

**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  
E-WIC PROCESSING SERVICES FOR THE  
WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN PROGRAM FOR THE  
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
AND  
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS  
DEPARTMENT OF PROPERTY AND PROCUREMENT  
RFP #MD/VI-EWIC-02182015**

April 2, 2015

- Q-1. Section 1.06 (pg. 2) - Given the extensive requirements for two separate systems would the State please agree to extend the proposal response deadline by at least five weeks?
- A-1. The Proposal Due Date and Time will not be extended.
- Q-2. Section 1.07 (pg. 2) - Given the extensive requirements and the unique needs for implementing two core WIC systems would the State agree to amend the RFP to include an additional round of questions and answers from bidders? This in conjunction with an extension will allow follow up questions from the first round of questions and/or additional questions that need to be submitted to the State.
- A-2. Additional questions will be permitted at the State Pre-Proposal Conference on March 25, 2015 at 11:00. A summary of the Conference will be sent to known prospective Offerors and posted on eMaryland Marketplace.
- Q-3. Section 1.09 (pg. 2) - RFP states: "To be considered for award, Offerors must submit to the Procurement Officer a package containing one (1) written original, and seven (7) copies (total of 8) of the Technical Proposal and the Price Proposal, each in separate sealed envelopes."

Please confirm that the States require seven (7) copies in addition to the one (1) original. Does this mean that the technical proposals should be packaged separately from the price proposals (i.e., technical proposals sealed in one envelope, price

proposals sealed in another envelope) or that each of the 8 total proposal packages needs to be provided in its own sealed envelope (8 sealed envelopes)?

A-3. This is to confirm the State requires seven (7) copies and one (1) original (for a total of 8 copies) for both the technical and price proposals. All copies of the technical proposal may be packaged in one envelope or box. All copies of the price proposal may be packaged in one envelope which should be sealed separate from the envelope or box containing the technical proposal copies.

Q-4. Section 3.02 (pg. 11) and Section 14.1.14 (pg. 69) - Can bidders propose alternate implementation timelines for the Maryland/USVI WIC project to ensure adequate coverage for pilot activities and statewide rollout extended beyond those listed in the RFP?

A-4. Yes. However, the State desires to implement both projects as soon as practical, and any proposed timelines extending the schedule significantly may be viewed less favorably than those that do not extend the schedule. The State reserves the right of final approval on any schedule.

Q-5. Section 3.02 (pg. 11) – RFP states "many of the design, development and test activities (including the User Acceptance Test) can be done simultaneously".

Does mean that the States expect that testing activities, specifically UAT, will be conducted at the same location?

A-5. The State and USVI systems will be nearly identical, so the State anticipates that many of the design and development activities will encompass both the Maryland and the USVI EBT systems simultaneously. However, during the final stages of testing, tests may require be required to occur separately in Maryland and in USVI.

Q-6. Section 3.04.5 (pg. 15) - This section discusses collateralization requirements. Will balances be held in the Offeror's account? If so, please provide additional guidance as to collateralization levels?

A-6. No. The RFP, Section 3.04 Minimum Requirements, item #5 states, "All collateral must be held in the name of the State of Maryland either, (a) with the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, (b) with the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, or (c) at the sole discretion of the Treasurer, on deposit with an independent financial institution acceptable to the Treasurer." Sections 6-202 and 6-209 of the State Finance and Procurement Article are attached as Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 2 respectively.

Q-7. Section 3.6.2 (pg. 24) The State has a number of specific requirements surrounding "pending" cards. Is it necessary that the EBT vendor actually manage cards in a pending status or would alternative approaches to managing and reporting on households for which benefits have not been issued be acceptable?

- A-7. Alternative approaches will be entertained, as long as they achieve the State's objectives regarding households to which benefits have not been issued.
- Q-8. The RFP states, "The e-WIC systems shall provide online functionality to delete a pending household account. In addition, the e-WIC systems shall automatically purge pending accounts based on parameters established by the State and/or the USVI. The e-WIC systems shall also automatically purge pending cards associated with any pending accounts."

Would the State consider the following as an acceptable alternative to this requirement:

"The e-WIC systems shall provide the ability to deactivate a pending household account, which eliminates that account from being able to receive benefits or using any cards associated with that account, but keeps data intact for audit purposes."

