

New York State Department of Health
Division of Chronic Disease Prevention
Bureau of Chronic Disease Evaluation and Research
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

5/23/2016

All questions are stated as received in the Bureau of Chronic Disease Evaluation and Research (BCDER) by the deadline. The BCDER is not responsible for any errors or misinterpretation of any questions received.

The responses to questions included herein are the official responses by the Department to questions posted by potential applicants and are hereby incorporated into the RFP#16526 issued on April 22, 2016. In the event of any conflict between the RFP and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.

A. Introduction

Q1A. RFP, Page 3 – The RFP states a Period of Performance (PoP) of 10/1/16 – 3/31/22 and that both contracts would be for 5 years and 3 months. However, the RFP also indicates a PoP of 5 years and 6 months. Which PoP is accurate?

Q1B. Page 3: The text states a period of 5 years and 3 months but the period given is 5 years and 6 months - which is correct?

Answer (Q1A-B): See Amendment #1, A. Contract Term.

Q2. RFP, Page 3 – The RFP states there will be two contracts - one from NYSDOH and one from HRI. Please explain.

Answer (Q2): The RFP includes both federal and state funds. The state funds will be used for the NYSDOH contract. The federal funds will be used for the Health Research, Inc. (HRI) contract. HRI is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation that administers federal funds and other grant funds for the NYSDOH.

B. Background

Q3. Page 5: What alternative formats has the NY BRFSS used in the past?

Answer (Q3) New York has administered the BRFSS as landline and cell phone surveys. It also participated in a pilot with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in which a portion of the BRFSS was administered as a web-based

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survey to volunteer panels of participants recruited by survey companies to represent the New York adult population.

C. Detailed Specifications

Q4. Page 7, Section m: Should resumes of key proposed staff be submitted with the Technical Proposal as an Appendix?

Answer (Q4): No, resumes are not required as part of the bidder's proposal and will not be evaluated.

Q5. Page 6: For the development of coding for open-ended questions referred to in Section 1.b, please describe what this task entails and how many open end questions we should expect each year?

Answer (Q5): Between 2012 and 2015, there were 3-6 open-ended question on the BRFSS questionnaire. None of these questions required coding by the data collection contractor. However, there is the possibility of open-ended questions on future BRFSS questionnaires that could require coding by the data collection contractor. This coding process might include frequency analysis of responses, development of a coding system (in conjunction with NYSDOH staff), and application of this coding system to the responses for the open-ended question(s).

Q6: Page 6: 1.b states: "This may necessitate the contractor to perform question development, including cognitive testing, pretesting, writing interview prompts, developing coding for open-ended questions, and performing analyses to determine the reliability of questions" For budgeting purposes how many questions should we assume each year will require 1) cognitive testing, 2) pretesting, 3) writing interview prompts, and 4) performing reliability analyses?

Answer (Q6): The question development including cognitive testing, pretesting, writing of interview prompts and reliability analysis is a relatively rare occurrence. In the past 5 years, NYSDOH has only required this service during one year, for approximately 10 questions. These are historical numbers and the actuals may vary.

Q7A: Pages 6, 15, & 23: Page 6 defines a completed interview as follows: "a completed phone interview is defined according to **CDC** guidelines as an interview in which the selected respondent has been asked all questions up to and including the demographic questions which will be used for weighting." Page 15 defines a completed interview as follows: "A completed interview is defined according to the standards of the **American Association for Public Opinion Research** and reflects an interview in which the selected respondent has been asked all questions up to and including the demographic questions which will be used for weighting." However, both of these differ from the CDC BRFSS definition which considers this a partially completed interview (page 7 of Attachment 1): "Partially completed interviews are defined as those where the first

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sections of the interview are completed and the portions of the demographic section which are used for weighting are also asked of the selected respondent in regular order of the questionnaire.” On page 23 of the RFP it states that partial completes are not included: “For the State contract, vouchers for the monthly payment of completed interviews (not including partial completes)...” Can you please provide: 1) The definition of a completed interview, 2) The definition a partial interview, and 3) Clarify if partial and/or completed interviews are counted towards the monthly target number of interviews.

