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**PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION OF OPEN ENROLLMENT AND
REGULATORY HEALTH BENEFITS MATERIALS FOR
STATE OF MARYLAND EMPLOYEES AND RETIREES**

IFB No. F10B8400030

**Q&A #1
ISSUED JANUARY 2, 2018**

Ladies/Gentlemen:

This List of Questions and Answers #1, questions 1 through 51, is being issued to clarify certain information contained in the above named IFB.

No provided answer to a question may in and of itself change any requirement of the IFB.

Question 1: Does the printing of the open enrollment material require us to be HIPAA compliant, and is MBE required?

Answer: Yes, the printing of the open enrollment materials requires your company to be Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) compliant, as set forth in Section 4.33 of the IFB. Bidders are required to complete the HIPAA business associate agreement (Attachment M of the IFB).

Question 2: We are in California. Are you accepting bids from out of state bidders?

Answer: Yes. There is no requirement that bidders be located within Maryland

Question 3: Do you have previous bid contract pricing (bid results)?

Answer: No. The total price for the 2017 printing was approximately \$240,000. This price did not include the COBRA printing that is being added new with this contract.

Question 4: Additionally, I wanted to inquire about the State's interest in setting aside requirements for SDVOSB and WOSB concerns. Any information you can provide regarding the State's stance on these types of set-aside programs and how we could get in front of requirements that could potentially be set-aside for SDVOSB and WOSB companies would be incredibly valuable.

Answer: The service-disabled veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB) and woman-owned small business (WOSB) programs are federal programs and are not used by the State of Maryland.

Question 5: I understand alternate and multiple bids will not be accepted, but will partial bids be accepted? In other words, if we chose to bid on the ACA 1095 work but not the enrollment materials, would that be considered?

Answer: No, this solicitation is for a single contract award, as stated in Section 2.1.3, for all services described in the IFB. All acceptable bids must include pricing all items on the bid form. Attachment B to the IFB states, “(E) Every blank in every Bid Form shall be filled in. Any blanks may result in the Bid being regarded as non-responsive and thus rejected...”

Question 6: I was hoping you could provide incumbent details for this opportunity please.

Answer: The incumbent Contractor is RR Donnelley.

Question 7: In MDF1031035895 Printing/Distribution of Open Enrollment/Regulatory Health Benefits Materials, Section 2.3.1.7 states “The Contractor agrees to accept files as formatted by the State. The Contractor must be able to transfer electronic files to and from DBM and/or EBD using the State's secure file transfer protocol.” What is the file format used by the State for these Benefits Materials? Are all in the same format or are there different formats for different material types, e.g. possibly PDF for tax forms, AFP for wellness notices, etc.?

Answer: The files are currently in Microsoft Excel and sent via EBD’s Secure File Transport Protocol (SFTP) site. However, the format is subject to change because the State will generate these materials through Workday software.

Question 8: In Section 2/2.3.1.4, what does “as needed” mean? Is there currently a designer assigned to this work? Is there an estimated amount of design hours from past years?

Answer: Under the current contract, the Department has full access to a designated designer on an as-needed or *ad hoc* basis throughout the year to work on various communication items associated with the contract. The estimated amount of design hours for this contract is stated in the bid form, but is not guaranteed as it has fluctuated based on the need at the time.

Question 9: Section 2/2.3.1.11 (A.), Is there an estimated amount of design hours for this piece?

Answer: See answer to Question 8.

Question 10: Section 2/2.3.10, Open Enrollment Envelopes – Are booklet style envelopes, with the flap on the long side, acceptable?

Answer: Yes, this is acceptable.

Question 11: Section 2/2.3.12.1 COBRA Mailings – What is the expected file format for these COBRA files?

Answer: The file format is an Excel file sent via the SFTP site and will include name, address, dates, benefits elections, etc. We reserve the right to change the format as necessary.

Question 12: Section 2/2.3.12.2 – Are the “pages” referenced actually the number of sheets of paper?

Answer: Yes.

Question 13: Section 2/2.3.12 – There are no mailing envelope specs mentioned under these paragraphs. Is the end size at the discretion of the Contractor?

Answer: The mailing envelopes can be No. 10 window or any envelope the Contractor chooses that can properly display the mailing information.

Question 14: For files not provided on web site, assume bleeds or no bleeds?

Answer: No bleeds. See Amendment 3.