- A-8. Yes. The State will consider the alternative.
- Q-9. Section 4.1.5 (pg. 29) - The cancellation of a proxy card functionality is not included in Section 11 with the other details of the web, ARU, and CSRs. Should it be?
- A-9. Yes, both primary & proxy cards should be able to be cancelled via the ARU, CSR and client portal.
- Q-10. Section 4.2.3.3 (pg. 30) - The RFP states, "The Contractor will apply for separate IIN's on behalf of Maryland and the USVI. Maryland and the USVI shall own their respective IIN's, and retain ownership beyond the expiration of the e-WIC Contract."

Should vendors interpret this requirement to mean that any funding requirements to obtain IINs on behalf of Maryland and the USVI are to be covered by the Contractor?

- A-10. Yes. The application cost for the Issuer Identification Numbers will not be covered by MD or USVI.
- Q-11. Section 4.3 (pg. 32) - We observed when implementing EBT for other WOW states, that the WOW system has very sophisticated and comprehensive card management functionality. Will the same functionality be available to Maryland and USVI and, if so, do the Agencies want the EBT vendor to develop and provide essentially the identical capabilities.
- A-11. Yes. The same WOW functionality will be available in Maryland and USVI. The card management functionality for the clinics will be handled in WOW. All other inventory functions in Section 4.3 will be the responsibility of the Contractor.

Q-12. 7.5.3 (pg. 47) - The RFP states, "The e-WIC systems shall also support navigation between queries, including the following:

- From account status query;
- Between WIC vendor and household queries;
- From summary to detail and from detail to summary; and
- From reconciliation to exception reports.

Our understanding is that users are able to navigate to the different queries within the EBT administrative system, but that each query must be run on its own. Is this a correct assumption? If not, can the State provide additional clarification?

A-12. Yes. This is a correct assumption.

Q-13. Task 13: Reports (pg. 65) – The RFP States "At a minimum, the package must include all reports required by latest version of the Functional Requirements Document for a Model WIC Information System (FReD)."  
Will the State confirm that vendors are only to provide a reporting package that includes those reports in Exhibit 3-13 of the FReD that include a check mark in the EBT column (referencing Functional Requirements Document for a Model WIC Information System Version 2008 2.0)?

A-13. No. Depending on the ultimate system design and functionality, additional/other reports may be required. Bidders may propose their standard "report suite" based on their particular design; this suite must include, at a minimum, the reports specified in the FReD.

Q-14. Section 18.1 (pg. 78) - The RFP states the following, "The e-WIC systems shall initiate a response to a request to transmit or retrieve a file within two (2) seconds from the time such request is received by the EBT system, 99.99% of the time, excluding scheduled downtime, on a monthly basis. (OR 6.1.b)."

Our assumption is that—with regard to Maryland and the USVI—this requirement applies to the batch files that are exchanged between the MIS and the EBT system. Will the State verify if our assumption is correct? If it is, how will this be measured and identified by the State as an SLA issue?

A-14. Yes. Measurement shall be as defined in the bidders reports required in task 13.1.

Q-15. Section 4.03 (pg. 83) The RFP states that the Copy of the GVI Certificate of Resolution must be signed or attested by the company's secretary. Can this form be signed or attested by the individual authorized to bind the offeror?

A-15. The GVI Certificate of Resolution must be signed or attested by the company's secretary. The company's secretary cannot attest themselves on the Certificate of Resolution.

