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QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES # 1
PROJECT NO. F10B4400008
Department of Budget & Management
Employee and Labor Relations Division
Employee Assistance Program
March 13, 2014

Ladies/Gentlemen:

This List of Questions and Responses #1, questions #1 through #44, is being issued to clarify certain information contained in the above named RFP.

In most instances the submitted questions and the Department's responses merely serve to clarify the existing requirements of the RFP. Sometimes, however, in submitting questions potential Offerors may make statements or express interpretations of contract requirements that may be inconsistent with the Department's intent. To the extent that the Department recognizes such an incorrect interpretation, the provided answer will note that the interpretation is erroneous and either state that the question is moot once the correct interpretation is explained or provide the answer based upon the correct interpretation.

No provided answer to a question may in and of itself change any requirement of the RFP. If it is determined that any portion of the RFP should be changed based upon a submitted question, the actual change may only be implemented via a formal amendment to the RFP. In this situation the answer provided will reference the amendment containing the RFP change.

1. The RFP indicates that if an employee calls directly to the vendor for EAP services, the vendor is supposed to refer the employee back to his/her supervisor and also immediately alert the EAP coordinator at the State of the employee calling the EAP directly. It seems that informing the State of an employee calling for services is a breach of confidentiality; so how does the current vendor handle this? Is the expectation to just inform that someone called the EAP directly? Keep count of how many are calling directly? Or is the expectation that the vendor inform of name of employee that called for services?

RESPONSE: The expectation is that the Contractor would contact the State and provide the EAP coordinator with the work location of the employee who attempted to self-refer as well as to inform the employee that he or she needs to take the matter up with their supervisor. The State is not asking the Contractor to identify the employee by name.

2. Does the State prefer its EAP vendor to have an office in Maryland?

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RESPONSE: Except to the extent reciprocal preference applies during the evaluation portion of the procurement (See RFP Section 5.4), the State has no preference for the EAP Contractor to have offices in Maryland, although it necessarily requires the Contractor to have a network of Maryland-based counselors.

3. *Is there a dollar amount that the State has in mind for economic benefit to the State from the EAP?*

RESPONSE: No. The Offeror is to identify its proposed economic benefits to the State, and those factors will be evaluated as identified in Section 5.2.4.

4. *Where can we get the Excel spreadsheet attachment F1-F4 for EAP financial proposal forms referenced in the EAP?*

RESPONSE: The Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet containing the Financial Proposal Forms F1-F4 can be found online at <http://dbm.maryland.gov/agencies/procurement/Pages/EAP.aspx>. Additionally, they are also available on eMM and through the Procurement Officer.

5. *Past utilization reports do not indicate any work/life cases such as financial consultation, legal consultation, elder care/child care. Is the current proposal requesting any of these types of referral services in addition to counseling?*

RESPONSE: Financial consulting, legal consulting, elder care, and child care support are not requested as separate services under the State's EAP, although these issues may surface as underlying problems to be addressed during the counseling portion of the State's EAP. The State's EAP consists of supervisor-generated referrals of an employee for up to three hours of counseling and as-needed grief counseling. The State is also directing Offerors to propose online educational modules and webinars as optional services that the State may use to enhance its EAP.

6. *On-line education modules and webinars are listed in the RFP. Will there ever be a request for in-person seminars?*

RESPONSE: The State directs that Offerors propose optional online educational offerings including modules and webinars. Offerors are free to propose in-person seminars as part of their online educational offerings; however, the price for all optional services proposed must be reflected in the Per Employee Per Month rate for Online Educational Sessions as indicated on F-4 of the Financial Proposal Form. No separate line item will be allowed for in-person seminars.

7. *Is the State happy with the incumbent Contractor? Are there specific issues that the State is not happy with and, if so, can you please indicate what those are?*

RESPONSE: This question is not relevant to the scope of services for this solicitation.

8. *What is the current PE/PM that the State is currently paying for the EAP program?*

RESPONSE: The State will not disclose the current rate paid for the EAP.

9. How many EAP calls were handled in 2013? 2012?

RESPONSE: The State's EAP does not take calls directly from employees. Supervisors refer employees to the program. The State's coordinator for the program gives employee referrals to the Contractor who arranges a meeting with an appropriate counselor for the employee. The State received 232, 233, and 194 EAP referrals respectively in fiscal years 2013, 2012, and 2011.

