

RFP – Retainer Contract Opportunity for Information Technology (IT) Services

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

April 1, 2024

BIDDERS ARE HEREBY ADVISED: The State's responses to questions concerning this RFP are provided for convenience and clarity only. The responses do not amend or in any way alter the terms and requirements set forth in the RFP. The State shall issue an Addendum to the RFP.

1. What is the contract number?

Answer: **This is a Request for Proposal not a contract.**

2. Section 4.2 Page 5, Could you please clarify if we have to submit the bid response in a single document or four different documents for Cover Letter, Technical Response, Price Schedule and Certificate of Compliance.

Answer: Single document. **Reference RFP section 5.2.1.**

3. Section 4.4.2.1, Page 5, Can we include the list of current or past projects of our subcontractor.

Answer: Current or past projects of a subcontractor would be responsive to RFP section **4.4.3.**

4. Section 4.4.2.1, Page 5, Can we include the list of current or past projects of other State.

Answer: **In responding to RFP section 4.4.2, bidders may identify current or past projects with other state or government entities. RFP Section 4.4.2.1 is intending to solicit information concerning projects with the State of Vermont.**

5. Section 4.4.2, Page 5, As part of the capabilities, is state expecting our delivery approach writeup for each service category mentioned in the RFP.

Answer: **Yes.**

6. Section 4.4.2, Page 5, We are suggesting limiting the page count for describing capabilities and experience for each IT services categories to 4 pages.

Answer: That is at a bidder's discretion. The RFP does not provide any such limitation but, per RFP section 4, the State discourages overly lengthy and costly proposals.

7. What is the estimated budget for this contract?

Answer: There is no estimated budget for this RFP. It would depend on the individual projects that are assigned under the IT Professional Service categories.

8. What was the clients spending in relation to the Current IT Staff Augmentation Contract for the previous year?

Answer: N/A

9. Is there any incumbent for this contract or is this for a new contract? If yes, can you please let us know the name of incumbent, their hourly rate and historical spend?

Answer: Current retainer contracts can be found online at: <https://bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing%20and%20contracting/current%20contrats/information-technology>

Follow the link entitled "IT Retainer Contracts (revised 03-01-2024)".

10. Can you please provide some background on the types of projects that require support and specifics regarding the professional and technical staff you are looking for to augment your team?

Answer: Such details would be supplied by the State during the SOW-RFP process described in the IT Retainer Contract.

11. How many requirements are anticipated to be released annually?

Answer: Unknown at this time.

12. How many awards to be made under this contract?

Answer: Unknown at this time.

13. Please confirm if there is any local preference?

Answer: Please refer to section 3.5. of the RFP.

14. On average how many temporary IT staff are deployed at any given time?

Answer: N/A

15. What is the expected lead time for vendor to provide requested contracted staff?

Answer: Such details, as applicable, would be supplied by the State during the SOW-RFP process described in the IT Retainer Contract.

16. What is the minimum duration of each contract position or task order?

Answer: See response to question 15.

17. How many task orders can we expect for each vendor?

Answer: SOW-RFPs will be issued to all eligible retainer suppliers that are pre-qualified to provide services in the desired category(ies) that meet the business need(s).

18. Could you please provide details about how task orders will be issued? Specifically, will they be delivered via email, through a portal, or by any other designated method?

Answer: Statement of Work Request for Proposals (SOW RFP) and Statement of Work (SOW) Agreements are delivered via email.

19. Is subcontracting mandatory for this RFP? Do you have specific goals or requirements related to subcontracting?

Answer: Subcontracting is not mandatory. Requirements for subcontracting are laid out in the RFP and IT Retainer Contract form included with the RFP.

20. Do we need to rebid or renew our existing IT Retainer Contract, which ends on 07/19/2024?

Answer: Reference RFP sections 1.1.2. and 1.1.3.

