Section 2.13** (pg. 7) – Regarding Living Wage, should the Affidavit be submitted with the cost proposal?
- A-2. A completed and signed Living Wage Affidavit is to be included with Technical Proposal. Refer to Section 4.03 of the RFP.
- Q-3. Will the chosen service provider evaluate, assess, recommend and track progress for manual, automation, and performance efforts?
- A-3. The State expects the QA contractor to evaluate all WIC procedures and systems impacted by implementation of the EBT system.
- Q-4. What is the expected total budget for this project?
- A-4. An expected total budget for this project is not available.
- Q-5. What are the expected staffing levels during years 1 through 5?
- A-5. As required in Section 4.03, item 3, the Offeror is to propose experienced personnel and have a working knowledge of the expected staffing levels to meet the requirements of this RFP at any given time.

- Q-6. Which automation tools will be used for the repository?
- A-6. The State will provide a Share Point site as the repository.
- Q-7. Will the e-WIC processor or State of Maryland be responsible for providing base data to the contractor for project planning/estimation?
- A-7. The State expects the QA contractor to develop the proposal based on the information in the QA RFP. Upon award, the State will provide any additional program data required (i.e. participation rates, etc.).
- Q-8. **Section 2.16** (page 7) – Will the state assess evaluation credit in this proposal for a subcontractor who is certified in another state and has applied for MBE status in MD?
- A-8. See Section 4.03, item 5(d), Economic Benefits to the State of Maryland.
- Q-9. **Section 3.01** (Pg 9) - Do the clinics fall under the local agencies? Do the local agencies act as clinic sites?
- A-9. Yes, clinics fall under local agencies. In most local agencies, the administrative office is co-located with a clinic site.
- Q-10. **Section 3.01** (Pg 9) - Does the USVI WIC Program headquarters office in St. Croix operate a clinic?
- A-10. The USVI WIC Program headquarters office in St. Croix is co-located with the Charles Harwood clinic.
- Q-11. **Section 3.02** (Pg 10) - Will the state provide a copy of, or access to the IAPD and/or other background materials for the EBT project?
- A-11. The State will provide any necessary materials to the successful contractor.
- Q-12. **Section 3.02** (Pg 11) - Since the RFP for e-WIC processor services RFP has yet to be released, do you have a better estimate as to when that contract may start?
- A-12. The tentative start date for the processing contract is July 1, 2015.
- Q-13. **Section 3.03 A 3** (Pg 12) - Can we assume these time frames relate only to the QA contractor deliverables and not to deliverables created by the Implementation vendor, which the QA contractor will assess? Or is this the standard?
- A-13. These time frames apply to both QA and processor deliverables.

- Q-14. **Section 3.03 B** - Asks each Offeror to discuss its ability to perform each of the following service tasks: Task 1 to Task 10. Will all tasks be awarded to one service provider or can they be awarded individually?
- A-14. Multiple contracts will not be awarded. The State will award one contract to that responsible Offeror whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the State based on the results of the final technical and price evaluations.
- Q-15. **Section 1.2.2** (Pg 12) - Does the State require this deliverable to be provided and maintained in MS Project?
- A-15. Yes, as specified in paragraph 3.03 A. 1.
- Q-16. **Section 1.3.1** (Pg 13) - Will the QA contractor be required to participate in MIS support contractor meetings to support the interface design, definition, interface testing and other meetings for the e-WIC project?
- A-16. State anticipates limited QA involvement in MIS development and modifications. The primary focus relative to the MIS will be the interface between that system and the EBT system.
- Q-17. **Section 1.3.1** (Pg 13) - Does the state have any indication of the expected dates and elapsed time of this activity?
- A-17. JAD sessions are expected to commence within 10 days of the execution of the processor's contract. While we expect the sessions to last from 3-5 days (i.e. 40 hours) the exact duration cannot be defined and may change.
- Q-18. **Section 1.3.1** (Pg 13) - Will there be multiple concurrent sessions held at any time? If so, what is the maximum number of concurrent sessions?
- A-18. Although we do not anticipate concurrent JAD sessions, concurrent session(s) may be necessary where warranted.
- Q-19. **Section 1.3.2** (Pg 13) - Can the State indicate the frequency of the scheduled and periodic status reports?
- A-19. The frequency and schedule for reports will vary throughout the project, based on project status and progress. The QA contractor will have input to determine the nature of the reports throughout the life of the project.
- Q-20. **Section 1.5.2** (Pg 13) –
- a. Does the State have a required percentage of time that the contract personnel will work on site?
 - b. Is it the intent of the State to have key QA members participate via conference call if contractors are not on site?

