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David C. Johnson, Executive Director

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to RFP Number 4488 for the Critical Case and Eligibility Systems and Software

From: David C. Johnson

Date: November 6, 2023

Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications

Contact Name: Solicitations Team

Contact E-mail Address: RFP@its.ms.gov

RFP Number 4488 is hereby amended as follows:

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

Task	Date
Deadline for Questions Answered and Posted to ITS Web Site	~~10/24/23~~ 11/6/23
Open Proposals	3:00p.m. Central Time on 12/01/23
Evaluation of Proposals Begin	12/01/23
ITS Board Presentation	01/18/24
Contract Negotiation	Jan – Feb 2024
Federal Partners Contract Review	Feb – Apr 2024
Proposed Project Implementation Start-up	05/01/24
Project Go-Live Deadline	TBD

2. **Appendix A, Glossary of Acronyms and Terms, is being modified to add the following:**

Acronym/Term	Definition
COTS	Commercial off-the-shelf
ESC	Executive Steering Committee

3. **Attachment B – MDHS System RTM is being replaced with the attached Revised Attachment B – MDHS System RTM form.**

4. **Attachment C – Cost Proposal Template is being replaced with the attached Revised Attachment C – Cost Proposal Template form.**

5. **RFP, Section VII: Technical Specifications, Item 8.2.5.1 is being modified to read:**

   At the State's option, Vendors that remain within a competitive range must be prepared to provide a reference site within seven calendar days of notification. ~~The reference site should be in the Southeastern region of the United States.~~ Vendor must list potential reference sites in the proposal.

6. **Attachment A, Item 11.2 Assumptions for the SOW, under "Call center and interactive voice response (IVR)" is being modified to read:**
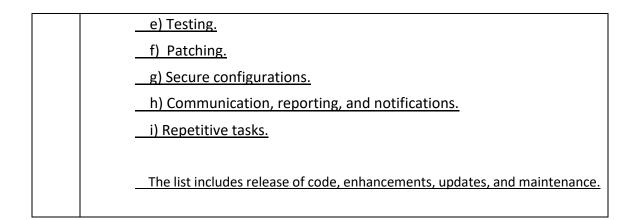
   Call center and interactive voice response (IVR) – Customer service functions such as mailroom, call center, and IVR ~~or conversational user interface (Chat Bot)~~ will not be replaced. MDHS has a standing call center resource with an IVR. ~~Chat Bot services are already in use and will be integrated with the new solution where necessary. When necessary, the MDHS System will integrate with, and collaborate to, support existing artificial intelligence Chat Bot functionality~~.

7. **Attachment A, Item 17.6. Task 2: System Development and Configuration, Table 13 - is being modified to add:**

Req. ID	Requirement Description
SDC-16	The Contractor must employ MDHS-approved configuration management software during the design, development, and testing phases of the project in order to accurately manage configurations, configuration dependencies, and configuration changes, and to automate deployments.

8. **Attachment A, Item 18. SI Services, 18.3. Contractor's Responsibilities, Table 21 SI-15 - is being modified to read:**

SI-15	~~The Contractor must automate manual processes, including:~~ ~~a) Release of code/build process~~ ~~b) Testing~~ ~~c) Patching~~ ~~d) Secure configurations~~ ~~e) Communication, reporting, and notifications~~ ~~f) Repetitive tasks~~ a) Release of code/build process. b) Release of enhancements. c) System Updates. d) Scheduled system maintenance.

	e) Testing.
	f) Patching.
	g) Secure configurations.
	h) Communication, reporting, and notifications.
	i) Repetitive tasks.
	The list includes release of code, enhancements, updates, and maintenance.

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: We did not see any past performance requirements for the RFP in any of the attachments. Can you please confirm that only the evaluation criteria identified will be used for the review of RFP submittals?

Response: **Please refer to RFP Section IX References. The State uses references to confirm the capabilities and quality of a Vendor, product, or individual as required in this RFP. The Scoring Methodology is listed in RFP Section VII, Item 8. There are three categories that will be scored during evaluations: Vendor Qualifications and Experience, System Requirements, and General and Technical Services.**

Question 2: Can you please indicate when the RFP for the "Success" Eligibility IVV vendor will be released, and confirm it will be released through the same website?

Response: **MDHS anticipates releasing the IV&V RFP in the near future. Yes, it will be released on the same website, www.its.ms.gov.**

Question 3: Due to the significant scope and large scale of the proposal being developed in response to RFP #4488, and to allow adequate time for internal review and approvals, we request a minimum two-week extension (on behalf of all responding vendors) in the due date associated with the "Open Proposals" date and time on Page 32 of the RFP. We propose a new date of December 15, 2023, at 3:00 PM to allow more time for vendors to complete and deliver their proposals to MS ITS.

Response: **All proposals are due on December 1, 2023, as stated in the RFP.**

Question 4: RFP, Section II, PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT, page 6, 5. Since the proposal is required to be submitted digitally on a USB, will the State please accept a digital blue ink signature?

Response: **The Submission Cover Sheet and Configuration Summary can be submitted digitally in blue ink on the USB. However, the signature cannot be electronically signed.**

Question 5: RFP Section III, VENDOR INFORMATION, page 11, 14; 14.4 requires that "the individual is a U.S. citizen or that the individual meets and will maintain employment eligibility requirements in compliance with all United State Citizenship and Immigration Servies (USCIS) regulations. The vendor must provide evidence of identification and employment eligibility prior to the award of a contract that includes any personnel who are not U.S. citizens."

Will the State allow the Vendor to: (a) use non-U.S. citizens to perform services, provided there is no access to PHI and/or (b) use offshore personnel, provided there is no access to PHI?

Response: **MDHS system's data must not be exposed or stored outside the U.S. Vendors' staff must meet the U.S. employment eligibility requirements.**

Question 6: RFP SECTION III, VENDOR INFORMATION, Vendor Personnel, page 11, 14.5 requires that "personnel assigned to a project will remain a part of the project throughout the duration of the contract"

1) As certain roles are required only during specific phases of the project rather than the whole contract term, is the State willing to limit this restriction to the duration of respective assignments?

2) Is the State willing to limit this restriction to key persons only, as it would be more cost effective to leverage other position as needed and thus reduce the overall cost?

Response: **1) Yes.**
2) Yes.

Question 7: RFP EXHIBIT A, STANDARD CONTRACT, page 13, 11. Scope of Work, 11.1 Overview of Services Requested; The SOW overview mentions that the cope is the replacement of five legacy IT Systems and mention four – SNAP, TANF, CCP, and CSE: "services to replace five (50 LEGACY it SYSYTEMS WITH A MODERNIZED, INTEGRATED SYSTEM (i.e., MDHS System) to support MDHS' Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (**SNAP**), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (**TANF**), Child Care Payment Program (**CCPP**), AND Child Support Enforcement (**CSE**) program areas. "12.1 Project Overview also mentions TWP: "MDHS currently uses five legacy IT systems to operate its SNAP (including Disaster SNAP [DSNAP] and SNAP Employment and Training [SNAP E&T], TANF, TANF Work Program (TWP), CSE, and the CCPP.

Is the TWP COMPONENT MISSING FROM Section 11.1?

Response: **TANF Work Program (TWP) is part of the TANF program; therefore, the TWP is included in the scope of this project.**

Question 8: RFP SECTION VII, TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS, 2. Mandatory Provisions or Non-Mandatory Provisions in Technical Requirements for the RFP, page 31; 2.1 state "Certain items in the technical specifications of the RFP are MANDATORY." During analysis of the RFP and Attachments A and B, no items have been categorized by the State as "mandatory."

Will the State please confirm no requirements in the RFP and accompanying attachments are designated as "mandatory"?

Response: **The mandatory requirement for this RFP is explained in RFP Section VII Technical Specifications.**

Question 9: RFP SECTION IX – REFERENCES, page 40; The State mandates three (3) references from a project with a comparable size and scope. Also, it was mentioned that, "unless otherwise noted, the requirements found in the References section may be met through a combination of Vendor and subcontractor references and experience."

Is it permissible for the prime contractor and subcontractor to collectively provide three references, or must they submit separate sets of three references each?

Response: **The requirements found in the References section may be met through a combination of Vendor and subcontractor references and experience. Vendor's proposal should clearly indicate any mandatory experience requirements met by subcontractors. Vendors must submit separate references for the prime and subcontractors. References for subcontractors and the prime can be for the same project.**

Question 10: RFP EXHIBIT A, STANDARD CONTRACT, ARTICLE 1 DEFINITIONS, page 44; 1.7 states' "Licensor" means VENDOR NAME, and its successors and assigns.'

Throughout the RFP AND CONTRACT DOCUMENT, "Licensor" is referred to as "Seller," "Contractor," "Vendor," and "Service Provider." Should the definition of "Licensor" be expanded to include these alternate names?

