

Bidder's Conference Questions

FAU# 0612180236

- 1) RFP Page 5, paragraph C.2.A (Examination Development) states, "In each year of the Contract, the Contractor will provide DOH with new forms of multiple-choice written examinations...".
 - a) In what format will the existing item banks be made available to the selected vendor?
 - i) In prior RFPs there were no requirements for format. However, DOH will assist any new vendor in discussions with the previous vendor in the transition process. It is our hope, and in all likelihood that the files will be transferred in a text delineated type file.
 - b) What are the sizes of the existing item banks for each examination category required in this RFP?
 - i) There are currently two divisions within the item bank. One for CFR and EMT-B questions and another division for ALS questions. There are approximately 6,000 items within the entire item bank. Not all items are active. Approximately one third of the items are not active.
 - c) Will the Department make item performance statistics available to the selected vendor for the existing item banks?
 - i) Any statistical data for any item within the item bank will be retained and forwarded from the previous vendor to the new vendor and DOH. Both form and item specific statistical data.
 - d) What is the process for form review and approval under current contract? Does the Department anticipate that the same process will be used in the new contract?
 - i) DOH anticipates that the same process will continue.
 - ii) Any changes that are made to an existing form and any totally newly developed forms are constructed by the vendor and DOH after comprehensive consultation with DOH.
 - e) Does the Department expect the selected vendor to provide additional and/or new test specification development during the term of the proposed contract?
 - i) Requires clarification. If in regards to blueprint development, there is no anticipated requirement for changing the current blueprint structure. Blueprints may require changing if there is a large scale curriculum redevelopment during the term of the contract. However, the construction of the blueprint would be completed by DOH in consultation with the vendor.

- 2) RFP page 5 paragraph C.2.A states, "New forms of multiple-choice written questions must be available for use by DOH within 30 days of a delivered signed contract."
- a) In light of the fact that the Department desires new examination forms within 30 days of a delivered signed contract, is it the Department's expectation that, for the first year of the contract, new examination forms will be created using the Department's existing item banks?
 - i) The existing item bank would be used for any and all new forms. All currently active forms would be transferred from the current vendor to a new vendor without change. These forms would continue to be utilized.
 - b) "Within 30 days of a delivered signed contract" seems to conflict with RFP page 15 which indicates that the initial term will be from January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2010. Please clarify.
 - i) Although the contract term begins on January 1, 2008, the exams and ancillary materials for a January exam administration would be needed several weeks in advance of the January exam date. A great deal of preplanning and beta testing is usually needed to assure that both DOH and the new vendor are ready for their first exam administration. DOH anticipates that any new vendor would have all exams and ancillary materials either available or a plan of action to have them available in the time period required to meet the January exam date deadlines.
 - c) What is the current percentage of item overlap between forms for each required examination category?
 - i) There are questions that overlap between forms. Some forms have only minor changes while others have a greater number of different items. We do not have statistical data available to us of the exact number of item overlaps between forms.
 - d) Approximately how many days after contract signing does the Department intend to make existing item banks (and any associated item performance statistics) available to the selected vendor?
 - i) This will greatly depend on the working relationship between the previous vendor, the new vendor and DOH. It is the hope of DOH that both vendors would work together to assure a smooth and expeditious transfer of the item bank and current forms.
- 3) RFP Page 5 paragraph C.2.A states, "The contractor will develop and have approved by DOH a standardized answer sheet that will be used for all examination levels...this standardized answer sheet must be made available to DOH within 30 days of a delivered signed Contract." "Within 30 days of a delivered signed Contract" seems to conflict with RFP page 15 which indicates that the initial term will be from January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2010. Please Clarify.
- a) Due to the time sensitivity of preparing for a January examination date, the vendor would most likely need to begin preparation for their first examination

administration several months in advance to assure that they are adequately prepared for the administration. The answer sheet is an example of something that would require development on behalf of the vendor and approval by DOH, which understandably would take some time to finalize.