Q7B. If partial interviews are allowed towards the monthly number of interviews, what is the maximum percent of interviews that can be partials?

Answer (Q7 A-B): Definitions of partially completed interviews and completed interviews can be found in Attachment 1, 2016 BRFSS Data Collection Protocol with Disposition Table. Partial interviews are not counted toward the monthly number of interviews. See Amendment #1, C. Detailed Specifications, 1.

Q8. Page 7: The RFP says that quality assurance reports are to be submitted on a regular basis. At what interval are they to be submitted?

Answer (Q8): See Amendment #1, C. Detailed Specifications, 2.

Q9: Page 7: Section 2 describes a required number of cell phone interviews per county/borough. Cell phone numbers are not coded geographically in a reliable enough way to stratify at the county level. CDC limits cell phone sample strata to a maximum of 10 contiguous county clusters (NY has 62 counties). Please confirm that these strata counts are only targets and not quota requirements.

Answer (Q9): For expanded (county-level) BRFSS, the selected vendor will be expected to achieve a goal number of landline interviews per county. The selected vendor will be expected to achieve a goal number of cell phone interviews per region. Goals for expanded cell phone interviews are established regionally rather than county-level because cell phone numbers are not coded geographically.

Q10. Page 9: Please clarify whether the Asthma survey is the core CDC survey or if there are additional state-added modules.

Answer (Q10): The Asthma survey is the CDC survey and utilizes CDC’s standard child and adult asthma questionnaires. There are no additional state-added modules to the Asthma questionnaires.

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D. Proposal

Q11. RFP Page 16, Section b. Cost Proposal – The RFP requires three handwritten, signed originals and three copies of the cover page (Attachment 16). Does the form need to be completed manually with a handwritten signature or will an electronic signature be acceptable?

Answer (Q11): If the question is referring to RFP reference Page 16, Section D, 4. b. Administrative Materials, which states “Three (3) handwritten, signed originals and three (3) copies of the Cover Page (Attachment 16)” then no, an electronic signature will not be acceptable.

Q12. RFP Page 20 – Section 3 states the offeror should submit 2 signed originals and 2 signed copies of Attachment 7 but there is no signature line. Please clarify.

Answer (Q12): See Amendment #1, H. Attachment 7- Revised Bid Price Cost Proposal.

Q13A. Page 10 - Will the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) permit the selected contractor to subcontract landline or cell phone BRFSS Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) data collection to a Minority/Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) firm that does not meet eligible bidder qualifications in order to meet the 30% MWBE solicitation goal?

Answer (Q13A): No. See Amendment #1, B. Eligibility, 1 and C. Detailed Specifications, 3.

Q13B. Page 10 - Will the NYS DOH permit the selected contractor to subcontract asthma callback CATI data collection to a MWBE firm that does not meet eligible bidder qualifications in order to work toward the 30% MWBE solicitation goal?

Answer (Q13B): No. See Amendment #1, B. Eligibility, 1 and C. Detailed Specifications, 3.

Q14. Page 13 - Section b. Methodology (fourth bullet point). Without a scope of work or project parameters, providing a meaningful detailed methodology is challenging. Please clarify what information the NYS DOH is seeking regarding the provision of a detailed methodology to conduct an alternative format portion of the BRFSS survey.

Answer (Q14): See Amendment #1, D. Technical Proposal Format and Instructions, 2.

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Q15. Page 13 (last bullet point) and 14 (second bullet point). Respondent confidentiality is addressed in both bullet points. Please clarify the desired location of this content in the proposal.

Answer (Q15): Assuring respondent confidentiality includes systems, processes and procedures at data capture, when interviewers are surveying respondents (last bullet Page 13) and systems that maintain the security of collected data during storage and data transmission (second bullet, Page 14). Applicants are expected to provide a detailed description of their informed consent, confidentiality and data security procedures and experiences within the Methodology section of the Technical Proposal.