- c. What will be the State's requirement for providing advance notice for the key member(s) onsite requirement?
- A-20. a. No.
 b. Conference calls are acceptable, depending on the nature and urgency of the particular topic(s) under review.
 c. The State will provide 48-hours notice when an unscheduled onsite presence is required.
- Q-21. (Pg 14) Has the e-WIC processor from page 14 of the RFP been selected?
- A-21. No.
- Q-22. (Pg 14) Is this e-WIC processor experienced with testing related documents such as system testing & UAT? Will it be the same processor for WIC and USVI?
- A-22. The e-WIC processor is unknown at this time, so we do not know what experience they will have. The State anticipates issuing the RFP for the processor in January, 2015. As a result of that RFP, one experienced, qualified processor will be selected for both Maryland and the USVI.
- Q-23. **Section 2.1** (Pg 14) –
 a. When does the State anticipate the RFP will be issued for the e-WIC Services processor?
 b. Has FNS waived the 90 day review period for that RFP?
 c. Based on this is the start date of March 2015 for the e-WIC Services processor still realistic?
 d. What type of assistance would the state expect of the QA contractor?
- A-23. a. Under our current schedule, the processing RFP will be issued in January, 2015.
 b. FNS has already performed several reviews of the processing RFP.
 c. See response to Question 12.
 d. See response to Question 45.
- Q-24. **Section 1.4** (Pg 14) - Will the state provide a platform (e.g. SharePoint) for creation of the repository?
- A-24. Yes.
- Q-25. **Section 3.1** (Pg 15) – Are all applicable standards, requirements, specification identified?
- A-25. These are identified at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/ebt-guidance> and include:
- WIC EBT Technical Implementation Guide (TIG),
 - WIC EBT Operating Rules,

- Functional Requirements Document (FReD) for a Model WIC Information System,
- Food and Nutrition Service (“FNS”) WIC Universal MIS-EBT Interface Specifications (WUMEI).

Q-26. **Section 3.2** (Pg 15) - Has the state developed a Requirements Traceability Matrix for the e-WIC Implementation Project?

A-26. No. An RTM is part of a required deliverable from the processor.

Q-27. **Section 3.2** (Pg 15) –

- Does the State anticipate issuing a separate RFP for the WOW Interface to e-WIC (MIS contractor)?
- What is the expected level of effort of the QA contractor to evaluate the progress of the MIS Support Contractor?

A-27. a. No. Any development or modifications necessary will be performed by the current MIS contractor.

b. See response to Question 16.

Q-28. **Section 5.2** (pg 16) - Will the state require the e-WIC Implementation contractor to provide Deliverable Expectation Documents (DEDs) for these deliverables? If so, will the QA contractor be involved in the review of the DEDs?

A-28. Deliverables will be specifically identified in the project work plan proposed by the processor. The QA contractor will be afforded the opportunity for input prior to State approval of the work plan.

Q-29. **Section 5.2** (h) (Pg 16) - Does the State anticipate additional deliverables to be reviewed by the QA contractor for the MIS Support Contractor Interface design, Test Plans and Scripts and other deliverables for the e-WIC project?

A-29. The State expects the QA contractor to review all of the deliverables specified in paragraph 5.2 of the RFP. We do not anticipate QA review of other MIS Contractor deliverables.

Q-30. **Section 6.1.1** (Pg 16) - Does the State anticipate that the QA contractor will support the monitoring the MIS Support Contractor progress and work plan?

A-30. See response to Question 16.