- Q-16. Section 4.03.3 c. Draft Implementation Plan (pg. 84) - RFP requires "A draft implementation plan as described in Section III, paragraph 14.1.14"  
Please clarify the expectation of what should be provided in the response versus the required deliverable (Task 14 .1.14), as an implementation plan requires considerable collaboration with the States.
- A-16. Task 14 is a list of required deliverables, all of which the offeror, must positively agree to provide in the technical proposal. The draft implementation plan must be included as an attachment/appendix to the technical proposal, and should define the elements of the plan, schedules or timeframes, risks, etc.
- Q-17. Section 5.02 (pg 89) - Please provide information on the members of the Evaluation Committee, such as how many members from MD and from VI, members outside of the WIC Program, etc.
- A-17. The make-up of the evaluation committee is not disclosed.
- Q-18. Section 5.02 (pg 89) - RFP states "Technical merit will be given more weight than price in determining the Evaluation Committee's final ranking"  
Please provide more detail about how pricing will be evaluated and provide the weighting between technical and price points. For example, will the State be evaluating based on the total contract value over the 4 year contract period? Or will individual costs in the price proposal be compared across offerors?
- A-18. Price proposals will be evaluated and ranked according to the best overall price for the term of the Contract.
- Q-19. Section 5.03 (pg. 89) - RFP states "*For the technical evaluation, the Evaluation Committee will take into consideration the following factors listed in the order of relative importance (greatest first):*"  
Will the State please provide the breakdown of points for these factors so bidders understand the weighting of evaluation factors?
- A-19. No. Evaluation factors are listed in order of relative importance, but the specific weights for these factors are not disclosed.
- Q-20. Section 5.02 (pg. 89) - Can the State provide the weighting criteria that will be used by the evaluators? For example: maximum points aligned with technical and price proposal?
- A-20. See answer to Question 19 above.
- Q-21. Section 5.03 (pg. 89) - Will the State consider removing the Community Benefits and Economic Impact to Maryland evaluation factors from this proposal? These

requirements create an unfair advantage to large firms. Small businesses that have a strategic focus in providing the services required in this area are at a disadvantage based on these requirements. They are also included in the Technical Evaluation and do not reflect the technical capabilities of a "responsible" offeror.

- A-21. No. For an Offeror that is not a financial institution, the Offeror must contract with a financial institution to serve as a depository of funds (see Section 3.04 Minimum Requirements, of the RFP). Consideration must be given to the Community Benefits to Maryland for any financial institution that will serve as a depository of State funds. Economic Benefits include direct or indirect benefits to the State as a result of the contract as a whole.
- Q-22. Appendix G, Addendum III (pg. 154) - The Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion Lower Tier Covered Transactions is not listed in Section 4.03 as one of the documents to include with the proposal. Should this form be signed and included with the submitted proposal?
- A-22. No. If selected as the contractor for USVI, this form will be signed as part of the USVI Personal Services Contract, exhibited as Appendix G in the RFP.
- Q-23. Exhibit 3 (pg. 166) - In Exhibit 3 – Maryland Vendor Summary, there is notation about a Direct Distribution Center. Is the Direct Distribution Center treated like other WIC vendors or does it require any special processing. such as Formula Warehouse or Above 50% WIC Vendor?
- A-23. The Direct Distribution Center is a Special Infant Formula Warehouse. Ordering of special formulas and payment amounts will continue to be handled by WOW. The processor will be required to provide daily payment amounts, sent from WOW, to the Direct Distribution Center.

### General

- Q-24. Would the State be interested in learning about cost saving opportunities? If so, how should these be presented?
- A-24. Cost saving opportunities should be included in Task 19, which includes *Innovative Implementation & Operational Strategies*.
- Q-25. Will the State please provide the projected date to go live in Pilot with the eWIC system in Maryland?
- A-25. The Pilot date is determined by the start date of the contract. Per section 3.05 of the RFP, the UAT must take place within 12 months of the contract start date; the State would anticipate the Pilot starting 1-2 months after the UAT.

- Q-26. Will the State please provide the approved Feasibility Study and IAPD for this project?
- A-26. No. The State has provided all information necessary to submit a proposal in RFP and the amendments thereto. However, such information may be provided to the successful proposer as necessary.
- Q-27. There are several requirements where the state would delete data (ie pending households) or add data (new households, benefits, etc.) directly through the AT. How does the State plan to reconcile the out of sync data with the MIS system?
- A-27. The State expects the EBT system, as part of its overall design, to track the manual and automatic deletion of accounts, and provide reports of all user and automated activity.
- Q-28. The RFP indicates universal interface compliance and no changes anticipated to the States/Terrority systems. Would the State/Terrority be willing to use the contractors file formats and make minor changes to be consistent with those of the Crossroads and Mountain Plains SAM system? This would be less expensive and likely provide benefits in the future.
- A-28. The State cannot commit to accepting such changes at this time. WOW is currently utilizing current EBT file formats in other States, but offerors may propose using other file formats as a cost-saving alternative in task 19 (see question # above).
- Q-29. The RFP indicates that the interface with NUPC database has been in development for several years but never made it to production. Does the State have an alternative solution in the event that the NUPC database continues to be unusable? When does the State/Terrority anticipate the database will be operational?
- A-29. The State does not know when the NUPC database will become operational. Until it is operational, the APL will be provided by the MIS.
- Q-30. Are bidders allowed to take exceptions to Terms and Conditions? If so, how are these to be submitted?
- A-30. Section 2.19 Order of Precedence, states, "If an Offeror proposes any terms and conditions inconsistent with the requirements of the solicitation, the Offeror must clearly state those terms and conditions in its proposal."