Question 15: Are all stocks uncoated, smooth white?

Answer: Yes.

Question 16: The cover file on web site shows more colors than requested; will cover files under the contract be converted to 2 color only?

Answer: No, EBD requires more than two colors for the Benefits Guide cover. See Amendment 3.

Question 17: Will all items print at one time (except were weekly/monthly indicated)?

Answer: No, items will be printed according to the project plan, which will be provided to the Contractor after award.

Question 18: What does the following mean: “MBE + VSBE Subcontracting goal 0%”.

Answer: The Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) program is described in Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 21.11.03. The Veteran-owned Small Business Enterprise (VSBE) program is described in COMAR 21.11.13. For this procurement, there are no MBE or VSBE subcontracting goals.

Question 19: #2.3.1.7, “The Contractor agrees to accept files as formatted by the State. The Contractor must be able to transfer electronic files to and from DBM and/or EBD using the State’s secure file transfer protocol.” What type of files?

Answer: See answer to Question 7.

Question 20: #2.3.1.10, Our firm assume the Department is not asking for postage as part of bid and that the Department is stating in this section that they will ask for costs options for prior approval at time of mailings. Are these assumptions correct?

Answer: Yes, EBD provides a check for postage in advance of the mailing as calculated by the Contractor and approved by EBD as a pass-through cost.

Question 21: #2.3.1.11 D., We would arrange delivery in most economical form but would not be making the delivery itself. Assuming this related 2 line item following item #33 on the bid form. Also assuming it is for the preparation/fulfillment/mailing only and will not include freight/postage costs. We assume that will be billed additional as incurred. Is that correct?

Answer: No, the Bidder is to include delivery services in its bid. The line is provided on the bid form so that the bidder may provide an estimate of the price for the delivery of the open enrollment packets sent to the agencies.

Question 22: #2.3.1.11 E., Please confirm what is meant by web layouts.

Answer: EBD requires all documents to be created for print and web use. The web layout must meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

Question 23: #2.3.1.14, Will overtime premiums be allowed to be invoiced as additional charge as incurred?

Answer: No, overtime charges are not allowed to be invoiced.

Question 24: #2.3.2, Need stock weight, type, color, finish for Benefits Guide.

Answer: Benefit Guide is 84 pages + 4 page cover, Cover is 6 color on 100# Finch Recycled test with a Saddle stitch.

Question 25: #2.3.6, Does the 4 page fold or staple? Is ORP 8.5 x 11?

Answer: Fold; Yes – landscape

Question 26: #2.3.7.2, Description says all 50# at the top but 2 are post cards. Do we assume 4.25 x 6, 7 pt uncoated white card stock for those and include mail services but exclusive of postage?

Answer: Correct. See Amendment #3.

Question 27: #2.3.10.1, Is this a booklet style envelope on the 12" edge?

Answer: Yes.

Question 28: #2.3.10.2, We need window size + location (or a sample). Do we assume the window does not change for the entire quantity?

Answer: The window size does not change. A sample can be provided to the Contractor.

Question 29: #2.3.12.2, Are these inserted loose or stapled and price to include mail services exclusive of postage? Will the quantities indicated be processed as a single mailing?

Answer: The inserts should be stapled and priced to include mail services exclusive of postage. Yes, the quantities indicated should be processed as a single mailing.

Question 30: #2.3.12.2, Please confirm if 4 double sided pages = 2 leafs, 5 double sided = 3 leafs?

Answer: Yes, that is correct.

Question 31: #2.3.13.2, Need schedule information. Do they print + mail all at one time and should this item include mail services, exclusive of postage?

Answer: As stated in 2.3.13.2, “mail in accordance with the established schedule provided by federal law.” Bidders should be familiar with and know federal requirements for mailing Affordable Care Act (ACA) 1095 tax forms. Yes, they would print and mail all at one time; mail services must be included. See also answer to Question 29.

Question 32: #2.3.13.3, Need sample or detail specifications.

Answer: Detailed specifications follow IRS regulations. Bidders should be familiar with and know IRS requirements in order to respond to this solicitation.

Question 33: Are there any peak volume periods or is volume spread evenly throughout the year?

Answer: As stated in 2.3.11.5, open enrollment usually occurs in mid-October. Therefore, there is a peak volume period ahead of that (generally July through August), as set out in the applicable project plan, which will be provided after award. There is a second enrollment period in December. As to the ACA forms, these will be printed at a time necessary to comply with federal regulations, typically in January.