Q16. Page 13, Section b.5: The BRFSS protocol allows for monitoring to replace callback verification. Will NYSDOH accept monitoring in lieu of callback verification for the NYS BRFSS?

Answer (Q16): Yes, NYSDOH will accept monitoring as an alternative to the callback verification requirements.

Q17A. During potential Expanded BRFSS years, does NYS DOH expects the contractor to implement the four following distinct, yet coordinated, surveys each month: annual landline survey, annual cell phone survey, supplemental landline survey, and supplemental cell phone survey?

Q17B. If the answer to question #17A is “no”, please explain the NYS DOH vision for data collection during potential Expanded BRFSS years?

Answer (Q17A-B): No, the Expanded BRFSS samples will follow the same general structure as the annual BRFSS, specifically, a landline and a cell phone sample. The stratification for the Expanded BRFSS samples will be much finer (effectively at the county level) and sampling rates will be different in order to target a minimal sample size per county. The Expanded BRFSS surveys will require tracking at the county level to determine progress toward the minimum county sample sizes, and appropriate adjustment to ongoing sample allocation.

Q18. Page 12: How many mid-year questionnaire changes are expected?

Answer (Q18): Mid-year changes occur very infrequently. The last mid-year change in New York was the inclusion of the H1N1 questions in the fall of 2009.

Q19. Page 12: What is the role of the information technology staff person on the contract, as required on Page 12 of the RFP?

Answer (Q19): Information technology staff would be expected to support and maintain information technology systems supporting data collection, storage and transfer,

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including the hardware (e.g., personal computers, servers, etc.) and software (e.g., CATI, security/encryption).

Q20. Page 12: Can the organizational chart go in an appendix?

Answer (Q20): Yes, the organizational chart can be in an appendix.

Minority/Women-owned Business Entity

Q21. Page 37, Section 7: Are M/WBE partners considered subcontractors and thereby require the information on the transmittal letter to be completed?

Answer (Q21): The transmittal letter is intended to collect the names of subcontractors that will be paid to perform work under this contract.

Q22. Can a company that is both an M/WBE fulfill the M/WBE requirements as a single organization, or are 2 separate companies required?

Answer (Q22): No. The overall M/WBE goal on this RFP is 30%. Prime spending of 30% of total overall contract value with a single dual certified organization can satisfy this goal.

Q23. Is there a W/MBE on the current contract?

Answer (Q23): No, the current contractor is not a certified Minority/Women-owned Business Entity and there are no certified Minority/Women-owned Business Entities identified as subcontractors on the current contract.

E. Method of Award

Q24A. Will “tie” be defined as exactly the same numerical score?

Q24B. If the answer to question #9 is “no”, please explain how “tie” will be defined.

Answer (Q24A-B): Yes, a tie is defined as having the exact same numerical score.

F. Administrative

Q25A: Page 23 states that payment will be reduced if the county-level goal of 400 interviews is not obtained. How will this be implemented since cell phones are not coded geographically at the county level which will make it impossible to control completed surveys by county through stratification?

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Answer (Q25A): The county level goal of 400 interviews is used as an example. See Amendment #1, G. Payment, 3.

Q25B. Page 23: Is there any additional financial penalty for not meeting the goal number of annual completes besides not billing for the cost per interview of the surveys not completed?

Answer (Q25B): There is a penalty for not meeting the goals established at the beginning of the data collection year. Payment will be reduced annually by the percentage of completed landline and/or cell phone interviews below the goal. The reduction in the annual payment is determined using the formula provided on page 23 of the RFP. The reduction will be recovered from subsequent payments due to the contractor. Starting in month twelve (12) of each contract year, the full amount of the monthly voucher will be withheld and applied to the amount owed the state for the reduction in annual payment until it is paid in full. Please see Amendment #1, G. Payment, 3.

Q26. Page 23: Prices are requested as Cost per Interview. Will monthly invoice amounts be based on these prices and the number of surveys completed?