21. In attachment A1, could you please clarify if we are required to submit only one category titled "Title of Positions," or if we can submit multiple categories under this title? If the latter is permissible, would it be acceptable to recreate the form to accommodate multiple "Title of Positions"?

Answer: An Addendum to the RFP will be issued to provide a fillable document for attachment A1 that will allow for multiple position titles.

22. Could you provide the names of current vendors providing the services? Also, can we access proposals or pricing from these incumbents?

Answer: See response to question 9.

23. Are there any specific pain points or issues with the current vendors?

Answer: N/A

24. Could you please provide information on the previous spending for this contract?

Answer: Approximate overall contract spend under the IT Retainers for the past two years has been \$12,000,000.00.

25. Can you confirm the approximate budget allocated for this contract?

Answer: There is no estimated budget for this RFP. It would depend on the individual projects that are assigned under the IT Professional Service categories.

26. What is the estimated number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTEs) needed for each category as outlined in "Attachment A1"?

Answer: N/A

27. Can the State provide an estimated budget for the services contracted through this RFP?

Answer: There is no estimated budget for this RFP. It would depend on the individual projects that are assigned under the IT Professional Service categories.

28. Does the State have an expected number of vendors it intends to add to its IT Vendor Pool?

Answer: No.

29. Must any or all references requested for the RFP be attached to government clients?

Answer: No.

30. Regarding section 3.5 Method of Award, "All other considerations being equal, preference will be given first to resident bidders of the state and/or to products raised or manufactured in the state, and then to bidders who have practices that promote clean energy and address climate change, as identified in the applicable Certificate of Compliance." How will this work in relation to bidders from out-of-state; does the State plan to provide local preference in selecting new vendors?

Answer: RFP section 3.5. permits an in-state preference when all other considerations are equal.

31. Is there any SBE/MBE/WBE goal for this solicitation?

Answer: SBE/MBE/WBE companies are encouraged to submit a bid proposal, but there is no specific goal in place.

32. Are electronic signatures allowed?

Answer: Yes

33. Are there scores for the evaluation criteria? If yes, could you please disclose it?

Answer: Scoring is based on factors in section 3.6. of RFP.

34. Could the State please confirm that vendors can fill out proposal forms electronically?

Answer: Yes. An Addendum will be issued to provide Attachment A1 as a fillable document.

35. Does the State accept remote resources to work on this engagement?

Answer: Yes depending on the project-specific requirements set forth in a SOW-RFP.

36. Does the State accept offshore resources to work on this engagement?

Answer: No

37. Does the State prefer on-site resources to execute this engagement?

Answer: Attachment A1 solicits roles and rates for both on-site and remote resources. Any preference will depend on the project-specific requirements set forth in a SOW-RFP.

38. Could the State please confirm that vendors only have to follow the format outlined in section 4.2 to create the Technical Response?

Answer: Technical Response detail is provided in RFP section 4.4.

39. Under Section 4.4.1 states "Provide details concerning your form of business organization, company size and resources." Could the State please elaborate on what information vendors have to provide for Business Organization?

Answer: Bidder's discretion. Information may include the company's origin of business, history, goals, employee count, how company resources are selected for individual project, etc.

40. Under Section 4.4.1 states "Provide details concerning your form of business organization, company size and resources." Could the State please elaborate on what information vendors have to provide for resources to suffice this requirement?

Answer: See response to question 39.

41. Could the State please clarify if the attachments have to be included within the technical response?

Answer: Unclear what attachments are being referred to in this question. Unable to respond.

42. Could the State please clarify if vendors have to provide references? if yes, under which section of the technical response vendors have to include them?

Answer: Yes. References are to be listed on the Certificate of Compliance form within RFP.

43. Could the State please clarify if vendors have to provide references with the Technical Response? if yes, can vendors provide commercial references?

Answer: See response to question 42. Commercial references are acceptable.

44. Could the State please clarify if vendors have to provide references with the Technical Response? if yes, can vendors provide ongoing contracts as references?