Response: **Article 1.7 will remain as written.**

Question 11: RFP EXHIBIT A STANDARD CONTRACT, ARTICLE 1 DEFINITIONS, page 44; 1.11 states "Software Error" means a reproducible defect or combination thereof..

In the sample contract, "defect" is used instead of "Software Error**.**" Should the definition correspond to "Software Defect" instead of: Software Error?" Please see clause 7.3 for reference.

Response: **Article 1.11 will remain as written.**

Question 12: RFP EXHIBIT A STANDARD CONTRACT, ARTICLE 2 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE, page 45; 2.1 states "Unless this Agreement is extended by mutual agreement or terminated as prescribed elsewhere herein, this Agreement shall begin on the date it is signed by all parties and shall continue in effect until

the Licensor completes all tasks required herein pursuant to the project work plan, including services during the five (5) year hosting term. At the end of the five (5) year initial ASP services term, the ASP services may, upon the written agreement of the parties, be renewed under the same terms and conditions for four (4) additional five (5) year terms.

Will MDHS please confirm the possible total term based on the language in Section 2.1: Additionally, should the pricing template be amended to reflect the options years?

Response: **The base term of the Contract will be five years, as stated in 2.1 under Article 2 Period of Performance. The cost proposal template reflects the Vendor's proposed cost for the base term of five years.**

Question 13: RFP EXHIBIT A STANDARD CONTRACT, ARTICLE 48 PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENT GUARANTEE, page 64; In the sample contract, all personnel are required for the whole term of the project. Because not all personnel need to be dedicated to the contract to render the services with the required quality, is the State amenable to making the following changes? Current contract language – " Contractor guarantees that the personnel assigned to this project will remain a part of the project throughout the duration of the Agreement."

Requested contract language revision – "Contractor guarantees that key personnel will remain in a part of the project for the duration of their assignment to the project and, if required, replaced by personnel with equal or better credentials subject to prior approval by the State."

Response: **MDHS is open to discussing during contract negotiations.**

Question 14: Attachment A, 11, Scope of Work, 11.2. Assumptions for the SOW, page 13; Will MDHS elaborate on ownership expectations with respect to Modified Components?

Does MDHS agree that the State will own the Mississippi custom-specific modifications, but all other enhancements, updates, and customizations made available to other users would only be licensed to MDHS for the contract term? Or Include Modified Off-the-Shelf (MOTS) components, with source code that is available to the State and any vendors?

Response: **Please see 49.12 under Article 49, Federal Contract Provisions in Exhibit A of the RFP.**

Question 15: Attachment A, 11., Scope of Work, 11.2 Assumptions for the SOW, page 19; Are there any batch jobs/runbooks as part of daily activities? If so, will the State please provide the list?

Response: **There are a number of batch jobs that are part of daily activities; however, this varies by legacy system. MDHS intends to replace these batch jobs with automated processes where feasible.**

Question 16: Attachment A, 11., Scope of Work, 11.2 Assumptions for the SOW, page 19: Will the State please provide a list of any case management systems reviewed prior to issuing this Solicitation?

Response: **MDHS chooses not to answer this question.**

Question 17: Attachment A, 12. Project Background, 12.1 Project Overview, page 16; "MDHS currently uses five legacy IT systems to operate its SNAP (including Disaster SNAP [DSNAP] and SNAP Employment and Training [SNAP E&T]), TANF, TANF Work Program (TWP), CSE, and the CCPP, as follows:

- Mississippi Automated Verification Eligibility Reporting Information Control System (MAVERICS) – manages eligibility determinations for SNAP and TANF; subsystems include SNAP E&T
- Jobs Automated Work System (JAWS) – manages TANF support services and TWP case management service for eligible recipients.
- Electronic Financial Interface Tracking System (eFITS) – an interface with the State's Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) contractor systems, eFITS provides deposits to a client's cash benefit card from multiple programs and reconciles the use of benefits.
- Mississippi Enforcement and Tracking of Support System (METSS) – collects and maintains data on all CSE cases and performs automated functions pertaining to CSE activities.
- Child Care Payment System (CPPS) - manages the CCPP within the Division of Early Childhood and Development (DECCD)

Is MDHS seeking to replace the SNAP, TANF, TWP, CSE, and CCP functionality or only the Systems currently supporting them: MAVERICS, JAWS, eFITS, METS, and CCPS?

Response: **Yes. MDHS is seeking a new solution that supports the functionality needed for all the programs in the scope for this project.**

Question 18: Attachment A, 13., Current Environment, General; Will the State provide a list of the standard reports?

Response: **No. Existing reports may not be relevant to the new system. MDHS intends to omit and/or consolidate reports rather than recreating existing reports generated by the legacy systems.**

Question 19: Attachment A, 13. Current Environment, General; What is the current strategy or method that the State has in place for DevOps and which specific tools or technologies are currently being used to support this approach?

Response: **MDHS is looking to implement new tools, technologies, and processes as part of this project. A combination of waterfall and agile methodology is currently being used.**

Question 20: Attachment A, 13. Current Environment, General; Who is the preferred Payment Gateway provider for Facilitating payments?

Response:	**The current issuance of financial payments varies by program.**

Question 21:	Attachment A, 13. General; Will the State please provide more details about which languages the application should support (Multilingual Forms)?

Response:	**Languages must include English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.**

Question 22:	Attachment A, 14. Procurement Goals and Objectives, Table 6: MDHS Goals and Objectives, page 38; The second objective associated with Goal 5 states "Solution components will be owned by MDHS."

	A license/SaaS approach would afford MDHS savings through enhancements and maintenance as part of the annual fees. Is MDHS willing to amend this objective to read "Solution components will be licensed by MDHS"?

Response:	**Please see 49.12 under Article 49, Federal Contract Provisions in Exhibit A of the RFP.**

Question 23:	Attachment A, 16. General Services, 16.1 Staffing Requirements, Table 7, Page 40. Does the State have any defined Key Personnel roles or is this left for the Vendor to decide?

Response:	**There are some Key Personnel roles defined in the RFP. Where the request asks for Key Personnel, and there is no role defined, the Vendors should propose the Key Personnel Role.**

Question 24:	Attachment A, 16. General Services, 16.1 Staffing Requirements, Table 7, Page 40, Requirement ST-05 states, "The Contractor must ensure that the replacement of staff is of equal or greater knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience. The Contractor must receive MDHS' approval prior to placing the replacement staff member on the project team. MDHS may also request a meeting with the proposed replacement before providing approval."

	Will MDHS please confirm that "staff" equates to "Key Personnel"?

Response:	**"Staff" does not equate to "Key Personnel" in Requirements ST-02 and ST-05.**

Question 25:	Attachment A, 16. General Services, 16.1 Staffing Requirements, Table 7, Page 41. Requirement ST-13 states, "The Contractor must make key personnel available on-site at MDHS' offices at least 50% of the time during the project or when requested. MDHS will provide requests a minimum of two (2) weeks in advance of expected on-site time."

	Would MDHS consider a counter-proposal to the 50% onsite requirement to the extent it would result in cost savings?

Response:	**Refer to RFP 4488, Section II: Proposal Submission Requirements, Item 9.6 states, "If the Vendor does not agree with any item in any section, then the Vendor must list the item on the Proposal Exception Summary Form."**

Question 26: <u>Attachment A, 16. General Services, 16.1 Staffing Requirements, page 41.</u> Requirement ST-14 states, "If the contractor uses remote staff, the Contractor must implement adequate communication systems to support project team activities conducted during MDHS business hours, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time. Remote staff must be located in the United States."

Will the State allow remote staff to be located offshore, provided they are not accessing PHI?

Response: **MDHS system's data must not be exposed or stored outside the U.S. Vendors' staff must meet the U.S. employment eligibility requirements.**

Question 27: Attachment A, 16. General Services, General, page 44. Does the State plan to host the SI platform in the State's public or private cloud environment? If yes, will the State provide the licenses/components for the cloud infrastructure and the COTS tools and products in the proposed SI solution?

Response: **Vendors should propose where the platform will be hosted and include all associated platform costs in the cost proposal.**

Question 28: <u>Attachment A, 16. General Services, General, Page 44.</u> If the SI platform should be hosted in the State's public or private cloud environment, will the Vendor have adequate access in the cloud to install and set up software/tools for the installation of software/tools proposed by the Vendor?

Response: **Yes.**

Question 29: <u>Attachment A, 16. General Services, General, Page 44.</u> Are there any restrictions on leveraging offshore work to implement this solution?

Response: **MDHS system's data must not be exposed or stored outside the U.S. Vendors' staff must meet the U.S. employment eligibility requirements.**

Question 30: <u>Attachment A, 16. General Services, General, Page 44.</u> What is the expected number of interfaces that the SI is expected to handle? How many of the above interfaces are real-time, near real-time, and batch interfaces?

