

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to RFP Number 3837 for the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS)

From: Craig P. Orgeron, Ph.D.

Date: May 27, 2016

Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications

Contact Name: Donna Hamilton

Contact Phone Number: 601-432-8114

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RFP Number 3837 is hereby amended as follows:

1. **Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 7.14.10.1 is hereby removed.**
2. **Title page, INVITATION is modified as follows:**

INVITATION: Sealed proposals, subject to the attached conditions, will be received at this office until June 8, 2016 @ 3:00 p.m. local time for the acquisition of the products/services described below for Mississippi Department of Human Services.

3. **Title page, third box is modified as follows:**

<p>PROPOSAL, SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO RFP NO. 3837 DUE June 8, 2016 @ 3:00 p.m., ATTENTION: Donna Hamilton</p>

4. **Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 3 Project Schedule is amended as follows:**

Task	Date
First Advertisement Date for RFP	03/22/16
Second Advertisement Date for RFP	03/29/16 04/05/16
Deadline for Vendor's Written Questions	3:00 p.m. Central Time on 04/8/16 04/15/16
Deadline for Questions Answered and Posted to ITS Web Site	4/22/16 05/27/16
Open Proposals	05/11/16 06/08/16
Evaluation of Proposals	05/11/16 – 05/31/16 06/08/16 – 06/20/16
Contract Negotiation	05/31/16 – 06/22/16 06/20/16 – 07/08/16
Proposed Project Implementation Start-up	07/18/16

Vendor must include in their proposal a response to each amended requirement as listed above. Vendor must respond using the same terminology as provided in the original requirements.

The following questions were submitted to ITS and are being presented as they were submitted, except to remove any reference to a specific vendor. This information should assist you in formulating your response.

Question 1: Please provide information regarding the number and type of users of the system, including any from any entities outside the MS DSHS.

Response: There are approximately 40 users which includes Program and Fiscal staff.

Question 2: Please provide the current MS WAP State Plan and any current policy and procedure manuals, or a link to an on-line version of these.

Response: The current MS WAP State Plan can be found at: <http://wxfieldguide.com/ms/>

Question 3: When does the WAP program year start in Mississippi?

Response: July 1st

Question 4: What is the budget for this project?

Response: The State has project estimation information but prefers for responding Vendors to submit their most competitive pricing for this effort. State budget information is public record and may be accessed at <https://boe.magic.ms.gov/BOE/OpenDocument/1501031122/OpenDocument/opendoc/openDocument.faces?logonSuccessful=true&shareId=1>.

Question 5: Are there any specific “pain points” that MS DSHS Division of Community Services desires to have addressed via the software solution provided? If so, what are they?

Response: The State requires a solution that meets the requirements of the RFP.

Question 6: Did MS DSHS Division of Community Services and/or MS ITS view any vendor demonstrations of Weatherization Management Software prior to the release of the subject RFP? If so, which vendor(s)?

Response: MDHS has not held formal Vendor demonstrations in conjunction with this RFP.

Question 7: Is the State willing to negotiate a Service Level Agreement tailored to the subject system at the end of a ninety (90) day hyper-care period?

Response: The State intends to use the Software License and Application Service Provider Agreement provided in Exhibit A, *Standard Contract*, as the basis of the Agreement with the winning Vendor. The Vendor must review Exhibit A and notate any exceptions in Section V, *Exception Summary* and propose alternative language for the State to consider.

Question 8: Can the State please confirm that there is no requirement for an interface with a fiscal system? If there is one, is it a single interface or does each Community Action Agency have their own?

Response: Currently, we would require a minimum of a .csv or Excel export from the software to be uploaded into the fiscal software. Preferably, we would like to have the capability to create a single automated interface (e.g., a web service that will return data based on a certain number of query parameters).

Question 9: Section II, 9.7, pg. 7 & Section VII, 1.1, pg. 30
Please clarify when "NOT APPLICABLE," may be used, if ever in responding to requirements in Section VII Technical Requirements? Otherwise to what RFP attachments might the use of it pertain?