Answer: **See response to question 42. On-going contract references are acceptable.**

45. Can vendors provide hourly rate ranges?

Answer: **An hourly rate must be specified for each On-Site and/or Remote role associated with each Title of Position identified on Attachment A1. Hourly rate ranges are not acceptable.**

46. What is the total allocated budget for this contract?

Answer: **See response to question 7.**

47. What has been the contract spend over the past three years?

Answer: **See response to question 24.**

48. Is there a specific format for the proposal response (font size, font type, spacing, etc.)?

Answer: **No.**

49. Are firms required to pay Holidays, PTO, Sick Leaves, etc., to the consultants placed?

Answer: **This decision is made between the selected contractor and their consultants. This is not a State determination.**

50. Is the State looking for firms to recruit the requested positions or for firms to provide in-house personnel to perform the services?

Answer: **The State not looking for firms to recruit the requested positions.**

51. Is the State looking for staffing services?

Answer: **No**

52. Could the State please confirm that resumes for the roles listed in attachment A1 are not required with the proposal response?

Answer: **Not mandatory, but may be submitted if/as necessary demonstrate capabilities relative to the specifications set out for any IT service category(s) of interest to the Bidder.**

53. Attachment A1: IT Service Categories, Roles and Rates, could the State please clarify if vendors can choose categories or if vendors are required to provide rates for all the categories listed in this attachment?

Answer: **Bidders may choose the one or more service categories they wish to bid on.**

54. Could the State please clarify whether vendors are permitted to submit a single response demonstrating the qualifications of the company and relevant experience for all roles requested in this solicitation as a whole, or if vendors are required to address each category separately and demonstrate qualifications and experience separately for each category listed in Attachment A1?

Answer: **An overall resource capability statement will suffice.**

55. Could the State please clarify how many references vendors have to provide and what information vendors have to include for references?

Answer: **See item F. References of the Certificate of Compliance form within the RFP.**

56. Under Section 4.4.2.1 states "Identify all current or past State projects." Could the State please clarify what information vendors have to provide for these projects?

Answer: **Identify, at minimum, the specific State of Vermont agency/department and project title.**

57. Under Section 4.4.2.1 states "Identify all current or past State projects." Could the State please clarify if vendors only have to list their state projects/clients?

Answer: **See response to question 4.**

58. Under Section 4.4.2.1 states "Identify all current or past State projects." Could the State please clarify how many projects vendors have to provide to suffice this requirement?

Answer: **All current or past projects with the State of Vermont.**

59. Under Section 4.4.2.1 states "Identify all current or past State projects." Does this mean State of Vermont projects or a Government project with any State/County/Local Government will suffice?

Answer: **See response to question 4.**

60. Could the State please clarify if vendors are required to provide their Recruitment Approach? if yes, under which section do vendors have to include it?

Answer: **Not required.**

61. Could the State please clarify if vendors have to provide their Key Personnel? if yes, under which section do vendors have to provide them?

Answer: **Key personnel will be specified on each Statement of Work Agreement for individual projects.**

62. Could the State please confirm that vendors who have an existing IT Retainer Contract do not have to submit a new proposal to be awarded for this contract?

Answer: **Please reference section 1.1.2 of the RFP.**

63. If we have an existing IT Retainer Contract, but we want to update the rates, can vendors just provide the attachment A1 with the updated rates, or vendors vendors have to submit a new proposal response to be able to update the rates?

Answer: **Please reference section 1.1.2 of the RFP.**

64. Section 3.1.1. of the RFP states that "Prices and/or rates shall remain firm for the term of the contract." Can the State limit this requirement to proposed prices for a defined set of services and not the Offeror's rate card? Vendors understand that the resultant contract could potentially have a term of three years. Allowing Vendors to propose escalation to their rates over the anticipated three-year period of performance offers the best value to the State and avoids artificially bloated rates to prematurely address inflation in the outyears.

Answer: **No. All hourly rates must remain firm over the duration of the IT Retainer Contract.**