Response: **There are approximately 75 interfaces currently used for communications to/from external systems. This is subject to change depending upon the configuration of the new system and availability of data sources. Vendor should be able to support batch, real-time, and near real-time data sources as these are subject to change based on Federal and State regulations.**

Question 31: <u>Attachment A, 16. General Services, 16.4 Supporting Tools Requirements, page 53.</u> Which automated testing solutions or tools are presently utilized within MDHS? Is there a particular preference from the State regarding the testing tools the vendor should deploy?

Response: **MDHS currently uses and prefers Jama for RTM, JIRA for user stories and defects. Automation tools include Smartbear, ReadyAPI, TestComplete, and Jenkins.**

Question 32: Attachment A, 17. DDI Services, 17.1 System Requirements. Will the State please provide the business rules engine/workflows the State currently uses?

Response: **MDHS intends to replace legacy systems, so vendors should propose the applicable technologies to support business rules engine and workflow functionality.**

Question 33: Attachment A, 17. DDI Services, 17.5.3 Contractors Responsibility, page 54. Will the State please clarify if the agency has a preferred public cloud vendor for hosting the solutions?

Response: **Vendors should propose where the platform will be hosted and include all associated platform costs in the cost proposal.**

Question 34: Attachment A, 17.DDI Services, 17.6. Task 2: System Development and Configuration, Table 13, page 69. Unnumbered Requirement ST-SS states, "The Contractor must employ MDHS-approved configuration management software during the design, development, and testing phases of the project in order to accurately manage configurations, configuration dependencies, and configuration changes, and to automate deployments."

Will the State please clarify what Req. ID is associated with the following requirement?

Response: **See Amendment 7 above.**

Question 35: Attachment A, 17. DDI Services, 17.6. Task 2: System Development and Configuration Table 13, page 70. Requirement SDC-05, viii, states, "Providing MDHS access to source code written by the Contractor within two (2) weeks of a written request."

Is MDHS amenable that the source code requirement is only applicable to code written for MDHS-specific modules and interfaces and not to the COTS solutions?

Response: **Yes.**

Question 36: Attachment A, 17. DDI Services, 17.7. Task 3: Data Conversion and Migration, page 72. Objective states, "MDHS' objective for conversion is to be able [to] eliminate any need for the legacy IT systems' historical data until the federal retention requirements are met."

Is MDHS amenable to archiving older data to increase the efficiency of the production database? If yes, what should that term be?

Response: **Yes, MDHS will need to archive data based on state and/or federal requirements.**

Question 37: Attachment A, 17.DDI Services, 17.8 Task 4 Testing, page 80. Section 17.8.2, Objective, states, "MDHS envisions testing will occur concurrently with the

development tasks, with testing for each development iteration. Testing should occur throughout the development process."

Is MDHS amenable to a COTS solution or is a custom solution required? Will MDHS please confirm that the following paragraph should refer to developed or configured, as applicable, by replacing the above test with the following text:

"MDHS envision testing will occur concurrently with the development or configuration tasks, with testing for each development for configuration iteration. Testing should occur throughout the development or configuration process, as applicable."

Response: **MDHS will consider all options as long as the proposed solution meets the functional and technical requirements in Attachment B - MDHS System RTM. MDHS considers configuration and development interchangeable. Requirement will remain as written**. **Refer to RFP 4488, Section II: Proposal Submission Requirements, Item 9.6 states, "If the Vendor does not agree with any item in any section, then the Vendor must list the item on the Proposal Exception Summary Form."**

Question 38: Attachment A, 17.DDI Services, 17.8. Task 4: Testing, Table 15, page 83. Requirement T-02 part c) states, "Documentation of associated test environment containing the following: i.Inventory of the hardware, software, network communication, and data storage components necessary to support the ongoing testing needs of the MDHS System."

Will MDHS confirm that hardware should be replaced for cloud environment requirements if the Vendor proposes a cloud solution?

Response: **Yes, MDHS confirms that hardware should be replaced for cloud environment requirements if the Vendor proposes a cloud solution.**

Question 39: Attachment A, 17.DDI Services, 17.8. Task 4: Testing, Table 15, page 84. Requirement T-04, part c) states, "Test log with a chronological record of test events covered by the report, including: ii. Hardware and software configuration used for each test."

Will MDHS confirm that hardware and/or cloud configuration requirements are included in this item?

Response: **Yes, MDHS confirms that hardware and/or cloud configuration requirements are included in this item.**

Question 40: Attachment A, 17, DDI Services, 17.9.2. Objective, page 86. Section 17.8.3, Objective, states, "…the Contractor must ensure all operational components (hardware, software, and network communication) of the MDHS system are functioning in accordance with DHS requirements."

Will MDHS confirm that as a part of operation components, "hardware" should be considered to include hardware and/or cloud environment?

Response: **Yes, MDHS confirms that as a part of operational components, "hardware" should be considered to include hardware and/or cloud environments.**

Question 41: Attachment A, 17, DDI Services, 17.9.3 Contractor's Responsibilities, Table 16, page 86. Requirement UAT-01 states, "b) Test preparations, including at a minimum: v. Hardware preparation plan."

Will MDHS confirm that hardware refers to hardware and/or cloud environment?

Response: **Yes, hardware refers to hardware and/or cloud environment.**

Question 42: Attachment A, 17.DDI Services, 17.9.3 Contractor's Responsibilities, Table 16, page 89. Requirement UAT-08 states, "a) Project source code (where applicable); b) Project tools (source code for nonproduction artifacts, e.g., conversion programs); c) Related code documentation."

Will MDHS confirm that source code would only be required for MDHS-developed software, not for COTS solution if proposed?

Response: **Yes.**

Question 43: Attachment A, 17. DDI Services, 17.11. Task 7: User Training, page 96. Section 17.11.1, Overview, states "To ensure delivery of user training during Task 7, the Contractor must first conduct a Train-the-Trainer Training (D29) for the training staff on how to use the MDHS System and on the associated Training Materials (D26). The number of MDHS trainers that will require training will vary by program area. After successful completion of the train-the-trainer activities, the Contractor must partner with the MDHS training staff to conduct joint field trainings in MDHS offices as delineated in the Implementation Plan (D31)."

Will MDHS clarify its expectations with respect to train-the-trainer training per component and then one joint field training per each of the 10 locations?

Response: **MDHS chooses not to answer this question.**

Question 44: Attachment A, 17. DDI Services, 17.11. Task 7: User Training, page 96. Section 17.11.1, Overview, states, "MDHS expects that training will include a combination of both on-site classes (held in 10 locations, including the MDHS central office and 9 regional offices throughout the state) and remote, web-based classes."

Will MDHS clarify the percentage of onsite versus web-based training expected? Is MDHS open to self-paced, web-based interactive training instead of web-based classes?

Response: **Vendors should propose the percentage of on-site versus web-based training. Yes, MDHS is open to self-paced, web-based interactive training after initial training is complete.**

Question 45: Attachment A, 17. DDI Services, 17.11. Task 7: User Training, page 96. What Learning Management System (LMS) is currently in use for employee training

within the State? Is it possible for the vendor to propose their own proprietary LMS for training and OCM activities?

Response: **MDHS uses Talent for its current LMS, but vendors may propose an LMS that is not proprietary to the vendor.**

Question 46: Attachment A, 17. DDI Services, 17.11. Task 7: User Training, page 96. Are there any requirements for Citizen-facing training or tutorials in the modernized solution?

Response: **MDHS anticipates the need for some training material and/or tutorials for client/provider-facing portals.**

Question 47: Attachment A, 17. DDI Services, 17.13.3. Contractor's Responsibilities, Table 20, page 105. Requirement DC-05 states, "The Contractor must develop a Post-Implementation Evaluation Report and deliver all materials developed in the course of the project. This will include complete documentation, source code, and other materials, …"

Will MDHS confirm that for a COTS solution object code along with technical documentation is provided instead of source code?

Response: **MDHS will not require source code for COTS components.**

Question 48: Attachment A, 18.SI Services, 18.3 Contractor's Responsibilities, Table 21, page 108. Requirement SI-15 states, "The Contractor must automate manual processes, including a) release of code/build process."

Will MDHS clarify its expectations with respect to automated processes for the release of code? Should the release of code be replaced with enhancements, updates, and maintenance?

Response: **See Amendment 8 above.**

Question 49: Attachment A, 19. O&M Services and Enhancements, 19.3 Contractor's Responsibilities, Table 23, page 117. Requirement OM-19 states, "The Contractor must transfer the ownership of the platform to the MDHS."

If the Contractor proposes a COTS solution using its proprietary IP, ownership transfer is not possible. Would MDHS consider a license to the solution instead?