Question 34: What are the Service Levels required for each of the applications (next day from file receipt to mail/ship, three day from receipt to mail/ship, etc.)?

Answer: The project plan, which will be provided to the Contractor after contract award, will set out the timeframes for each application. The project plan will include a line item for when the file is received and another line item for when the ship or deliver date is. Each year, EBD creates the project plan in consultation with the Contractor regarding the ship dates to ensure that the Contractor can meet the assigned deadlines. These dates will be determined each year based on the needs of that year.

Question 35: Are files “print ready” or is composition required (looks like the composition is required for 1095s)? If any files are “print ready”, what type of file is transmitted (postscript, pdf, AFP, etc.)?

Answer: As stated in 2.3.1.12, “The Contract Monitor will supply text in accordance with the established project plan for that plan year. The Contractor shall perform layout, formatting, editing, etc., and provide the content proof for approval prior to printing.”

Question 36: Are the forms shipped in bulk to a single address or are each forms addressed to individuals and packed in individual envelopes? If mailed to individual recipients, are they sent USPS, 1st class mail?

Answer: Packets are individually assembled for each participant, as stated in 2.3.11. Most packets are then sorted by agency and delivered to the State agencies and satellite account locations. Packets for Retirees and Direct Pay are individually assembled and mailed (see 2.3.1.6). The Contractor must deliver the individually mailed packets to the United States Postal Service for mailing. The Contractor will present postage cost options to EBD for approval prior to mailing (see 2.3.1.10).

Question 37: Are any files printed with color, in full bleed?

Answer: See description in Section 2.3 of each file type for information about colors.

Question 38: Many of the line items mention “trimmed to a final size of 8.5x11”...what is the starting sheet size?

Answer: The starting paper size is at the discretion of the Contractor unless specified in Section 2.3.

Question 39: Are the multipage forms bound in any way (stapled, glued, etc.) or inserted as separate sheets into the mailing envelopes?

Answer: Binding of multi-page forms is at the discretion of the Contractor as long as all required documents are included in the mailing envelopes.

Question 40: Are “OE Postcard” and “Web Enrollment System Reminder Postcard” self-mailers? If so, are they folded and tabbed?

Answer: That is at the discretion of the Contractor, who is also responsible for mailing the cards.

Question 41: What are the paper specs for the cover and text stock used for the saddle-stitched “State Employee/Retiree Benefits Guide”?

Answer: These are at the discretion of the Contractor.

Question 42: Is it possible to get or pick up a copy of the previous bid/contract? Or, if you could point us in the right direction would be great. We are fairly new and would like to have an idea of around what to bid. Your assistance would be so greatly appreciated. Thanking you in advance.

Answer: See answer to Question 3.

Question 43: Will there be preference given to Maryland vendors or will a qualified, out-of-state vendor that submits the best cost be awarded this work?

Answer: The State of Maryland has reciprocal preference for Maryland firms competing with out of state firms. See IFB section 5.5, Reciprocal Preference.

Question 44: Regarding the COBRA rate sheet, what are the specifications?

Answer: As stated in Section 2.3.12.2, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) rate sheet is on 50# white paper, following the requirements for all COBRA mailings.

Question 45: Are samples of materials to be printed available?

Answer: Samples of all open enrollment materials are available on the DBM employee benefits web page: <http://dbm.maryland.gov/benefits/pages/default.aspx>. The COBRA notices are changing drastically to add further required information, including the plan in which employee was enrolled on last day of employment and COBRA rate to continue that coverage.

Question 46: What is the file format for the data provided by the State?

Answer: Data is currently provided through XFTP in Microsoft Excel®. The format is subject to change because the State is transitioning to Workday.

Question 47: Regarding design services, please explain what is required.

Answer: See answer to Question 8.

Question 48: Is there an abstract available of the current prices used?

Answer: See answer to Question 3.

Question 49: What is the total contract value of the current contract?

Answer: See answer to Question 3.

Question 50: Is there a requirement that all mailing be postmarked within the State of Maryland?

Answer: No.

Question 51: As an MDOT MBE Certified Commercial Printer would you please consider adding an MBE Goal of between 1% to 5% on this RFP?

Answer: DBM strongly encourages MBEs to participate in this contract opportunity as prime Contractors.