Answer (Q26): Yes, monthly invoices will be based on the cost per interview x # of interviews completed.

Q27. Page 20: The RFP states that the technical proposal needs to be signed. Should this signature be included on a bidder-created cover sheet or letter?

Answer (Q27): Yes, the Technical Proposal should be signed on a bidder-created cover sheet. The cover sheet will not count toward page limits.

Attachments

Q28: Can you provide us with Attachments 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, and 19 in MS Word or can we recreate them in MS Word ourselves?

Answer (Q28): Yes. Attachments 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, and 19 have been posted in MS Word format. No, we cannot allow bidders to recreate them.

Attachment 6

Q29. Page 36: Attachment 6 states that the Transmittal Letter is to be completed on Bidder's letterhead. Can we reproduce this electronically on our letterhead?

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Answer (Q29): No, please do not reproduce electronically on your letterhead. An Attachment 6 Transmittal letter in MS Word format has been posted.

Attachment 7

Q30A. Attachment 7. Option 2: Expanded BRFSS – What is the anticipated period of performance that should be used for budgeting Option 2? (The period of performance in Attachment 7 is the same for Option 1 and Option 2).

Q30B. Page 42: The text says the Expanded Survey will be conducted in 2020 or 2021 but the table says it will be conducted in 2018. Please clarify which specific year we should base the pricing on.

Answer (Q30 A-B): See Amendment 1, H. Attachment 7- Revised Bid Price Cost Proposal, 1.

Attachment 10

Q31. RFP, Page 25 states that only the winning bidder must complete and submit the Vendor Responsibility Attestation (Attachment 10). RFP, Page 16 states that bidders must include three signed originals and three copies of the Vendor Responsibility Attestation (Attachment 10). Please clarify if this Attachment is required with submission or upon award.

Answer (Q31): Page 16 states that bidders should submit signed Vendor Responsibility Attestations (VRA). This is not a requirement to bid, however, submission of the VRA at the time of bid is requested.

Attachment 13

Q32. “Sample Contract Language” – The RFP requires the successful bidder to provide insurance for its employees and subcontractors. If the successful offeror’s insurance does not cover subcontractors, is it acceptable to flow down the insurance requirement to the subcontractors to provide their insurance?

Answer (Q32): Yes, provided the subcontractor’s insurance names the State of New York as an additional insured.

Q33. “Sample Contract Language” – The RFP states that the Certificate of Insurance shall not be changed or cancelled until 30 days written notice has been given. If the bidder is bound by their state code, notice goes to the First Name Insured who can provide notice to the insured. Please confirm this is acceptable if the bidder is bound by their state code.

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Answer (Q33): Yes, provided the Department receives the notice 30 days prior to any change or cancellation.

Q34. (ii) "Sample Contract Language" – Protective Liability Insurance refers to construction work. Since this work does not include construction work, can this requirement be removed for bidders who do not provide construction work and therefore do not have that coverage?

Answer (Q34): Owners and Contractors Protective coverage, a form of liability insurance, is required whenever specified by the Agency as per the Agency's policies/procedures and standards. The Contractor shall obtain a separate Owner/Contractors Protective Liability (OCP) Policy written on a project basis for the benefit of the Agency, its officers, agents, and employees, and the People of the State of New York. The policy shall be specific to the Contractor's work, including any work performed by subcontractors.

Q35. (iii) "Sample Contract Language" – This includes language requiring the bidder to cover the People of the State of New York under automobile coverage. If the bidder's insurance coverage would not be issued to the people of the State of New York, is it acceptable to include the State of New York as additional insured? If the successful offeror's insurance does not cover subcontractors, is it acceptable to flow down the insurance requirement to the subcontractors to provide their insurance?

Answer (Q35): Yes, you may name New York State as an additional insured. Yes, it is acceptable to flow down the insurance requirements to the subcontractors provided the subcontractors can provide their coverage and their coverage has New York State as an additional insured party.

Proposal Formatting

Q36. RFP, Page 14, d – The RFP indicates a minimum font point size of 12pt. Does this font size apply to tables and graphics?