Response: **MDHS would prefer not to implement a COTS solution using proprietary IP but would evaluate all proposed solutions.**

Question 50: Attachment A, 19. O&M Services and Enhancements, 19.4.1. Enhancements/SRs. Item 3 states "Completing approved SRs is as follows: i. The Contractor creates a schedule for development, including start date, finish date, and UAT dates; ii. The Contractor conducts development, unit testing, and system testing."

Will MDHS clarify the alternate procedure if configuration rather than development is required?

Response: **The procedure includes both development and configuration for enhancements/SRs**.

Question 51: Attachment A, 19. O&M Services and Enhancements, 19.4.6. Software Upgrades, page 123. Section 19.4.6 states "The Contractor must upgrade and test Contractor-implemented third-party software in all MDHS System environments. MDHS requires that the Contractor maintain all third- party software that is not maintained by MDHS at a release level no older than one release prior to the current production release, in compliance with SLA14: Technical Debt."

Will MDHS confirm that this requirement also applies to Contractor proprietary software and should thus read as third-party or proprietary software?

Response: **This requirement applies to third-party software.**

Question 52: Attachment A, 20. Transition Out Services, 20.3. Contractor's Responsibilities, Table 25, page 126. Requirement TO-05 states "g) A plan for knowledge transfer and training from the Contractor to MDHS' assigned resources to prepare them to support the MDHS System, including a description of how: i. The Contractor will embed MDHS' assigned resources with the Contractor staff throughout transition; ii. The Contractor will supervise and provide independent design and development work to MDHS' assigned resources; iii. The Contractor will provide MDHS' assigned resources in-depth training, review of the source code where applicable, and the base framework used for the design, development, configuration, and customization of the MDHS System as it exists at the time of the transition."

Will MDHS agree that the contractor would only be sharing source code and development for State specific customizations for which the State specifically paid for, which then for definition would then be owned by the state, but not for Contractor Proprietary Software?

Response: **Yes.**

Question 53: Attachment A, 21. SLAs, 21.1. DDI Sas, Table 26, page 130. Requirement SLA02 states, "MDHS will reject deliverables that do not align with the DED and do not contain the agreed-upon content (as specified by MDHS in the associated Deliverable Acceptance Form), or that are more than two (2) weeks late in delivery.... Failure to resubmit a deliverable within five (5) days of rejection and/or make the changes requested by MDHS. MDHS will calculate and assess a penalty of $1,000 for each calendar day, or part of, with a monthly cap of $10,000 per deliverable."

Given that MDHS will reject deliverables that are more than two weeks late and, likewise, subject the Vendor to the corresponding penalty, can MDHS clarify how acceptance of the deliverable once provided will work? How will the Contractor obtain relief from the penalty to delayed delivery?

Response: **MDHS will acknowledge receipt of the deliverable which will then begin the review period. A Deliverable Acceptance Form (DAF) will be signed once the deliverable has been accepted and approved by MDHS.**

Question 54: Attachment A, 21. LSAs, 21.2 O&M SLAs, Table 27, page 133. Requirement SLA05 states "At its discretion, MDHS may choose not to assess a penalty for any portion of unplanned downtime that MDHS deems is not a result of Contractor performance failure (e.g., sustained power outage)."

ARTICLE 41 FORCE MAJEURE reads "Each party shall be excused from performance for any period and to the extent that it is prevented from performing any obligation or service, in whole or in part, as a result of causes beyond the reasonable control and without the fault or negligence of such party and/or its subcontractors."

Is MDHS amenable to changing "may choose not to assess a penalty" to "will not assess a penalty" since the resulting default is a force majeure event and thus not the Contractor's fault?

Response: **No. Refer to RFP 4488, Section II: Proposal Submission Requirements, item 9.6 states, "If the Vendor does not agree with any item in any section, then the Vendor must list the item on the Proposal Exception Summary Form."**

Question 55: Attachment A, 21. SLAs, 21.2 O&M SLAs, Table 27, page 141. Requirement SLA14 states, "In addition, the Contractor must annually use an industry-standard code analysis program approved by MDHS to inspect and identify poor coding practices, dead code, antiquated and previously deprecated code, functions, method, and APIs. The Contractor must develop a code correction plan for the identified problems.
The Contractor must specify the schedule for performing the upgrades and code corrections in the O&M schedule.

As the Vendor would propose a COTS solution, will the State remove the code analysis requirement from this SLA and reword the first paragraph above to include Vendor Proprietary Software?

Response: **No. Refer to RFP 4488, Section II: Proposal Submission Requirements, item 9.6 states, "If the Vendor does not agree with any item in any section, then the Vendor must list the item on the Proposal Exception Summary Form."**

Question 56: Attachment A, 22. Summary of Contractor Deliverables, 22.1. DDI Deliverables, Table 28, page 143. Deliverable D6 is for a Software Development Guide.

If the Contractor offers a COTS solution, can the Software Development Guide be exchanged for a Software Configuration Guide?

Response: **Yes, a Software Configuration Guide will be acceptable for a COTS solution.**

Question 57: Attachment A, Glossary of Acronyms and Terms, Table A1, page 152. Is MDHS able to add COTS: Commercial off-the-shelf to the Glossary? Please note that it is included in Attachment B under Glossary.

Response: **See Amendment 2 above.**

Question 58: Attachment B, 4. Requirements, Row 744. LSRP-SHRQ-737 states, "The system must export detail and summary data in the system and generated reports to formats including, but not limited to: .csv, .pdf, .doc, .txt, or .xlsx formatted file."

Given the complexity of the information, it may not be exportable to all the specified formats. Is MDHS amenable to adding, "If feasible and as mutually agreed"?

Response: **No. Refer to RFP 4488, Section II: Proposal Submission Requirements, item 9.6 states, "If the Vendor does not agree with any item in any section, then the Vendor must list the item on the Proposal Exception Summary Form."**

Question 59: Attachment B, 4. Requirements, Row 777. Will MDHS clarify expectations with respect to voter registration language? LSRP-SHRQ-770. The system must include voter registration language on all notices, except specialty notices that do not require it.

Response: **Including an option for client voter registration on certain notices and forms is a federal requirement based on the National Voter Registration Act of 1993.**

Question 60: Attachment B, 4. Requirements, Row 1133. LSRP-SHRQ-1124 Will MDHS provide the description for the following ID? The description is missing.

Response: **See Amendment 3 above.**

Question 61: Attachment B, 4. Requirements, Row 1259. LSRP-SHRQ-1250 Will MDHS provide the description for the following ID? The description is missing.

Response: **See Amendment 3 above.**

Question 62: Attachment B, 4. Requirements, Row 1278. LSRP-SHRQ-1269 Will MDHS provide the description for the following ID? The description is missing.

Response: **See Amendment 3 above.**

Question 63: Attachment B, 4. Requirements, Row 1287. LSRP-SHRQ-1278 The system must stop the continuation of benefits. Will MDHS clarify expectations/conditions to stop the benefits?

Response: **This will be based on the federal and/or state business rules for each program.**

Question 64: <u>Attachment B, 4. Requirements, Row 1299</u>. LSRP-SHRQ-1290 Will MDHS provide the description for the following ID? The description is missing.

Response: **See Amendment 3 above**.

Question 65: <u>Attachment B, MDHS System RTM, Column E</u>. It appears that all requirements have been labeled "N" under column E which indicates they are not mandatory. Can ITS please confirm if the requirements included in Attachment B – MDHS System RTM are correctly labeled?

Response: **Yes, the requirements are labeled correctly. While requirements are not considered "Mandatory" in Attachment B, the list of functional and technical requirements represent MDHS' business needs and federal and/or state requirements**.

Question 66: <u>Attachment A,11.2 Assumptions for the SOW, page 13</u>. The MDHS System Will: Include Modified Off-the-Shel (MOTS) components, with source code that is available to the State and any vendors.

Can ITS please confirm that all bid solutions must provide the source code of the MDHS system to the State and any other vendor at no additional cost (e.g. the vendor solution is non-proprietary)?

Response: **Yes, please see 49.12 under Article 49, Federal Contract Provisions, in Exhibit A of the RFP.**

Question 67: <u>Attachment A,11.2 Assumptions for the SOW, page 15</u>. Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) MDHS has an ESB that ties into some of the services intended for reuse. The MDHS System is expected to integrate with the MDHS ESB.

Can ITS provide additional details on the in-house ESB? Is the required usage of the State's ESB intended for connecting with the State's enterprise assets?

Response: **MDHS uses Red Hat Fuse Java services for its ESB. Yes, the intent is to use the in-house ESB for connecting with the State's enterprise assets.**

Question 68: <u>Attachment B, 4. Requirements, Row 67</u>. LSRP-SHRQ-182, RTM. The system must integrate with the existing document solution (Worksite) to support tracking and efficiently scanning of documents and preparing them for further processing. This may include the ability to attach a scanned document(s) to a case/client record. These could include any documents associated with a client's case and can be received in hard copy, via fax and include, but are not limited to, applications, referrals, returned mail, and supporting documentation.

