Questions and Answers for the Quality Assurance RFP
Vocational Rehabilitation
12/8/2020

- Is there a formal QA system in place currently? Is this project going to improve upon a system or create a completely new one form scratch? We have an informal QA system and would like to improve upon it and add more structure.

- Similarly, which software systems, if any, are currently in use to store some of the key indicators we would want to use for the QA system (e.g. employment status after six months)? We utilize the AWARE case management system.

- How many staff are relevant to this project (i.e. how many staff would require training on the new system)? We have a bureau of about 80 individuals.

- Could you share the formal posting link with me? Will a recording of the bidders' zoom conference call be posted in the same place? Here is the link: https://www.education.nh.gov/partners/working-nh-doe/requests-proposals

- The zoom conference was not recorded but we captured all the questions and will share them all on the website for you to reference.

- Who is the incumbent? There is no incumbent for this work.

- What is the contract amount with the incumbent? N/A

- What is the business reason for posting this RFP now? NHVR is always interested in program improvement strategies and has undergone a state audit the last 18 months. Quality assurance improvements will assist with responding to the audit in many ways.

- What are the challenges that your agency hopes to resolve with this engagement? We would like a structured quality assurance system to manage all aspects of quality assurance for case work.

- What are the pain points with the current processes and services? All staff, whether Supervisors or VR Counselors, have various ways to review cases and case work and make different determinations. We want this system to help structure case review and quality assurance processes as well as internal controls and risk assessment.

- What are the specific improvements your agency would like the next contractor to bring to your processes and services? See #5.

- What is the budget range that has been established for the duration of this engagement? There is no budget range. We would like an appropriate budget for the work to be performed.

- Is this opportunity to be funded with Federal monies? Yes.

- If so, will any federal responsibilities convey to the awardee? No.

- Can the contract start date be clarified? The contract will begin once our Governor and Executive Council has approved the contract. We have a very structured approval process for contract approvals in NH. It is likely that we would be writing the contract. I have amended the RFP with the following dates: 3/1/21-3/31/22.
- Page 1 says: 1/1/21 (or upon Governor and Council approval)-12/31/21
- Page 2 says: Governor and Council, approval (G&C) February/March 2021

- May the successful bidder for this project be located outside of NH? Yes.

- Can the work of this engagement be done on a 100% remote basis? Yes, but this could be negotiated if COVID restrictions change.

- How can bidders receive a copy of the RFP referenced (p 14) "Standard Terms and Conditions of the State of New Hampshire which is attached as Appendix A"? We will be including this with the RFP posting but you can view it now with the RFP right below ours. It is the same for all contracts.

- The numbers of evaluation point categories on page 9 skips #4.
  Is some key evaluation info missing, or is it just a numbering error/typo? It was a typo and has been corrected in the updated version.
    - **3. Organizational Capacity 15 points_____**
- Description of the organization
- Mission statement
- Population served
- Description of current programs and services
- Location of programs

    - **5. Quality Assurance Experience 10 points_____**
- **Describe an existing collaboration or partnership between your organization and other similar requests for quality assurance systems**
- Share an example of a relatable quality assurance program
- Review the sample
- **Does the project provide all elements requested in the RFP?**
- Does the project assist the agency in making program improvements?

    - **6. Project and Organization Budget 30 points_____**

- Is NH including the potential redesign of their operational processes in the ask around implementing a quality assurance program? Yes.

What we are trying to find out is if NH just wants to implement a QA program for their existing processes, or if NH is also interested in improvement opportunities along with the QA system? We are looking for a more structured system as we have fewer and fewer administrative staff to do the work.

- Is NH referring specifically to an IT type of system to measure quality? No.
  Or is the state just using the term "system" to refer to a collection of inputs, processes, and outputs? Yes.

- What does "research" mean in the RFP*? The contractor will research the current quality assurance system*, (page 1, Executive Summary). Discuss, with NHVR staff, current tools, components to the existing system, or, potentially, other states to determine tools to make the new system efficient and effective.

