

## **RFP for Technical Assistance to Small Public Water Systems Response to Questions**

FAU Control #0712170227

Q1: The RFP states the “anticipated dates of contract are July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2013. Any resulting agreement shall be effective only upon approval of the New York State Office of the State Comptroller and shall be in effect for five years. The selected contractor(s) shall commence services upon notification by the NYSDOH of contract award.” Does this mean to commence services upon formal notice-to-proceed, or after the selection of contractor on April 25, 2008? Please clarify.

A1: Work shall commence after an executed contract is received from the Office of the State Comptroller. The currently anticipated date is July 1, 2008. This date is only anticipated as contract processing times vary.

Q2: On page 8, the Department of Health (NYSDOH) reserves the right to reject any bid containing a “price proposal that is not commensurate with anticipated costs in any of the five contract years.” Does this mean you have an assumed budget for each of the contract years that must be met?

A2: No. There is no specific budget allocated for each task. This clause exists to eliminate bidding anomalies where one year’s costs are completely out of proportion with costs in other years. Bids will not be disqualified as long as the price proposal reflects reasonably similar costs for each of the five years. Anticipated inflation in wages and other services are entirely reasonable sources of variation in pricing from year to year.

Q3: Under the Price Proposal, it discusses Tasks and Deliverables. It states the total level of effort to implement the contract is expected to be equivalent to about 4,000 hours of staff time per contract year. Does the 4,000 hours include all aspects of the work including travel time, planning training events, research and development of standard operating procedure manuals, writing reports, quarterly meetings with DOH, etc.

A3: Yes it is intended to include all aspects of work. The 4,000-hour estimate is not a deliverable. It is an estimate of the effort required to implement all of the contract tasks per year.

Q4: The RFP states that the lowest bid meeting minimum requirements will receive 30 points. How will the remaining bids be allocated points?

A4: The lowest bid will receive the maximum, 30 points. All other bids will receive points proportionally, based in comparison with the lowest bid.

Q5: Will the list of systems on the Priority Project List (PPL) change every year?

A5: Yes. The PPL is dynamic and will change regularly based on the NYSDOH’s assessment of needs across the state. In addition, the contract services will not be delivered exclusively to systems on the PPL. The contract services will be offered to any public water system in New York as required. The PPL is a list of systems that are higher priority to receive assistance and

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the contractor must contact every system on the PPL to offer them technical assistance. Many systems on the PPL may not respond with a request for assistance.

Q6: Approximately how many systems are on the Project Priority List? Where are these systems located?

A6: There are approximately 450 systems on the current PPL. Systems on the PPL are located all over the state. However, the contract services will not be delivered exclusively to systems on the PPL. The contract services will be offered to any public water system in New York as required. The PPL is a list of systems that are higher priority to receive assistance and the contractor must contact every system on the PPL to offer them technical assistance. Many systems on the PPL may not respond with a request for assistance.

Q7: Has a similar contract been issued in the past? Who is the current contractor?

A7: Yes. The current contractor is the New York Rural Water Association. The current contract expires March 31, 2008.

Q8: Under the Confidentiality Clauses, item 1 states all materials must be reviewed and approved by the State Department of Health prior to dissemination and/or publication. Would this State approval be required for training agendas, annual water quality reports, vulnerability assessments, emergency response plans, standard operating procedure manuals, etc. developed and some of which are already approved by a division of health or local health units?

A8: In general, no. Routine deliverables for this contract will not require prior review and approval as they are not being produced for publication. As the contract progresses, the Bureau of Water Supply Protection may require periodic review of contractor-developed documents for quality assurance purposes. Items of a sensitive nature, such as vulnerability assessments or system maps must be kept confidential.

Q9: Five years is a long term for this contract. Does NYSDOH expect any additional RFPs during this time if federal requirements change and this RFP does not meet newly developing needs?

A9: The Bureau of Water Supply Protection does not currently anticipate offering any additional RFPs for technical assistance for the duration of this contract.

Q10: Does NYSDOH have a budget for this project? Does the current contract have a similar scope of services?

A10: There is no established budget for this contract. The RFP is seeking the best value proposal, weighing both the technical proposal and the proposed price. The current contract does have a similar scope of services, although some items have changed.

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Q11: Under the Scope of Work – Summary of Services you discuss data entry into a reporting database designated by the State. Will the State provide the database?

A11: No. The database will be proposed by the contractor and approved by the Bureau of Water Supply Protection during work plan development. The database will include basic information such as: the public water systems visited, dates of visits, and the types of services provided by the contractor.

Q12: How will individual deliverables in Task E (written SOPs, emergency response plans, asset management plans, system mapping, etc.) be compensated? The Price Proposal Submission Form in Attachment 10 states that Task E is “to be paid based on type and # of products developed.” However, the Price Proposal Submission Form only allows space for one price.

A12: Please submit two prices for this task: one price for system mapping deliverables and one price for all other types of deliverables. Amendment #2 of this RFP contains a revised Price Proposal Submission Form Annual Details form. Please clearly differentiate these prices in the price proposal.

Q13: Can the training sessions be held at a location of the contractor’s choice?

A13: Yes. The contractor can hold training sessions at any geographic location in the state. However, the contractor must demonstrate that the training locations offer reasonable geographic diversity to facilitate participation by small water systems across the state. All training locations must be publicly accessible and should offer adequate parking facilities for participants.

Q14: Are the training sessions required to be free-of-charge to the attendees? Is lunch to be provided to the attendees?

A14: Yes, the training sessions must be provided free-of-charge to the attendees. Training sessions should accommodate 50-60 water operators. Lunch is not required to be provided to the attendees free-of-charge.