Response: Vendors must respond to Section VII as instructed in Item 1. As stated in Section II, Proposal Submission Requirements, Item 9.7: "If the Vendor is certain the point does not apply to the given RFP, the Vendor should respond with "NOT APPLICABLE."

Question 10: Section III, 14, pg. 11
Please clarify this section, including providing examples. Does the State envision other contractors acting as the State's agent on this particular project, and if so in what role(s)?

Response: The State does not envision other contractors acting as the State's agent on this project. Item 14 is included to provide the Vendor an opportunity to inform the State of any known limitations, if any exist, that would prevent the Vendor from working with another contractor. The State does not have an example.

Question 11: Section IV, 3, pg. 13
Given that most software companies typically have Software Licensing Agreements and Service Level Agreements in the course of doing business, is the

State amenable to including each of these documents in any contract resulting from the subject RFP?

Response: The State intends to use the Software License and Application Service Provider Agreement provided in Exhibit A, *Standard Contract*, as the basis of the Agreement with the winning Vendor. The Vendor must review Exhibit A and notate any exceptions in Section V, *Exception Summary* and propose alternative language for the State to consider.

Question 12: Section IV, 28 and 29, pgs. 19 & 20

- a. If the vendor is proposing a COTS solution, where their already developed software platform is being custom-tailored for MDHS requirements, does the state consider this to fall this to fall under Section IV, number 29?
- b. When the final contract is negotiated, does the state consider Section IV, numbers 28 and 29 to be mutually exclusive so that only one of them remains in the final contract?
- c. If the vendor determines it needs to develop additional software or modules to the base COTS system or to work with the base COTS system to satisfy agency requirements, where the vendor would offer or extend an applicable license to the State, with or without a change request, please confirm this would still fall under Section IV, number 29 as opposed to Section IV, number 28.
- d. Where the vendor's intellectual property is modified and custom-tailored to meet the needs of the State, such that source code is modified internally by the vendor, but provided as object code to the State to operate the system, please confirm that access to the vendor's proprietary internal source code is not required to comply with Section IV, number 29.

Response: RFP 3837 is seeking a COTS, web-based Weatherization Management System hosted by the Vendor. The Vendor is instructed to review Exhibit A, *Standard Contract*, for an example of the terms that would be applicable to this project. In particular, Article 4.8 of Exhibit A addresses ownership.

- a. Yes.
- b. See Article 30 of the Standard Contract attached as Exhibit A wherein it states that Content collected by the vendor's software is owned by the State but the vendor's software remains the exclusive property of the Vendor.
- c. Yes, this would be considered a modification as defined in Section IV, Item 29.
- d. Yes, see response to (a) above.

Question 13: Section V, *Proposal Exception Summary Form*, pg. 26

Column 2 of the *Proposal Exception Summary Form*, reads "Vendor Proposal Reference (Page, section, Items in Vendors Proposal where exception is explained." Is it acceptable to simple explain the exceptions in Column 3 "Brief Explanation of Exception" rather than elsewhere in the proposal, as doing so would seem to be more convenient for evaluators?

Response: Vendor's explanations provided in Section V, *Proposal Exception Summary Form*, are meant to be brief. Vendor must provide the detailed explanation

for an exception within the document at the point where the item in question is located. In addition, if the Item is located in Section VII the Vendor must respond with “EXCEPTION”.

Question 14: Section VII, 1.1, pg. 30 & Section 12, pgs. 44-47

Are proposal responses required to Section 12 Scoring Methodology, which seems to be informational only?

Response: Yes. Please see Section VII, Item 1.3.

Question 15: Section VII, 1.7, pg. 30 & Section II, 9.11, pg. 7

Please clarify this requirement as to what is expected beyond the instruction in 1.6, providing an example of possible. Does the State expects a specific format in responding? Is the State asking vendors to respond on a numeric scale, perhaps, and if so, what is the scale to be used?