Can ITS clarify that the intent is for the MDHS application to integrate with the Worksite solution to import documents?

Response: **Vendors can propose to integrate with the existing document management system or propose another solution. Refer to RFP 4488, Section II: Proposal Submission Requirements, item 9.6 states, "If the Vendor does**

not agree with any item in any section, then the Vendor must list the item on the Proposal Exception Summary Form."

Question 69: Attachment B, 4. Requirements, Row 68. LSRP-SHRQ-192, RTM. The system must search and display correspondence stored in the documentation management system without exiting the system's web application.

Can ITS clarify that the intent is for the MDHS application to integrate with the Worksite solution to import documents? If the intent is to reuse the existing document management system, can you please indicate what product is currently in use?

Response: **Vendors can propose integrating with the existing document management system or propose another solution. MDHS currently uses WORK and proprietary products for document management.**

Question 70: Attachment B, 4. Requirements, Row 1211. LSRP-SHRQ-1202, RTM. The system must provide a data warehouse solution. Can ITS clarify if the vendor is to provide a data warehouse solution or use the State's existing data warehouse ecosystem described in section 11.2 SOW assumption which indicated data warehouse assets will be reused?

If ITS requires using the State's existing data warehouse, please provide additional details about the integration requirements.

Response: **Vendors should use the applicable requirements in Attachment B - MDHS System RTM for data warehouse requirements.**

Question 71: Attachment A, 11.2 Assumptions to the SOW. "The MDHS system will have the ability to host the modular components in any environment, including the State's public and/or private cloud environments."

We also have the following language in Attachment A, Req. ID RSD-17, bullet h: "Flexibility to host modular components in the MDHS-approved cloud"

If a bidder proposes a cloud-hosted solution that would be hosted in the existing MDHS cloud environment, does the bidder need to provide costs for hosting (monthly cloud usage for compute and storage) and managed services (operate the cloud environment) OR just the hosting costs?

Response: **Vendors should propose where the platform will be hosted and include all associated platform costs in the cost proposal.**

Question 72: RFP Section IX References, Item 1.3, page 39. 1.3 References should be based on the following profiles and be able to substantiate the following information from both management and technical viewpoints:

1.3.1 The reference installation must be for a project similar in scope and size to the project for which this RFP is issued;

1.3.2 The reference installation must have been operational for at least six (6) months.

Can ITS please confirm that the reference to 1.3, 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 is intended for the vendor to demonstrate that they have experience with implementing DDI projects for each of the key programs included in this RFP (SNAP/TANF, Child Care, Child Support)?

Response: **Yes**.

Question 73:   RFP Section IX References, Item 1.3, page 39. 1.4 References should be based on the following profiles and be able to substantiate the following information from both management and technical viewpoints:

1.3.1 The reference installation must be for a project similar in scope and size to the project for which this RFP is issued;
1.3.2 The reference installation must have been operational for at least six (6) months.

Can ITS confirm that the bidder must have performed as the prime vendor (systems integrator) for each of the 3 minimum references?

Response: **Yes.**

Question 74:   Attachment A, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, page 1. 2.2.2. A minimum of five (5) years of experience with implementing systems of similar size and scope within the last five (5) years.

2.2.3. A minimum of five (5) years of experience providing similar services to those requested in this RFP (e.g., design development and implementation [DDI], systems integration [SI], project management, etc.).

Can ITS confirm that the bidder must have performed as the prime vendor (systems integrator) for the qualifications?

Response: **Yes**.

Question 75:   Attachment A, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, page 1. 2.2.2. A minimum of five (5) years of experience with implementing systems of similar size and scope within the last five (5) years. 2.2.3. A minimum of five (5) years of experience providing similar services to those requested in this RFP (e.g., design development and implementation [DDI], systems integration [SI], project management, etc.).

When the State refers to a comparable DDI project, is the expectation that the vendor will have implemented the system for a new client (E.g., not multiyear incremental renewal in place for an existing client that has never been transferred or implemented as would be required by Mississippi)?

Response: **Vendors can include experience with new and/or existing clients to meet the qualifications**.

Question 76: Attachment A, 13.2, Technical Environment CCPS, page 36. CCPS is generally viewed by users as working well and is more modern than several other systems used within MDHS. CCPS supports approximately 6,000 monthly applications (including re-certifications), 19,000 active parental enrollments, and 1,400 providers statewide.

Future-state aspirations include mobile applications and expanded interfaces to additional systems to make more data accessible to State staff directly through the system, such as a childcare workforce registry. Table 5 provides a summary of CCPS.

Can ITS please clarify that the intent is for the MDHS system to integrate with the existing CCPS asset and it will continue to be utilized by the stakeholders?

Response: **The intent is for the new solution to replace the current CCP system.**

Question 77: Attachment A, 11.2. Assumptions for the SOW, page 13. MDHS has identified several technical assets, business assets, and resources that the department may use to support the MDHS System. The reused functionality contributes to cost avoidance, as MDHS has already invested in the items and may not need to fund DDI, O&M, or other expenses related to the costs, except for minor changes to accommodate the new system components. The following existing assets and resources are already maintained and operated by the State, will provide reused functionality in the MDHS System, and may not need to be re-procured:

In "Attachment b" there are a number of requirements that reference functionality included in the assets identified for reuse in section 11.2 in "Attachment A". Where a requirement is associated with functionality supported by one of the assets in 11.2, is the intent to respond with how we will integrate?

E.g., ID - LSRP-SHRQ-745 states "The system must allow clients to start a change report for changes to an existing submitted application through their account using the client web portal". For this requirement our assumption is that CWP will provide this functionality and the MDHS system will provide APIs needed by CWP to integrate?

Response: **The RFP states that existing assets *may not* need to be re-procured. Vendors' proposed solution shall meet the requirements in Attachment B - MDHS System RTM to help ensure business needs are met.**

Question 78: RFP Exhibit A Section 43.3, page 61. Section 43.3 indicates that the State will reference the labor rate card from the cost proposal to determine the cost for change order hours. Yet, each DDI services tab in the cost proposal also provides a section for estimating these hours.

Does the State anticipate vendors to set aside specific change order hours annually during the DDI? Or should we include the rate but leave the hours as zero (0)?

Response: **The applicable DDI service tabs in Attachment C - Cost Proposal Template no longer include the staffing costs for System Requests/Change Orders.**

The System Request/Change Order Hourly Rates section of the labor rate tab must list the hourly rates for any System Requests/Change Orders. See Amendment 4 above.

Question 79: Will new data sources (e.g. income and employment, address, incarceration) be included as part of this modernization project?

Response: **Yes, MDHS expects there will be new data sources**.

Question 80: Would the State consider modifying the reference site visit requirement to expand the requirement to include states across the U.S.?

Response: **Yes, reference site visits can be outside of the southern region of the U.S. See Amendment 5 above.**

Question 81: Would the State consider an initial implementation of a Systems Integration Platform (SIP) that could be utilized to implement modular business components over time?

Response: **MDHS will consider a System Integration Platform (SIP).**

Question 82: Is the State planning to release a separate RFP to procure an OCM vendor (Refer to Section 3.2.2)

Respond: **MDHS has already procured OCM services.**

Question 83: Throughout the RFP, there is mention and diagram of system interfaces. Could MS DHS please inventory and provide a count of system interfaces by program area (SNAP, TANF, Childcare, Child Support, etc.) to ensure consistency and accuracy in all vendor proposals?

Response: **There are approximately 75 interfaces currently used for communications to/from external systems. This is subject to change depending on the configuration of new system and the availability of data sources. Vendor should be able to support batch, real-time, near real-time data sources as these are subject to change based on Federal and State regulations.**

Question 84: Attachment B. MDHS System RTM.xls, "Requirements" tab, all rows are marked optional (Mandatory = N), please clarify if this is intended and how the Mandatory or Optional is related to scoring and other evaluations?

Response: **While requirements are not considered "Mandatory" in Attachment B, the list of functional and technical requirements represents federal and/or state requirements and MDHS' business needs.**

Question 85: Attachment B. MDHS System RTM.xls "Instructions" tab, please clarify how the Native/Config/Coding is related to scoring and other evaluations.

Response: **Scoring will be based on whether the requirement is met and not based on the requirement being met by native, configuration, or coding.**

Question 86:   Attachment B. MDHS System RTM.xls, "Requirements" tab, requirement against IDs LSRP-SHRQ-1124, LSRP-SHRQ-1250, LSRP-SHRQ-1269, LSRP-SHRQ-1290 are empty, please provide details**.**

Response: **See Amendment 3 above.**

Question 87:   Attachment A 12.1 lists the 5 legacy systems as SNAP (including DSNAP & SNAP E&T), TANF, TWP, CCPP, and CSE. However, Attachment B does not mark any benefiting program as TWP. We see two occurrences of TANF. Does this warrant a correction?