Answer (Q36): No. The 12 point font size requirement only applies to narrative text. Figures, tables and graphics can include text using different font sizes.

Q37A. RFP, Page 14, d – Regarding the page limit, please clarify what is meant by "directly relevant appendices".

Q37B. Page 14: Please clarify what sections of the RFP are to be included in the 35 page limit for the technical proposal. The examples given in the RFP of items excluded from the 35 page limit are: "i.e. completed forms included in attachments section;

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documentation of mandatory requirements, organizational experience, capacity, and capability; and methodology”.

Answer (Q37A-B): See Amendment #1, D. Technical Proposal Format and Instructions, 1.

Q38. Do the cover page, cover letter, and Table of Contents count toward the page limit?

Answer (Q38): The RFP does not request a cover letter or a table of contents. The RFP does request a Transmittal Letter (Attachment 6) and a Cover Page (Attachment 16). No, the cover page, and the transmittal letter do not count toward the page limit. If you provide a Table of Contents, solely for the purpose of organizing the proposal, it will not count toward the page limit.

Q39. How should the volumes be packaged for submission? There are requirements for both hard copies and originals. Should all originals and copies be bound by volume? Please clarify submission requirements.

Answer (Q39): See Amendment #1, F. Submission of Proposal, 1 and 2.

Q40. Are resumes and other appendices required to be double-spaced?

Answer (Q40): Resumes are not required as part of the bidder’s proposal and will not be evaluated. Appendices are not required to be double-spaced.

Q41. Page 14: Can resumes of key staff and other tables and figures be included as appendices and excluded from the 35-page limit?

Answer (Q41): Resumes are not required as part of the bidder’s proposal and will not be evaluated. Yes, tables and figures can be included as appendices and excluded from the 35-page limit.

Q42. Section b. Administrative Materials. Please confirm that the seven forms listed (Attachments 6, 8 10, 11, 12, 16, 17) should be submitted with the Bid Price Cost Proposal (and not the Technical Proposal).

Answer (Q42). Yes, Attachments 6, 8 10, 11, 12, 16, 17 should be submitted with the Bid Price Cost Proposal.

Q43A. If the answer to question Q.42 is “yes – submit forms with Bid Cost Proposal”, how does NYS DOH want the seven attachments packaged with the proposal? (The proposer is required to submit 3 originals and 3 copies of Attachments 6, 8, 10, 12, 16 –

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only 2 originals and 2 copies of the Bid Price Cost Proposal are required to be submitted

Q43B: Pages 16, 17, & 20: On pages 16 and 17 it states that we need to submit 3 signed originals and 3 copies of the following attachments: 6, 8, 10, 12, and 16, all to be submitted with the Bid Price Cost Proposal. However, on page 20 it states that we are to submit two signed originals and two signed copies of the Bid Price Cost Proposal. Can you please explain where to include the 3rd original and 3rd copy of these attachments, or should it only be two originals and two copies of each?

Answer (Q43A-B): See Amendment #1, F. Submission of Proposal, 1.

Survey Sample

Q44A. What was the percent of NY BRFSS landline and cell phone interviews conducted in Spanish in 2015?

Q44B. What is the percentage, for LL and cell separately, of interviews completed in Spanish vs. English for the regular BRFSS and for the Expanded county-level BRFSS?

Answer (Q44 A-B): In the 2015 annual BRFSS, approximately 5% of completed interviews via landline and 9% of the completed interviews via cellphone were conducted in Spanish. In the 2013-14 Expanded BRFSS, approximately 1% of completed interviews via landline and 4% of the completed interviews via cellphone were conducted in Spanish.

Q45. In 2016, how many landline interviews are completed per hour?

Answer (Q45): The NYSDOH does not have this information.

Q46. In 2016, how many cell phone interviews are completed per hour?

Answer (Q46): The NYSDOH does not have this information.