Response: Item 1.7 is instructing the Vendor to provide a detailed response where appropriate to clearly explain how the proposed solution meets a requirement instead of only responding with “Will Comply” or “Agreed”. The Vendor must intersperse their response following each RFP specification.

Question 16: Section VII, 4.6., pg. 32

Section 4.8 reads in part, “Vendors must be able to provide references demonstrating experience providing the proposed solution in a hosted environment.” Is it sufficient for a vendor who has provided multiple hosted solutions for state clients to provide a reference for their platform, rather than a specific weatherization application?

Response: The State prefers hosting references for the proposed solution.

Question 17: Section VII, 6.2.2, pg. 34

Can the State confirm that they envision that future changes to update and/or alter configuration of the system after implementation as needed to keep it in compliance with MDHS’s approved current Priority List for Single-Family Homes would be addressed through the change order process?

Response: Yes, the Vendor should anticipate future changes and enhancements to their application/services via the change order process.

Question 18: Section VII, 6.4, pg. 34

Regarding the ability for staff to enter data remotely and then upload the data into the Weatherization Assistance Management System:

- a. Is there certain functionality that the State requires to be available in an offline fashion?
- b. Would it be acceptable to MS if the audit tool is capable of being used in a remote location and uploaded later, rather than the entire system, including case management functions?

Response:

- a. **The State is not able to provide a definitive response to the question, but the proposed solution must provide the ability for staff to record the appropriate data necessary while the staff member is onsite.**
- b. **Having the audit tool work remotely offline for later upload is acceptable.**

Question 19: Section VII, 6.6, pg. 34

- a. Please provide the schedule for replacement of Virtual ROMA with CAM-IS.
- b. Is it envisioned that the vendor will implement an interface for both Virtual ROMA and CAM-IS?
- c. What type of communication will be used for each interface (eg. Web Service, FTP Transfer, etc.)?
- d. Approximately how many requests will there be? Responses?
- e. Please provide specific details regarding the data collected in Virtual ROMA/CAM-IS, and what Client and Building specific information will be provided to the proposed solution as a result of this required interface.
- f. Please also indicate which system, if either, should generate Client Eligibility notices.

Response:

- a. **The State does not have a schedule for replacement of Virtual ROMA with CAM-IS. At best, it will be late 2016, or early 2017.**
- b. **Unknown at this point, but will probably just be an interface to CAM-IS. Either way if the interface is a Web Service call then it can interface any system we want.**
- c. **Web Service**
- d. **Approximately 50 per day.**
- e. **The State will work with the Vendor to identify the specific client information required.**
- f. **Virtual ROMA/CAM-IS generates client eligibility notices. MDHS can redirect them to the weatherization portal based on the eligibility check.**

Question 20: Section VII, 6.9, pg. 35

Please provide clarification of the following statement: *"If any component(s) necessary for operation of the requested system is omitted from Vendor's proposal, Vendor must be willing to provide the component(s) at no additional cost."* What is meant by "operation of the requested system?" Is that a list of components as required by Mississippi for the programs, and if so, please provide a specific component list and description of mandatory functions for each specified component MS requires from the proposed solution.

Response: **Vendor must detail all components required for operation of the proposed Weatherization Management System. The State does not have a list of components.**

Question 21: Section VII, 7.10, pg. 36

- a. Does the State require a secondary data center to provide a disaster recovery environment for the system?

- b. Does the State desire a production and test environment within the hosted infrastructure, or just a production system, beyond the internal development and test environments at the vendor's site?

Response:

- a. **The State does not have a preferred solution. The State will evaluate the Vendor's disaster recovery plan and determine whether adjustments are required.**
- b. **The State requires production and test environments.**

Question 22: Section VII, 7.13, pg. 36

Does the state have specific recovery time objectives (RTO) and recovery point objectives (RPO) for the hosted environment, besides the 99% uptime requirement?