Response: **TANF Work Program (TWP) is part of the TANF program, so TANF is listed twice when the requirement is needed for both TANF and TWP.**

Question 88:   Attachment B. MDHS System RTM. The following requirements seem missing but not sure if intentional: LSRP-SHRQ-62, LSRP-SHRQ-183.

Response: **Requirement LSRP-SHRQ-62 does not exist in Jama and is not included in the MDHS System RTM. Requirement LSRP-SHRQ-183 is included in the MDHS System RTM with all the necessary information.**

Question 89:   Attachment B - MDHS system rtm.xls, sheet "Requirements," Column ID has hyperlinks for each requirement, but these need a login to jama cloud connect, please clarify reason to provide hyperlinks and how bidders are supposed to utilize the same.

Response: **The RTM was an export from Jama, and Vendors do not need to access any additional information within Jama to respond to the requirements**.

Question 90:   Attachment B – LSRP-SHRQ-179. Please clarify if the new solution must include a new MDM solution and implementation services to migrate data over from the State's existing MPI solution.

Response: **MDHS does not have an existing MDM solution. Vendors should include an MDM solution as part of the proposed solution and as stated in the RFP on page 15, MDHS does not have an MPI solution in place at this time.**

Question 91:   Attachment B, LSRP-SHRQ-179. Building a new MDM solution is a significant undertaking and quite often executed as a project on its own. Given that this requirement is not marked as mandatory, how will the State evaluate proposals that includes cost for a new MDM and the corresponding implementation services against proposals that do not include an MDM component?

Response: **MDHS is seeking to have a new MDM solution as part of this implementation and proposals will be scored accordingly.**

Question 92:   Attachment A, 11.1, page 13. How many implementation phases does the department expect, and their corresponding durations?

Response: **Vendors should propose the number of implementation phases and durations.**

Question 93: Attachment A, 11.2, page 13. "Include Modified Off-the-Shelf (MOTS) components, with source code that is available to the State and any vendors."

Please clarify if this is for components that are newly added or modified for the State specifically and not for pre-existing COTS modules that need no customization. Also, please clarify the intention behind "any vendors."

Response: **This does not apply to pre-existing COTS modules that need no customization. The intent behind "any vendors" is to allow another vendor – contracted with ITS or MDHS – to provide O&M services at the end of the five year initial services term or additional five year terms, based on written agreement of the parties**.

Question 94: Attachment A, 11.2, page 13. Please clarify that the source code is to be handed over to the State after 2 years of O&M completion or at the mutually agreed contract end.

Response: **Source code owned by MDHS should be provided upon request.**

Question 95: Attachment A, 11.2, page 14. Please provide details of the Call center and IVR systems that the new solution will need to integrate.

Response: **MDHS chooses not to answer this question at this time.**

Question 96: Attachment A, 11.2, page 14. Common Web Portal (CWP) is included in the list of assets with which the new solution is expected to integrate (re-use). However, Attachment B, requirement LSRP-SHRQ-95 requires the new solution to provide both a client portal and a provider portal.

Please explain how the conflict between the requirement to re-use the CWP and requirement LSRP-SHRQ-95, which requires both a client portal and provider portal, can be resolved.

Response: **The RFP states that existing assets *may not* need to be re-procured. Vendors' proposed solution shall meet the requirements in Attachment B - MDHS System RTM to help ensure business needs are met.**

Question 97: Attachment A, 11.2, page 15. Please provide details of the ESB the new solution will need to integrate.

Response: **MDHS uses Red Hat Fuse Java services for its ESB.**

Question 98: Attachment A, 11.2, page 15. Please provide details of the ITSM, and incident management system the new solution will need to utilize or integrate.

Response: **MDHS uses Jira Service Management for its ITSM. MDHS will use its existing ITSM or consider the Vendors ITSM if it is more advantageous for MDHS.**

Question 99: Attachment A, 11.2, page 14. "Customer service functions such as mailroom, call center, and IVR or conversational user interface (Chat Bot) will not be replaced," and "MDHS is open to review proposed Chat Bot functionality provided by the Vendor" appear conflicting.

Please clarify the State's intent and how this will impact scoring and evaluations.

Response: **See Amendment 6 above.**

Question 100: Attachment A, 11.2, page 14. "The MDHS modernized, integrated IT solution is expected to integrate with MDHS' current and future iterations of the Common Web Portal and the MyMDHS application,"

Please provide the technology stack details needed for the integration with CWP and MyMDHS.

Response: **The RFP states that existing assets *may not* need to be re-procured. The vendors' proposed solution shall meet the requirements in Attachment B - MDHS System RTM to help ensure business needs regarding public-facing portals and mobile applications are met.**

Question 101: Attachment A, 11.2, page 14. "The MDHS modernized, integrated IT solution is expected to integrate with MDHS' current and future iterations of the Common Web Portal and the MyMDHS application."

Is any modernization planned in the roadmap for these specific components? If yes, what are their timelines that may impact the integrations?

Response: **The RFP states that existing assets *may not* need to be re-procured. The vendors' proposed solution shall meet the requirements in Attachment B - MDHS System RTM to help ensure business needs regarding public-facing portals and mobile applications are met.**

Question 102: Attachment A, 11.2, page 15. Please provide details of "Many existing databases, and some data warehouses and reporting platforms, will not be replaced," including whether these are on-prem or cloud-based, reporting engine(s) used, and the type of integration expected, such as ETL or over ESB etc.

Response: **MDHS uses Power BI, SQL, and Red Hat Fuse Java services. Databases are native SQL on-prem.**

Question 103: Attachment A, 11.2, page 15. In continuation to the above question, is the contractor expected to push and/or pull data with these platforms on an ongoing basis?

Response: **Yes.**

Question 104: Attachment a, 11.2, page 15. Assumptions for Scope of Work, "Data Warehouses and reporting platforms…Integration of data services may be a function of the Contractor's SI staff."

Please list respectively the databases, data warehouses, and reporting platforms in scope for integration with proposed solution.

Response: **MDHS uses Power BI, SQL, and Red Hat Fuse Java services. Databases are native SQL on-prem.**

Question 105: Attachment A, 11.2, page 15. "The MDHS System will be able to interface with this service instead of passing it on, potentially increasing the cost for subscription service(s)."

Please clarify passing it on with example and whether a two-way bi-directional interface is expected?

Response: **The expectation is the Vendor will interface with the Address Verification service, which is a bi-directional interface.**

Question 106: Attachment a, 11.2, page 15. "The MDHS System will be able to interface with this service instead of passing it on, potentially increasing the cost for subscription service(s)."

Do vendors need to provide Melissa Persontaor licenses, or what is the impact of subscription services on the bidder cost book submission?

Response: **MDHS will continue to pay for Melissa Personator services and Vendors are not expected to propose this cost.**

Question 107: Attachment A, 11.2, page 15. "The MPI could serve to bridge the Contractor's MDM and existing data requests the MPI can provide."

Please provide details of the current MPI solution vendor and integration technology stack.

Response: **As stated in the RFP on page 15, MDHS does not have an MDM or MPI solution in place at this time.**

Question 108: Attachment A, 11.2, page 15. "The MPI could serve to bridge the Contractor's MDM and existing data requests the MPI can provide."

Please confirm how many user licenses the State will provide for vendor staff to use the MPI.

Response: **As stated in the Attachment A on page 15, MDHS does not have an MDM or MPI solution in place at this time.**

Question 109: Attachment A, 11.2, page 15. "The Vendor shall provide a solution for MDHS that is an industry-recognized third-party solution for Master Data Management (MDM) and help with MDHS' growing needs."

Please provide number of users, expected data volumes, growth percentages and associated volume metrics for sizing.

Response: **MDHS does not have an existing MDM solution, so numbers cannot be provided. Vendors should include an MDM solution as part of the proposed solution.**

Question 110: Attachment A, 11.2, page 16. "… with any other MDHS-approved office automation tools as determined by MDHS."

Please provide a list of currently anticipated integrations.

Response: **The only anticipated integration is with MS Office365 for office automation tools.**

Question 111: Attachment A, Table 6: MDHS Goals and Objectives, page 38. One Goal states "…Eliminates integration with multiple disparate systems…" System interfaces of each respective system are provided in technical environment Section 13.2.

Please clarify which affiliated systems and interfaces are in scope for integration with the proposed solution.

Response: **There are approximately 75 interfaces currently used for communications to/from external systems. This is subject to change depending on the configuration of the new system and the availability of data sources. Vendor should be able to support batch, real-time, near real-time data sources as these are subject to change based on Federal and State regulations.**

Question 112: Attachment A, 15, page 39. "The Contractor must complete all DDI and SI tasks within 36 months".