Cost information

Q47. RFP, Page 24 – Regarding price adjustment for the Annual BRFSS, the RFP indicates “Prices shall remain firm for the first year of the contract period. On each anniversary date of the contract for subsequent years, NYSDOH will increase or decrease the rate the lesser of 3% or the percent increase or decrease in the Consumer Price Index.” Please explain if this should impact the way we present our pricing.

Answer (Q47): The NYSDOH cannot provide guidance on how a bidder calculates their bid pricing.

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Q48. RFP Page 16, Section b. Cost Proposal RFP, Page 14, d – The RFP requires three handwritten, signed originals and three copies of the cover letter (Attachment 6). Does the form need to be completed manually with a handwritten signature or will an electronic signature be acceptable?

Answer (Q48): If the question is referring to RFP reference Page 16, Section D, 4. b. Administrative Materials, which states “Three (3) handwritten, signed originals and three (3) copies of the Cover Page (Attachment 16)” then no, an electronic signature will not be acceptable.

Q49. We understand the per completed interview price for contract years two through five is subject to annual price increase constraints. In the event of significant protocol changes dictated by the Centers Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or substantial technological shifts influencing cellular and/or landline telephones use, will there be an opportunity to revisit per completed interview pricing rather than having to decline to renew the contract?

Answer (Q49): The contract period is 5 years, 6 months with no renewals. A change in the scope of work, due to a substantial revision to the CDC BRFSS methods would require an amendment to the existing contract. The amendment and cost proposal will be subject to price justification and approval by the NYSDOH and the New York State Office of the State Comptroller.

Q50. Will the vendor be responsible for translating the State-Added and County-added questions into Spanish? If yes, how many questions will need to be translated?

Answer (Q50): Yes, the vendor will be responsible for translating State-added questions into Spanish. There are approximately, 50 – 60 state-added questions per year, but most are not new and have already been translated. New state-added questions are likely to be less than 10 per year. We do not anticipate county-added questions.

Q51. What were the landline, cell phone, and asthma cost per interviews in 2015?

Answer (Q51): The NYSDOH is unable to share the landline, cell phone, and asthma cost per interviews in 2015.

Q52. What was the Expanded BRFSS cost per interview in 2013-2014?

Answer (Q52): The NYSDOH is unable to share the Expanded BRFSS cost per interview in 2013-2014.

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Q53. Page 16: For the expanded BRFSS, should the contractor price the purchase of the additional sample or will this be provided by CDC?

Answer (Q53): The bidder does not need to budget for the purchase of the additional sample.

Q54. In 2016, what is the cost per landline interview? What is the total volume of landline interviews in 2016?

Answer (Q54): The NYSDOH is unable to share the cost per landline interview or the total volume of landline interviews for 2016.

Q55. In 2016, what is the cost per cell phone interview? What is the total volume of cell phone interviews in 2016?

Answer (Q55): The NYSDOH is unable to share the cost per cell phone interview and the total volume of cell phone interviews for 2016.

Q56. What was the cost per landline interview for the most recent Expanded BRFSS? What was the total volume of landline interviews for the most recent Expanded BRFSS?

Answer (Q56): The NYSDOH is unable to share the cost per landline interview for the most recent Expanded BRFSS. The most recent completed Expanded BRFSS is year 2013-2014. The total volume of landline interviews for the most recent Expanded BRFSS is provided in Chart 1 below.

Q57. What was the cost per cell phone interview for the most recent Expanded BRFSS? What was the total volume of cell phone interviews for the most recent Expanded BRFSS?

Answer (Q57): The NYSDOH is unable to share the cost per cell phone interview for the most recent Expanded BRFSS. The most recent completed Expanded BRFSS is year 2013-2014. The total volume of cell phone interviews for the most recent expanded BRFSS is provided in Chart 1 below.

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Chart 1	
	2013-14 NYS Expanded BRFSS
Landline interviews	23,856
Cell phone interviews	7,834
Total	31,690

Q58. What was the total contract amount for 2015?

Answer (Q58): The NYSDOH is unable to respond as this question is not well defined.