Response: **No.**

Question 23: Section VII, 7.14.2, pg. 36

If a vendor has the capability to host in their private data center or on the Microsoft Azure Government cloud:

- a. Would MDHS consider the vendor's private data center to be a dedicated cloud, or
- b. Does the MDHS have a preference for hosting in the Microsoft Azure Government cloud, which may be a more costly option, or in the vendor's private data center (which meets the controls of an annual SOC 2 Type 2 audit)?

Response:

- a. **The State has provided the following definitions to assist the Vendor in determining whether their data center meets the requirement.**

Dedicated cloud - dedicated physical equipment specifically for DHS systems and data, segmented from all other systems/customers in that cloud environment.

Government cloud – dedicated physical equipment specifically for government-related systems and data, segmented from all private customer system/data in the cloud environment. The government cloud would have logical controls for separating the various government customers.

- b. **Vendor must describe the cloud security level of the proposed solution. If more than one solution exists that meets the requirement of "government cloud" or "dedicated cloud" then the Vendor should provide pricing for both options.**

Question 24: Section VII, 7.14.3, pg. 36

- a. What is the VPN connection to the hosted servers and equipment anticipated to support?

- b. Is the VPN connection connecting from the hosted servers to the state/agency network, or a third-party?
- c. Given that the vendor's solution is an Application Service Provider (ASP) model, what access and permissions would agency staff or third-parties require to both the hosted infrastructure and application configuration (backend setup, configuration, database access, etc.)?

Response:

- a. **MDHS will support the VPN connection.**
- b. **The VPN connection is connecting to the State Agency.**
- c. **The State requires Administrator Rights.**

Question 25: Section VII, 7.14.8, pg. 37

What are MDHS's current data retention requirements?

Response: 7 years

Question 26: Section VII, 7.14.10.1, pg. 38

Can the state clarify what is envisioned with regard to the log collector and log receiving system mentioned in this section?

Response: **Item 7.14.10.1 has been removed. Please see Amendment Item #1 above.**

Question 27: Section VII, 7.14.11, pg. 38

Does the State have any specific requirements or expectations regarding a contractor's role in and response to electronic discovery, litigation holds, discovery searches and expert testimonies or to a contractor's response to subpoenas, service of process, and other legal requests?

Response: **The Vendor must agree to provide the State's data in a format acceptable to MDHS, so as to enable the State to respond to any subpoenas or the like in a timely fashion.**

Question 28: Section VII, 7.14.17, pg. 39

- a. Does an annual SOC 2 Type 2 audit (with Security Trust Services Principle) cover the agency's requirements, or are additional assessments required?
- b. Does an automated vulnerability scanning solution such as <https://www.mcafeesecure.com/vulnerability-scanning> satisfy the requirements?

Response:

- a. **The SOC 2 Type 2 audits should address the security requirements outlined in the State of Mississippi's Enterprise Security Policy (ESP). MDHS may have additional security outside of the ESP that they need addressed.**
- b. **No, the scanning option would be good to have but that alone does not address the requirement in Item 7.14.17.**

Question 29: Section VII, 7.14.23, pg. 39

- a. What specific documentation of internal and external security controls does the State require for 7.14.23?
- b. Does a SOC 2 Type 2 audit report satisfy this requirement?

Response:

- a. **The State has not identified specific documentation. The documentation should verify the Vendor's compliance with industry standards.**
- b. **The SOC 2 Type 2 audits should address the security requirements outlined in the State of Mississippi's Enterprise Security Policy (ESP). MDHS may have additional security requirements outside of the ESP that may be identified.**

Question 30: Section VII, 7.14.24, pg. 40

Can the State clarify what an acceptable separation of backup data is required? The minimum separation used by the vendor is separate database backup files for each cloud service customer.

Response: Separated database backup files for each cloud service customer is acceptable to the State.