What drives this timeline such as federal IAUPD approvals? How is scoring and evaluation considered for longer durations?

Response: **MDHS is seeking to have the implementation completed within 36 months, and proposals will be evaluated accordingly. Vendors can take exception to this item and propose an alternate timeline.**

Question 113: Attachment A, 15, page 39. Please provide a schedule showing the other dependent tracks and onboarding of vendors such as the IV&V vendor, OCM support team, MDHS PMO, MDHS Integration and Programmatic teams, etc

Response: **IV&V will be onboard prior to the DDI/SI vendor and all other teams are already onboard.**

Question 114: Attachment a, 15, page 39. "The Contractor must complete all DDI and SI tasks within 36 months".

Given that five large modules that are being implemented, are the UATs, Pilots, Rollouts and Warranty phases considered outside this 3-year window?

Response: **UAT, pilots, and rollouts must be within the 36-month duration. The warranty period(s) might fall outside of this duration depending on the Vendor's proposed implementation approach and timeline.**

Question 115: Attachment A, 16.1, page 41. ST-14 "Remote staff must be located in the United States.",

Please confirm offshore staff is allowed for COTS modifications with deidentified data as we do with other clients.

Response: **MDHS system's data must not be exposed or stored outside the U.S. Vendor's staff must meet the U.S. employment eligibility requirements.**

Question 116: Attachment A, 16.4, page 48. "The Contractor must support MDHS in configuring and maintaining Jira and Jama for all design, development, testing, and O&M activities."

How many user licenses of these does the State intend to provide?

Response: **MDHS will provide as many licenses as deemed necessary.**

Question 117: Attachment A, 16.4, page 48. Does the State have any preference or reuse existing investment requirements around tools for SCM, DBMS, ALM, Automated Testing, Configuration Management, etc.?

Response: **MDHS currently uses the following tools:**
- **Automated Testing - SmartBear ReadyAPI, TestComplete, Jenkins.**
- **Configuration Management - Ansible Automation Platform.**
- **ALM – Jama, Jira Service Management.**

Question 118: Attachment A, 16.4, page 48. Does the State user need access to tools for SCM, DBMS, ALM (including JIRA and JAMA), Automated Testing, Configuration Management etc. If yes how many State user licenses should the vendors cater?

Response: **Yes. Vendors should propose the number of licenses and applicable costs for tools not currently used by MDHS, but which will be needed for the new solution.**

Question 119: Attachment A, 17.1, page 50. "Please see the Conceptual System Design Document in the Procurement Library for more information."

Please provide access to this document.

Response: **Please see the attached Conceptual System Design and the Current State Assessment Report documents.**

Question 120: Attachment A, 17.1, page 50. Figure 6, please provide details of the four-color coded items as well as the mapping of these to the detailed requirements in "*attachment b - mdhs system rtm.xlsx*".

Response: **Please see the attached Conceptual System Design and the Current State Assessment Report documents. The Conceptual System Design Document includes more details on the four color-coded items depicted in Figure 6. These items have not been mapped to the requirements in Attachment B - MDHS System RTM.**

Question 121: Attachment A, 17.5, page 53. Please clarify if business rules from legacy systems have been extracted and readily available to create detailed user stories or would the State expect *attachment b - mdhs system rtm.xlsx* to be a full list of requirements?

Response: **MDHS does not want to use the business rules from legacy systems. The business rules for the new solution will be created based on MDHS, state, and/or federal policies as required in the applicable requirements in the RTM.**

Question 122: Attachment A, 17.5, page 55. Table 12 "An SCM in a format acceptable to the MDHS will be provided for source code included under any Software Escrow Agreement, if applicable."

Please clarify if Escrow arrangement is mandatory and to be costed to cover what time periods?

Response: **No, the Escrow arrangement is not mandatory. Refer to RFP 4488, Section II: Proposal Submission Requirement, Item 9.6 states, "If the Vendor does not agree with any item in any section, then the Vendor must list the item on the Proposal Exception Summary Form."**

Question 123: Attachment A, 17.5, page 58. RUP is indicated. Can vendors use Agile frameworks, Design Thinking etc.?

Who provides the associated tool licenses?

Response: **MDHS currently uses SAFe Agile methodology. Vendors should propose and provide any associated tools and licenses necessary to meet the requirement(s).**

Question 124: Attachment A, 17.6, page 68. "Consist of one or more integrated environments used for the duration of the project, including development, configuration, implementation, enhancements, and subsequent O&M."

Please clarify how many environments are to be sized, and any DR site considerations?

Response: **The State will require dedicated training and production environments that meet agreed upon SLAs and designed to meet defined RTOs and RPOs. Other environments will need to be available as described in requirements LSRP-SHRQ-45 through LSRP-SHRQ-48 in Attachment B - MDHS System RTM**.

Question 125: Attachment A, 17.6, page 69. "The Contractor must support the timely acquisition, installation, and configuration of the hardware, software, and infrastructure required to develop and host the MDHS System."

Would the State allow fully cloud based solutions or in which cases does hardware come into play?

Response: **MDHS will allow a fully cloud-based solution as long as it conforms to the State's cloud first policy which includes provisions for complete support by a Vendor of all cloud-based architecture. MDHS and the Vendor will verify and validate its cloud-based solution requirements as part of the requirements analysis phase of the project.**

Question 126: Attachment A, 17.7, page 72. "Appendix B – Program Data for Conversion."

Please provide details of number of tables/files arranged by number and complexity of columns inside.

Response: **MDHS cannot answer this question at this time.**

Question 127: Attachment A, 17.7, Task 3, page 77. Please provide the duration of the legacy historical data retention in years/months that will have to be migrated into the new System.

Response: **Based on State and/or Federal policies, historical data retention can range from three to ten years, depending on the type of data. Some data is required to be retained indefinitely.**

Question 128: Attachment A, 17.8, page 83. Are the 3,500 concurrent users all CWP users? Please provide the user split by module or functionality and include interfaces list as well.

Response: **Requirement T-03 in Section 17.8 should be used as a testing benchmark only. User split by module or functionality, including interfaces, should not be relevant.**

Question 129: Attachment A, 17.9, page 90. "Provide MDHS System Help Desk support."

Does the State have a Help Desk which the vendor will support or does the vendor need to setup a Help Desk from scratch including an ITSM system and staff it?

Response: **MDHS envisions that the MDHS Help Desk would provide Level 1 support and work with the Vendor on Level 2 support. The Vendor will be responsible for providing Level 3 support, including following the agreed upon change management and release management processes. MDHS currently uses Jira Service Management for its ITSM.**

Question 130: Attachment A, 17.11, page 96. "The Contractor must first conduct a Train-the-Trainer Training (D29) for the training staff on how to use the MDHS System and on the associated Training Materials (D26)".

How many training the trainer sessions are to be planned to include any repeat booster training prior to ORT?

Response: **Vendors should propose the number of train-the-trainer sessions.**

Question 131: Attachment A, 17.11, page 101. "The Contractor must maintain a record of individuals who have completed the System training. Documentation must include the name of the individual trained, the date of training, and the specific training completed (e.g., for what type of user). The Contractor must make the training records accessible to the MDHS."

Does MDHS have an LMS or does the vendor need to cost an LMS provision?

Response: **MDHS uses Talent for its current LMS. Yes, Vendors should propose a LMS.**

Question 132: Attachment A, 17.12, page 101.   "The objective of Task 8 is to develop the Implementation Plan (D31) and artifacts required to put the tested MDHS System into a production pilot—for a minimum of three (3) months—and then into operations with minimal disruption to system users."

Which FNS 901 phase does this map to? Pilot or Rollout?

Response: **Section 6.7.3 in the FNS Handbook 901 reads, "The Pilot is a transitional milestone in project development and occurs after a successful UAT. In a Pilot, the system goes live for a reduced population of users. These users will be operating with a fully functional system in a live environment. If a legacy system exists, the State is encouraged to continue to run client data through the legacy system in parallel with live operations in the pilot area, and then compare the results, to further validate the accuracy of the new system."**

Question 133: Attachment A, 17.12, page 102. "Any additional functionality required for federal certification is functioning in production or is in development in accordance with the priority set by the ESC."

What or who is ESC?

Response: **The ESC is the MDHS Executive Steering Committee. See Amendment 2 above.**

Question 134: Attachment A, 18.3, page 107. "The Contractor must maintain a MDHS-approved data anomaly/integrity checker to monitor the production environment."

Does the State provide this tool including licenses for vendor staff or should vendor include/develop, please provide details?

Response: **No, the State does not provide this tool. Vendors should propose the necessary tool(s) and include any associated costs.**

Question 135:   Attachment A, 18.3 page 107. "Service Registry to catalog and document all web services, microservices etc."