- Q-31. **Section 6.2** (Pg 17) - Who is responsible for developing the UAT plan & scripts? Who is responsible for managing UAT? Who is responsible for executing the UAT?
- A-31. The e-WIC processor will be responsible for UAT plans & scripts, and for executing the UAT. The QA contractor is responsible for reviewing the overall UAT and its results.
- Q-32. **Section 6.2 B** (Pg 17) - As defined in the RFP, all of the tasks defined for the Testing Phase by the QA Contractor are completed prior to the start of UAT. Does the State anticipate that any participation by the QA Contractor in the UAT? If not, why is there a delay in considering the QA Contractor's deliverable complete until after the UAT is complete and the technical results report accepted?
- A-32. Yes, the State anticipates QA participation in the UAT. This participation includes verification that the UAT satisfies the objectives specified in Section 3.03(B), paragraphs 6.2.2 and 6.2.3, and resulting documentation required by paragraph 6.2.4.
- Q-33. **Section 7.1** (Pg 17) – What is meant by the word ‘coordinate’?
- A-33. The State's expectations are defined in the remainder of Section 3.03(B), paragraph 7.1.
- Q-34. **7.1** (pg 17-18) *Coordination of Certification Activity* – Is this activity primarily coordination in support of certification activities or does the State intend for the QA contractor to lead these activities?
- A-34. This is primarily coordination; the e-WIC processor is expected to lead this task.
- Q-35. **Section 7.1** (Pg 18) - How many test sites are expected? Have they been identified?
- A-35. The number of sites is unknown at this time, and is dependent, to a great extent, on the number of Maryland vendors participating in other on-line e-WIC projects at the time certification is to occur.
- Q-36. **Section 8.1.2 and 8.2.1** (Pg 18) - For the USVI, will the State office at St. Croix be considered the local agency (clinic) onsite reviews and pilot site support by the QA contractor?
- A-36. The USVI pilot site has not been determined as of this time.
- Q-37. **Section 8.2.1** (Pg 18) - How many local agencies will be involved in the pilot?
- A-37. The exact number is unknown at this time. The State anticipates the pilot will encompass three counties, with a total of 3-4 Local Agencies. The USVI pilot will include one Local Agency.

Q-38. **Section 9.1** (Pg 19-20) - Is the State assuming that e-WIC services will continue at the pilots sites, after pilot, during rollout?

A-38. Yes.

Q-39. **Section 3.03 B, 9.2.2** (Page 20) - Does on-site in this context mean at the project site?

A-39. Not necessarily. It is the State's expectation that at least one contractor representative will be available for at least one week for support in each roll-out area, wherever it may be required.

Q-40. **Section 3.03 B, 9.2.2** (Page 20) - Section 3.02 talks to a staggered roll-out. How many 'roll-outs' are expected, including in the Virgin Islands?

A-40. Current plans are for Maryland to have a pilot and five "roll-outs," and the VI one pilot and one "roll-out".

Q-41. **Section 4.01** (Pg 22) - Should a copy of the transmittal letter be included external to the 2 separately packaged proposals (cost/technical) or included internal to one or both of the proposals?

A-41. The Transmittal letter may be included in all copies of the Technical Proposal.

Q-42. **Section 4.03 4 a** (Pg 24) - Will the state accept similar projects for Federal agencies?

A-42. Yes. The Offeror should demonstrate how the cited project(s) is similar to the Maryland e-WIC project.

Q-43. **Section 4.04 4** (Pg 24) - Can experience and references of sub-contractors be used? Can experience and references from teaming partners be used?

A-43. Subcontractor and teaming-partner experience and references may supplement, but not be a substitute for, the Offeror's experience and references.

Q-44. **Section 4.04** (Pg 25) - Should disclosures be included in the Technical Proposal?

A-44. Yes.

Q-45. **Appendix A** (Pg 32) - As Task 2 is optional, depending on the needs of the State, how many hours should be assumed for assistance in the development of the e-WIC Request for Proposal and evaluation of the e-WIC Processor's technical proposal?

- A-45. The e-WIC Processor RFP is expected to be issued prior to the March 2015 anticipated start date for the QA contract, therefore Offerors should not consider paragraph 2.1 of Task 2. Consideration should be given to paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3, as the selected Offeror may serve in a consultant role
- Q-46. **Appendix A** (Pg 32) - QA Pilot Oversight – as the requirement is to provide one staff person to monitor each local agency involved in the pilot (Section 8.2.1), how many local agencies will be involved in the pilot for both Maryland and the U.S. Virgin Islands?
- A-46. See response to Question 37.
- Q-47. **Appendix A** (Pg 32) - Section 9.2.2 requires a contractor staff member to be onsite to monitor each rollout for one week. How many rollout phases are anticipated for the Maryland rollout? How many for the U.S. Virgin Islands?
- A-47. See response to Question 40.
- Q-48. In Volume I – Technical Proposal, is there a page count limitation on our respective responses to each subsection of the Service Tasks?
- A-48. No.