- 4) RFP page 6, paragraph C.2.B requires the vendor to conduct item development workshops for basic level (CFR/EMT-B) and advanced level (EMT-I, EMT-CC, EMT-P) exams each year.
 - a) What is the typical duration of each type of item development workshop?
 - i) Typically item development workshops are conducted over a two day period.
 - b) How many items are typically developed at each workshop?
 - i) Greatly variable and dependant upon the content areas requiring item development and the number of workshop content experts.
 - c) How many EMS content experts are typically invited to each workshop?
 - i) Dependent on the development requirements, however usually varies from eight to 12.
 - d) What is the current process for pre-testing new items?
 - i) DOH works with the vendor to “pilot” new questions. Questions are piloted for at least one exam administration, but preferably two or more. Each form from EMT-B through Paramedic has 10 items that are “pilot” questions that are used for statistical purposes only to validate any new question.
- 5) RFP page 7, (third paragraph) states, “The contractor, upon approval of DOH will conduct ‘special’ examination administrations that are not included within and are in addition to the seven (7) aforementioned regularly scheduled examination administrations.”
 - a) During the current contract, how many special examination administrations have been scheduled each year?
 - i) Five.
 - b) What is the current fee for “special examination administrations”?
 - i) \$1,000.00 plus the regular administration fees that are charged to DOH are charged to the entity requesting the special examination.
- 6) RFP page 8, paragraph C.2.D states that the DOH “will provide the Contractor with the number of examinations needed by level no later than four (4) weeks prior to the scheduled examination date” and that the Contractor will provide a sufficient number of examination materials “at least three (3) weeks prior to each examination date”. Please confirm that the Contractor could have only one (1) week to assemble and deliver the required materials.

- a) The assembly of the examinations would have already been completed by the vendor. This should only entail the printing and shipping of the examination materials. In most instances the information is provided by DOH five weeks prior to the exam date.
- 7) RFP page 9, paragraph C.2.F, “The contractor will maintain hard copy and back-up software of current examination items (examination questions) for all examination levels and current usable copies of all examination forms for all examination levels in a secure facility other than their office.” If a vendor maintains multiple offices in geographically diverse locations, would the department allow the selected vendor to maintain hard copy and back-up software of current examination items in separate, secure vendor facilities?
- a) A specific situation or scenario would require an answer tailored to that situation or scenario. However, this is a likely possibility.
- 8) RFP page 10, paragraph C.2.G states, “the contractor shall provide on-site scoring of examinations in at least three locations...on a schedule mutually agreed upon by the contractor and DOH, which will include the seven (7) aforementioned scheduled examination dates”.
- a) When on-site scoring is provided, does the department require/prefer testing vendor personnel to perform examination scoring?
 - i) DOH requires that the vendor perform on-site examination scoring.
 - b) Who performs on-site scoring under the current contract – testing vendor staff or per diem staff hired by the Department?
 - i) The current testing vendor.
 - c) Is the on-site scoring considered an official result or is it a preliminary result?
 - i) On-site scoring reports are considered to be temporary official results.
 - d) Who bears liability for examination answer keys when on-site scoring is performed?
 - i) The testing vendor’s employees.
 - e) What is the current process for and what type of equipment is used for conducting on-site scoring under the current contract?
 - i) Once a candidate has completed their exam a DOH proctor collects all examination materials and forwards the candidate’s answer sheet to the testing vendor’s employees for scoring. The answer sheet is then scanned for the purpose of scoring. A letter of failure or passing is then printed and given to the candidate. The letter contains personal candidate demographic information, non-itemized exam results and other pertinent DOH information.
 - ii) Equipment used is a scanner to scan the answer sheet, laptop computer for the processing of the scanned information and a laser printer used to print the

examination results/candidate letter.

- f) In the past year, how many candidates have requested on-site scoring for each exam type?
 - i) From June 1, 2006 to June 1, 2007 there were 2,666 candidates amongst all four exam levels from EMT-B through Paramedic.
 - ii) EMT-B = 1732
 - iii) Intermediate = 99
 - iv) Critical Care = 218
 - v) Paramedic = 617

- 9) RFP page 10, paragraph C.2.G states, "Candidates who successfully pass the examination at the on-site scoring, receive a Contractor issued, DOH approved temporary EMS certification at the examination site."
 - a) Please describe the format of the current temporary certification.
 - i) 8 ½" x 11" white paper with printed information from printer.
 - ii) The letter contains personal candidate demographic information, non-itemized exam results and other pertinent DOH information.
 - iii) Instructions to candidate if and when further action is required by the candidate, testing vendor or DOH.
 - iv) Letter is authenticated by the use of a stamp, preferably a raised seal, by the vendor prior to disbursement to the candidate.

 - b) Is the temporary certification provided in paper or plastic form?
 - i) Paper.

 - c) Does the Department issue the permanent certification in these cases?
 - i) DOH issues all final and official certifications.