Q15: Is there a minimum length of training sessions? Must they be full-day?

A15: Yes, the training sessions must be the equivalent of 6 full-day sessions (at least 6 NYSDOH-approved contact hours per day). The contractor may elect to offer 12 half-day sessions or some combination of each in consultation with Bureau of Water Supply Protection. Amendment #3 of the RFP provides additional clarification.

Q16: What is the expected scope of water system mapping projects?

A16: Water system infrastructure mapping is intended for small municipalities with old and undocumented infrastructure. The contractor’s selection of the specific systems must be

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approved by the Bureau of Water Supply Protection. The intended scope is to map a small municipal water system with a population less than 3,300 people. The map should meet the needs of the water system and may include sources, transmission lines, treatment works, distribution lines, valves, hydrants, storage tanks, etc. The maps should be delivered to the water system in an electronic format (ArcView, ArcReader, or equivalent). Amendment #2 of the RFP provides additional guidance.

Q17: Will more than one contract be awarded as a result of this RFP?

A17: No. Only one contract will be awarded from this RFP.

Q18: Is NYSDOH looking for specific geographic coverage or statewide coverage?

A18: The contract is for statewide coverage of services. There is no quota for specific geographic areas as part of the deliverables.

Q19: Is there an expectation of emergency response in this contract? What is the required response time?

A19: Yes. The contractor must provide assistance to water systems on an emergency basis within 24 hours. The type of assistance is not “first-responder” type assistance, but is intended to be assistance with emergency or disaster recovery efforts.

Q20: Can firms combine for a joint proposal?

A20: No; due to the nature of the services required by the contract, the Bureau of Water Supply Protection does not believe joint proposals are appropriate for this RFP. One contract will be awarded to one vendor.

Q21: Is a multiple-day site visit counted as one visit or multiple visits for billing purposes? If an emergency requires a long duration of technical assistance, will there be an allowance in the budget to adjust the number of site visits in subsequent weeks or months?

A21: Yes, multiple days will be considered multiple visits. The Bureau of Water Supply Protection anticipates the nature of site visits to be unevenly distributed throughout the year. Some months may be very busy and some months may require fewer on-site visits. The contractor is required to provide 200 on-site visits per year, including the variability mentioned in the question.

Q22: Is there any additional compensation for overnight visits, especially in response to emergency visits that may require a multiple-day visit?

A22: No. Expenses for overnight stays are the responsibility of the bidder, regardless of the type of site visit.

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Q23: Can bidders get a copy of the PPL to plan their travel needs?

A23: Yes, the most recent PPL will be posted on the RFP website at: <http://www.nyshealth.gov/funding>. However, bidders are reminded that the contract services will not be delivered exclusively to systems on the PPL. The contract services will be offered to any public water system in New York as required. The PPL is a list of systems that are higher priority to receive assistance and the contractor must contact every system on the PPL to offer them technical assistance. Many systems on the PPL may not respond with a request for assistance.

Q24: Would the contractor have flexibility in scheduling on-site visits?

A24: Yes. The contractor can schedule technical assistance visits in advance to make travel more efficient. However, emergency assistance must be provided within 24 hours.

Q25: Regarding collecting water samples, is the contractor required to provide sample analysis? Is there a minimum number of samples to be collected?

A25: No. Sample collection is considered a form of technical assistance included in the typical scope of services to be performed by the contractor. The contractor is not responsible for sample analysis, purchasing bottles, or the cost of sample analysis. Because subcontracting is not allowed under this contract, no sample analysis is required by the contractor. The contractor is expected to provide technical expertise and assistance in sample collection and might typically be asked to assist a water system in collecting a series of samples in response to an emergency or some other stated need. There is no deliverable for the number of samples to be collected. This effort is included in the scope of services for Task C.

Q26: Under Section D - Proposal Requirements: the Technical Proposal format covers the Statement of the Problem, Technical Approach, Experience, and Personnel and TA Providers Experience. Is there no requirement for a Management Statement?

A26: No, there is no requirement for a "Management Statement." The RFP details the specific requirements of the technical proposal and the contents of each prescribed section.

Q27: Will the selection of the two systems each year to receive the system infrastructure mapping deliverables be decided by the Contractor or selected by the NYSDOH?

A27: The selection of the two systems each year will be based on consultation with the contractor. Final determination of the specific systems will be made by Bureau of Water Supply Protection.

Q28: Can a local health unit we have worked with be listed as one of the three (3) references required in our Experience section of the proposal?

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A28: Yes, with limitations. The local health unit must have been a previous client of the contractor and not simply acting in an oversight role. In addition, to avoid any potential for a conflict of interest, the local health unit cannot be a District Office of the NYSDOH.

Q29: Under Summary of Services two tasks are listed that are not listed in the Tasks and Deliverable Section C -3, they are Participate in the kick off conference call, and attend NYSDOH Train-the-Trainer Sessions - are these two tasks not be to consider in that Section and also in the Price Proposal?

A29: Both of these tasks are required and should be incorporated into Task A: Develop TA Implementation Work Plan. The Train-the-Trainer sessions will be one full day in the Bureau of Water Supply office in Troy on a date mutually acceptable to the contractor and NYSDOH.

Q30: If you wish all bidders to submit Form A - State Consultant Services as a part of the original bid proposal what dates should be listed for the Contract Start Date and Contract End Date and is the amount payable under the contract the entire amount of the price proposal?

A30: Use the dates listed in the RFP: July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2013. Yes, the amount payable is the entire amount of the price proposal.

Q31: Will I have to wait for the written answers to these final questions after March 13, 2008?

A31: All questions will receive a written response which will be posted on the NYSDOH website March 26, 2008 at <http://www.nyhealth.gov/funding>.