Is an API management gateway in scope?

Response: **Yes, Vendors should propose all technologies needed to meet the requirement(s).**

Question 136:   Attachment A, 19.2, page 111. "A twelve (12)-month warranty, or stabilization, period will follow each implementation phase of the MDHS System."

Please clarify if some of the five modules be migrated earlier and hence have its own DDI, warranty, O&M cycle or should all modules be considered in totality? If parallel tracks are allowed, what are the legacy system integration requirements as some modules are converted, but need to integrate with legacy system of other modules?

Response: **Vendors should propose the approach and timeline for implementation, warranty (or stabilization), and O&M phases. If Vendors are proposing parallel tracks, integration with legacy systems might be needed. Please see information provided in Attachment A in Section 13.2, Technical Environment for potential integrations.**

Question 137:   Attachment A, 19.2, page 111. "A twelve (12)-month warranty, or stabilization, period will follow each implementation phase of the MDHS System."

Please clarify if DDI Steps 1-9 are completed in 36 months, followed by a 1-year warranty, followed by a 2-year O&M.

Response: **MDHS expects that the warranty (or stabilization) period might be concurrent with the O&M period depending on the Vendor's proposed implementation approach and timeline within the base term of the Contract.**

Question 138:   Attachment A, 19.4.4, page 120. "MDHS and the Contractor will share MDHS System Help Desk support. Each organization will provide a different level of Help Desk support to MDHS System users."

Does the State provide the ticketing system, including licenses for vendor users? How many incident system tickets should we plan for?

Response: **MDHS currently uses Jira Service Management for its ITSM. Vendors should use their current and past experience to plan the number of incident system tickets.**

Question 139:   Attachment A, 19.4.4, page 120. "The Contractor will provide Level 3 Help Desk support for technical problems that MDHS cannot resolve."

Does this mean the State will also implement code fixes? Please clarify the scope of Level 1 and Level 2, assuming the State provides this.

Response: **MDHS envisions that the MDHS Help Desk would provide Level 1 support and work with the Vendor on Level 2 support. The Vendor will be responsible for providing Level 3 support, including following the agreed upon change management and release management processes.**

Question 140: Attachment A, 21.1, page 129. "Table 26 provides DDI SLAs that MDHS will hold the Contractor accountable for during the term of the DDI phases of the Contract."

Are the SLAs subject to mutual discussion and agreement at contract stage given the limited contextual detail available, shared services between vendor, State and other vendors and potential misinterpretation of the SLAs without further discussions?

Response: **Yes. Refer to RFP 4488, Section II: Proposal Submission Requirement, Item 9.6 states, "If the Vendor does not agree with any item in any section, then the Vendor must list the item on the Proposal Exception Summary Form."**

Question 141: Attachment A, Appendix B, page 154. Please clarify how many years (or other dimensional aspects) does the Appendix B data represent. Is this all operational/transactional data only? How frequently are the current data archived/purged?

Response: **The information in Appendix B in Attachment A represents a point-in-time (e.g., data from implementation through November 2021) for each system. The numbers represent all data, which has not been archived/purged but MDHS is evaluating data to archive/purge that will not be transitioned to the new solution.**

Question 142: Attachment A, Appendix B, page 154. How much of the data volumes listed as historical data are not required for data conversion into the proposed solution?

Response: **MDHS cannot answer this question at this time**.

Question 143: Attachment A, Appendix B, page 154. What data formats and structures are currently used by each system?

Response: **See the summary tables for each system in Section 13.2 in Attachment A.**

Question 144: Attachment A, 11.1 and Attachment C. As per attachment A 11.1 "The Contractor will provide O&M services for the MDHS System and integrations after implementation for a minimum of two (2) years after the last implementation phase." This implies 5 years base contract. However, in various tabs of Attachment C, there is a reference to Year 4 and Year 5 being extension years. This implies 3 years base + 2 Option years contract. Further, in Attachment C, the tab named "Total Price Summary" at cell A23 states, "Total Price for Initial Five-Year Contract with Options for up to an Additional 4 Years". This implies 5 years base + 4 Option years contract (total 9

years pricing). But there is no provision to enter an additional 4 years of pricing.

Our understanding is that we need to provide a 5-year base pricing, which includes two years of O&M. Please confirm if this is correct.

Response: **Yes, Vendors must provide five-year base pricing, which includes two years of O&M, in Revised Attachment C - Cost Proposal Template. At the end of the five-year services term, services may, upon the written agreement of the parties, be renewed under the same terms and conditions for four additional five-year terms (as stated under Article 2 Period of Performance in Exhibit A). See Amendment 4 above.**

Question 145: Attachment C, Labor Rate tab. Attachment C - Cost proposal template.*xlsx*, sheet Labor Rate, Cell R23 should it read Extension 2 – Year 5?

Response: **See Amendment 4 above.**

Question 146: Attachment C – Cost Proposal Template, Labor Rates tab. We do not know how to size for the system request/ change order with the information provided as of now. For the purpose of completing this tab, should we enter 1 FTE across all Years for rows 65 through 97?

Response: **Yes. The "System Request/Change Order Hourly Rates" section of Labor Rate tab should have the hourly rate of all the resources that could be used for any change orders during the duration of the contract. See Amendment 4 above.**

Question 149: RFP, Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 8.2.2.3, page 35. "The additional 10% is used for a proposal that exceeds the requirement for an item in a way that provides additional benefits to the state."

How does the State usually determine this?

Response: **This is determined by proposals that exceed the requirements articulated in the RFP during evaluations.**

Question 150: RFP, Section IX, page 39. Can the reference installation be from our subcontractor for similar SNAP, TANF scope modules?

Response: **Yes. The requirements found in the References section may be met through a combination of Vendor and subcontractor references and experience. Vendor's proposal should clearly indicate any mandatory experience requirement met by subcontractors. Vendors must submit separate references for the prime and subcontractors. References for subcontractors and the prime can be for the same project**

Question 151: RFP, Section IX 2. Subcontractors, page 40. "Three (3) references for whom the subcontractor has performed work that the State may contact."

Do we need three references for each proposed subcontractor in addition to references for the prime vendor?

Response: **Yes. The requirements found in the References section may be met through a combination of Vendor and subcontractor references and experience. Vendor's proposal should clearly indicate any mandatory experience requirement met by subcontractors. Vendors must submit separate references for the prime and subcontractors. References for subcontractors and the prime can be for the same project.**

Question 152: RFP, Section IX 2. Subcontractors, page 40. "Vendor's proposal should clearly indicate any mandatory experience requirements met by subcontractors. NOTE: The State reserves the right to eliminate from further consideration proposals in which the prime Vendor does not, in the State's sole opinion, provide substantive value or investment in the total solution proposed. (i.e., the State does not typically accept proposals in which the prime Vendor is only a brokering agent.)"

What are the minimum references to be met by the vendor to avoid disqualification for not meeting the reference requirement?

Response: **The requirements found in the References section may be met through a combination of Vendor and subcontractor references and experience. Vendor's proposal should clearly indicate any mandatory experience requirements met by subcontractors. Vendors must submit separate references for the prime and subcontractors. References for subcontractors and the prime can be for the same project.**

Question 153: What is the size of the population that DHS serves, on average across all its benefits programs?

Response: **https://www.mdhs.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/ANNUAL-REPORT_2023-1.pdf**

Question 154: On average, what is the quantity of custodial and non-custodial parents that DHS has in the child support enforcement program?

Response: **Non-Custodial Parents: approximately 176,000.**
Custodial Parents: approximately 183,000,

Question 155: Did the State use Third Party Advisors (TPA) or vendors to assist with drafting the specification for RFP 4488? If so, what is the name of the TPA vendor? Were their services procured through an RFP or another method? Will these consultants/vendors be precluded from bidding on this project?

Response: **MDHS engaged BerryDunn to assist with the development of this RFP. These services were competitively procured through ITS' master service agreement with Knowledge Services. BerryDunn is precluded from submitting a proposal for this procurement.**

Question 156: At the State's option, Vendors that remain within a competitive range must be prepared to provide a reference site within seven calendar days of notification. The reference site should be in the Southeastern region of the United States. Vendor must list potential reference sites in the proposal.

Can ITS please confirm that the reference sites are referring to the sites of clients where you can see the system live in production and vendor has included the clients as submitted references?

Response: **Yes.**

RFP responses are due, December 1, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time).

If you have any questions concerning the information or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Solicitations Team via email at RFP@its.ms.gov.

cc: ITS Project File Number 47212

Attachments: Revised Attachment B – MDHS System RTM
                     Revised Attachment C – Cost Proposal Template
                     Attachment D - Conceptual System Design Document
                     Attachment E - Current State Assessment Report Document