State Finance and Procurement Article

§6-202.

Collateral that may be used under this subtitle shall be:

- (1) an obligation of the United States or any of its agencies;
- (2) an obligation guaranteed by the United States or by any of its agencies;
- (3) an obligation insured by the United States;
- (4) an obligation of the State or any of its units or instrumentalities;
- (5) an obligation of a county of the State or any of its agencies;
- (6) an obligation of a municipal corporation in the State or any of its agencies;
- (7) an obligation of any other governmental authority in the State;
- (8) an obligation of the Inter-America Development Bank;
- (9) an obligation of the World Bank;
- (10) an obligation of the following government-sponsored enterprises:
  - (i) the Federal Home Loan Banks;
  - (ii) the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation;
  - (iii) the Federal National Mortgage Association;
  - (iv) the Farm Credit System;
  - (v) the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation; and
  - (vi) the Student Loan Marketing Association;
- (11) a surety bond if:
  - (i) subject to the terms and conditions of the bond, it is irrevocable and absolute;
  - (ii) the surety bond is issued by an insurance company authorized to do business in this State;
  - (iii) the issuer of the surety bonds does not provide surety bonds for any one financial institution in an amount that exceeds 10% of the surety bond insurer's policyholders' surplus and contingency reserve, net of reinsurance; and
  - (iv) the claims-paying ability of the authorized insurance company is rated, at all relevant times, in the highest category by at least two nationally recognized rating agencies acceptable to the Treasurer;
- (12) an obligation or security of, or other interest in, any open-end or closed-end management type investment company or investment trust registered under the provisions of the federal Investment Company Act of 1940, 15 U.S.C. § 80a-1 et seq., if:
  - (i) the portfolio of the open-end or closed-end management type investment company or investment trust is limited to direct obligations of the United States government and to repurchase agreements fully collateralized by United States government obligations; and
  - (ii) the open-end or closed-end management type investment company or investment trust takes delivery of that collateral, either directly or through an authorized custodian; or
- (13) a letter of credit issued by a Federal Home Loan Bank if the letter of credit meets the conditions under the guidelines issued by the State Treasurer's office.



**State Finance and Procurement Article**

§6-209.

- (a) State money on deposit with a financial institution shall be secured by:
  - (1) deposit insurance; or
  - (2) collateral as required by this section.
- (b) (1) The collateral for State money on deposit with a financial institution:
  - (i) must have, at all times, a market value that equals or exceeds the State money that is on deposit with the financial institution and is not covered by deposit insurance; and
  - (ii) must be approved by the Treasurer.
- (2) If the collateral is a surety bond under § 6-202 of this subtitle:
  - (i) the surety bond shall be in a form and amount acceptable to the Treasurer as determined by the Treasurer from time to time; and
  - (ii) the financial institution that provides the surety bond as collateral shall immediately notify the Treasurer if the rating assigned to the issuing insurance company by any rating agency, found acceptable to the Treasurer under § 6-202 of this subtitle, is withdrawn or downgraded, in which event the financial institution shall immediately provide the Treasurer with substitute collateral permitted under § 6-202 of this subtitle.
- (3) Subject to the requirements of this subsection, a financial institution may change its collateral from time to time.
- (c) (1) A custodian shall hold the collateral under this section for the benefit of the State.
- (2) A financial institution may use as a custodian:
  - (i) any banking institution that is approved by the Commissioner of Financial Regulation to conduct commercial banking business in the State;
  - (ii) a federal reserve bank; or
  - (iii) any national banking association that is approved by the Comptroller of the Currency to conduct banking business in the State.
- (3) A financial institution may not be approved as custodian for the collateral of a depository unless the assets of the financial institution equal or exceed 200% of the value of the collateral to be held for the depository.