Question 31: Section VII, 8.7, pg. 40 & 8.11, pg. 41

- a. How long does the State envision that Acceptance Testing will last?
- b. Please provide an estimate of the number of days the Vendor should plan to have an on-site presence for these items.

Response:

- a. **30 days**
- b. **10 days. 5 each at the start and end.**

Question 32: Section VII, 8.9, pg. 40

Is the State seeking a help desk that is manned 24X7 for users until Final Acceptance of the System is completed? Please clarify what is envisioned.

Response: A help desk from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. CST.

Question 33: Section VII, 8.14, pg. 42

Would the State be open to a combination of an on-site presence and scheduled daily meetings during the Pilot phase, as a cost saving measure? Please provide more specifics regarding the State's expectations for an on-site presence. How many locations does the State envision for the Pilot phase?

Response: The State would be open to a combination of on-site and remote.

Question 34: Section VII, 10.1 pg. 44 & Section VIII "Training/Knowledge Transfer Costs", pg. 48

RFP Section VII, 10.1 states in part, "Vendor must propose multi-level training for at least ten (10) users and two (2) administrators for Agency personnel." Elsewhere, RFP Section VII *Cost Information Submission*, in the

“Training/Knowledge Transfer Costs” subsection, references “Internal-User Training (25)” and “Administrator Training-system controls, security configuration (5).” Please clarify the number of trainees broken down by users and administrators.

Response: 25 Internal Users and 5 Administrators

Question 35: Section VII, 10.3 pg. 44

Please clarify what is meant by the term “manual media” in Item 10.3.

Response: An electronic pdf is acceptable.

Question 36: Section VIII, pgs. 48-49

Please confirm that there is no requirement to submit *Section VIII Cost Information Submission* packaged separately from the rest of the proposal response.

Response: Vendor’s Cost Proposal is not required to be packaged separately from the rest of the proposal.

Question 37: Section VIII, pgs. 48-49

Can Vendors add to the *Cost Information Submission Form* for any items not listed?

Response: Yes.

Question 38: Section VIII, pgs. 48-49

Are Implementation Services included in the Total 5-Year Lifecycle Cost on the *Cost Information Submission Form*?

Response: Yes.

Question 39: Section VIII, pgs. 48-49 & Exhibit A 3.5. R pg. 58

Please clarify if the hours of support being sought by the State. Section VII Cost Information Submission requests information about “Maintenance and Support Costs (if separate) 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Central Time Monday through Friday,” but Exhibit A Item 3.5 R specifies “Providing 24x7x365 support of the website, including sub-domain support” and 39.2 specifies “Licensor shall also provide unlimited e-mail and toll-free telephone technical support in the operation of the Software Products twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week.” Does the State really want 24X7 support if the vendor can provide eight to twelve hours of manned support in the central time zone, with e-mail and voice mail available for support 24X7, as well as providing and emergency contact for any critical after hours’ needs?

Response: Yes, MDHS would be open to the vendor providing eight to twelve hours support during MDHS business hours in central time zone.

Question 40: Exhibit A, 4.4, pg. 59

If the system is hosted by a third-party cloud provider such as Microsoft Azure, is the vendor responsible for a loss or interruption in the cloud provider’s service?

Response: Yes.

Question 41: Exhibit A1, 5.3, pg. 59

- a. Does the State anticipate testing the software at various stages (in addition to Acceptance Testing) to help mitigate the potential risk of a major defect?
- b. In the unlikely event that a major defect in the software is discovered, how willing is the state to negotiate the ten (10) business day requirement to either repair or replace the Software?

Response:

- a. **Yes, an incremental test cycle is preferred rather than a “big bang” style testing. However, end to end testing would be done when all functionality is available.**
- b. **Not negotiable.**

RFP responses are due June 8, 2016, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time).

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Donna Hamilton at 601-432-8114 or via email at Donna.Hamilton@its.ms.gov.

cc: ITS Project File Number 42096