- Will the successful bidder have direct access to the current system? Yes.

- If so, how is access granted and what data elements will be included in this access? Discussions with staff currently using tools in existence.

- If there is a user agreement (or other user acknowledgement/guideline) for this system, can the organization provide a copy for review? No.

- Is there a copy of the "RSA Monitoring and Technical Assistance Guide" available that can be reviewed prior to submission? https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/rehab/107-reports/2019/monitoring-and-technical-assistance-guide.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

- What would be the successful bidder's role in the implementation of the new system? Training of staff on the new system/components/tools.

- Does VR envision the successful bidder knowing what QA system to recommend for implementation before knowing/understanding what the current VR system is like? That is possible but not required.

- What is the Quality Assurance Technical Assistance Center? What would their role be? They can provide various levels of QA technical assistance as a part of the RSA funding. They are just getting started as a TA center, as they were just funded in October so we are unsure of their role completely at this time.

- Does VR have examples to post and share with prospective bidders of what the RFP refers to as "protocols and procedures to enhance the priorities and justifiable needs of our Vocational Rehabilitation consumers"? Our policy manual would be an example of this work.

- Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? Yes
  (like, from India or Canada)

- Whether we need to come over there for meetings? Not necessarily.

- Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? Yes, if work can be done remotely.
  (like, from India or Canada)

- Can we submit the proposals via email? Yes.

- Given the expansive scope of work, would the State entertain a multi-year engagement to support successful implementation of the QA system? Yes.

- Can the State share the current case review forms? Yes, we will upload them to the RFP website.

- Can the State confirm budget expectations and the evaluation process? In particular:
- Section 6, G., pg. 11, states that 30 points of the evaluation will be based on lowest price: Proposer's Price Score = (Lowest Proposed Price / Proposer's Proposed Price) x Number of Points for Score. Section 6 Evaluation of Proposals, A., pg. 9, states that 30 points of the evaluation will be based on the structure of the project budget. Which metric will be used to determine the 30 evaluation point allocation for budget? Both. We take into account the specificity of the budget and then compare all bids using the 30 point scale.

- Section 6 Evaluation of Proposals, A., pg. 9, states that 30 points of the evaluation will be based on the structure of the project budget, including salary, fringe and indirect costs. As a for-profit firm, we typically keep this information confidential for competitive reasons, and instead we provide market-based fully-loaded hourly rates for our staffing costs. If a budget meets all of the requirements of the "Budget Narrative Guidelines" on pg. 7, which require staffing costs but not specifically salary, fringe and indirect costs, would that fully meet the State's expectations? Yes.

- Section 6 Evaluation of Proposals, A., pg. 9, do we need to include a separate "total project budget" and a separate "total organization budget?" If so, what is the distinction? One project budget is acceptable.

- Is there a budget cap or expectation for this engagement? No, it should be appropriate to the size of the project.

- The RFP includes two section 6's (6 and VI). During the bidder conference, it was noted this would be corrected – is this correction still expected? Yes.

- Pg. 6, during the bidder conference, informal clarification was provided that the required "Project & Service Provision Summary with timelines" is same as the required "Project Summary" for the proposal response. Please confirm. Yes, this is correct.

- On page 8, Section 6 provides criteria for evaluation and scoring. This list of evaluation criteria do not clearly align to the 10 items listed in "Section 5 – contents and requirements for a proposal." In particular, the Proposal Summary is assigned no evaluation points, but the description of the Proposal Summary on pg. 6 appears to include many essential elements of the proposal to be evaluated. Is the expectation that all substantive content of the Proposal Summary also be included in other proposal sections for evaluation, or will the Proposal Summary be considered in the evaluation? All the information will be considered in the evaluation.

- On page 9, "six months of financial statements and bank statements" are requested. If the last two years' of completed audited financial statements are provided, would this be acceptable in lieu of separate financial and bank statements? Yes

- Is there a cap on the indirect rate? We prefer an indirect cost rate that is as low as possible.

- Are subcontractors allowed on this proposal? Yes.