- 10) RFP Page 10, Paragraph C.2.G state, "A plan for the development of additional sites (i.e., Buffalo, Syracuse and Long Island) is to be included with this bid."
 - a) Please clarify what is meant by the development of additional sites. Does the Department expect the selected vender to plan for the provision of on-site scoring at sites in addition to the required three locations?
 - b) Yes. DOH will work with the testing vendor to establish additional sites across the state of New York where there is a need for additional on-site scoring locations. A short and long term plan should be in-place by the testing vendor to fulfill this requirement over the term of the contract.

 - c) Does the Department expect the selected vendor to participate in the identification of additional test sites in the state of New York beyond those already identified by the Department?

- d) No. DOH will determine a location site, but will ask for the testing vendor's input. DOH will keep an open line of communication with the testing vendor in the site selection process.
- 11) RFP Attachment 20 Detailed Bid Form states that the Technical Requirements have a "Maximum values of 70 points". While Paragraph b.4 Examination Printing and Distribution is assigned 5 points, none of the other paragraphs in this section have point assignments. Please provide the point distribution for the other 7 paragraphs in this section.
- a) The assigned 5 points on b.4 is a misprint and should not appear. Please disregard the "5 points".
- 12) RFP Attachment 8, Forms A and B: Please clarify the need for these forms, particularly the last column (Amount Payable). If all costs are to be paid through candidate fees or entities requesting special administration sessions where fees are not included in the total project cost, why is this information necessary or relevant?
- a) The only fees from candidates are for on-site scoring. All fees for "special" exam administrations would come from the entity requesting the exam administration. There would be no fees or charges to DOH for "special"
- b) Form A and B would list the services that DOH will be paying for under the resulting contract that falls under the definition of consulting services pursuant to Chapter 10 of the Laws of 2006.
- 13) RFP Attachment 20, Paragraph C Financial and Proposed Contract Cost provided instruction on how the costs will be calculated but does not assign point to this section or indicate how cost will be utilized in making a selection. Please provide additional information on the weight of total contract cost in the decision making process.
- a) There is a maximum of 30 points awarded to the Financial section. **IN ORDER TO QUALIFY FOR THE 30 POINTS, BIDDERS MUST HAVE PASSED ALL OF THE Pass/Fail QUESTIONS TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FINANCIAL PROPOSAL. LOWEST BID WILL BE AWARDED 30 POINTS. ALL OTHER BIDS WILL BE WEIGHTED PROPORTIONATELY IN COMPARISON TO THE LOWEST BID.**
- 14) RFP Attachment 20, Paragraph C.1 requests a "per candidate fee for examination scoring" for each of the 5 exams. What are the fees for these services today under the contract with your current vendor?
- a) \$12.50 per candidate
- 15) RFP Attachment 20, Paragraph C.2 requests "On-site Testing Locations Per Candidate Fee". Is this paragraph requesting the fee associated with on-site "scoring"?
- a) It is asking what the fee will be that the vendor will be charging candidates for on-site scoring. These fees are payable directly from the candidate to the vendor at the time of the exam.

16) Is DOH interested in computer-based testing services? If so, should a separate option for such be presented with this proposal?

- a) The DOH is always considering alternative testing methods such as computer-based testing. However, this RFP does not include any computer-based testing. A separate RFP/contract would need to be developed to take in to consideration computer-based testing.

17) Please verify the total number of test centers during any given administration.

- a) The total number of testing locations varies greatly throughout the year and is variable from exam date to exam date. However, for each of the scheduled seven exam dates the range is between 200 and 300 locations.

18) **Page 6:** It appears that DOH would like additional cost information for additional examination development (Certified First Responder and Emergency Medical Technician – Basic, Intermediate, Critical Care, and Paramedic) – please verify.

- a) DOH does not expect there to be a need to develop additional forms above and beyond what is outlined in the RFP as required for each year of the contract. However, if circumstances present themselves (i.e. a form is stolen) and DOH needs to have an additional form developed, what would the cost of developing a new form be?

19) We understand that the technical and financial proposals must be submitted separately – should five originals and five copies be submitted for each?

- a) Bidders must submit 5 originals with original signatures as well as 5 copies of the original signature version.

20) **Page 26:** Do bidders decide whether to submit these documents with the bid or upon award, or does DOH have a preference?

- a) With bid.

21) **Appendix D, Sections M.4 and N:** Is proof of Year 2000-warranty compliance still necessary to submit with this proposal?

- a) It is not necessary to submit with the proposal, but the vendor must be able to show proof of compliance if and/or when requested by DOH.