10. What is the current Critical Incident Stress Debriefing hourly rate?

RESPONSE: The State does not pay an hourly rate for Critical Incident Stress Debriefing under the current EAP. Grief Counseling is not part of the scope of work in the current EAP contract. The State is requiring Offerors to propose Grief Counseling in their EAP proposals in order to include these services in the Contract resulting from this solicitation.

11. What was the average number of visits per EAP face-to-face case in 2013? 2012?

RESPONSE: The data to derive those numbers were provided with the RFP in Attachment S.

For 2013, if no-shows are excluded from the calculation, the average number of visits per referral is 1.37. If no-shows are included in the calculation, the average number drops to 0.97 visits.

For 2012, if no-shows are excluded from the calculation, the average number of visits per referral is 1.44. If no-shows are included in the calculation, the average number of visits per referral is 1.04.

12. How many Department of Transportation cases were handled in 2013? 2012?

RESPONSE: The State does not categorize EAP referrals by department.

13. Is the current EAP program Customer Service Associate First Answer or Clinical First Answer?

RESPONSE: It is neither. See Response to Question 9.

14. How many employees were covered in 2013? 2012?

RESPONSE: The number of EAP-eligible employees for the previous Behavioral Health/EAP Contract was 74,000. The estimated number of employees for the Contract resulting from this solicitation is 55,700. The decrease is due to the University System of Maryland, which has procured a separate EAP for the employees of the educational institutions within that system.

15. How many utilization reports in total per year are being requested?

RESPONSE: RFP Section 3.2.6 requires a monthly, quarterly, and annual Utilization Reports for a total of 17 reports during each Contract Year of the RFP.

16. In reference to page 19 of the RFP, can an employee receive both an initial assessment and up to 3 one hour sessions per EAP case? If so, does each of the new EAP cases reported on

Attachment S – EAP Utilization include an initial 1 hour assessment? If not, how many initial 1 hour assessments were handled in 2013? 2012?

RESPONSE: No, there is not a separate, evaluative session in addition to the three one-hour sessions of counseling provided under the EAP. The “Initial Assessment” as used in the RFP is synonymous with the up to three hours of counseling and has been defined to mean “the process by which a counselor assigned by the Contractor provides up to three hours of counseling for a State employee in response to an EAP supervisor-generated referral from the Employee and Labor Relations Division. Initial Assessment does not mean a separate, evaluative counseling session in addition to the up to three hours of counseling covered by the EAP.” See Amendment 2 Item 1.

17. In reference to section 1.23 Key Personnel, what is meant by Key Personnel? Please elaborate. 1. What specific roles are to be designated as Key Personnel? 2. What percent of the Key Personnel’s time are you expecting to have assigned to this contract?

RESPONSE: Key Personnel is defined in the RFP as “personnel employed by the Contractor to include the Contract Administrator and any other personnel the Contractor designates as Key Personnel in its Proposal.” The only Key Personnel required under this RFP is the Contractor’s Contract Administrator. However, Offerors may expressly designate other Key Personnel in its Proposal. Offerors are to specify how much of Key Personnel’s time is assigned to this Contract in their Proposals. Please see Amendment 2 Item 1.

18. Why are the EAP services out to bid, given that they were part of the 2010 integrated behavioral health proposal?

RESPONSE: The State is procuring EAP services because the current State contract containing both Behavioral Health and EAP services is expiring in 2014. The State’s behavioral health benefits will be covered in the State’s next medical benefit contract, leaving the renewal of EAP services to be procured separately.

19. For the Provider File, what criteria date is to be used to determine the 2 year participation requirement? Can Offerors use the contract effective date of 1-1-2015?

RESPONSE: Because the requirement in RFP Section 2.1.2 is a minimum qualification that must be met in order for an Offeror to propose services in response to the RFP, providers must possess a minimum of 2 years of network participation by the date an Offeror submits its proposal.

20. Why does this solicitation have a 0% MBE goal, given that the State of Maryland has an overall MBE participation goal of 29% minority business inclusion in State contracts?

RESPONSE: No MBE or VSBE goals were set for this solicitation because of the anticipated size of the Contract, which is likely to be small based on past program utilization rates, as set forth in Attachment S to the RFP. Although no goals were set, MBEs and VSBEs are encouraged to offer services as prime contractors for this solicitation, and MBEs have been directly solicited to that end.

21. Please confirm that the MBE and VSBE targets are 0% for this bid.

RESPONSE: The MBE and VSBE goals are 0% for this RFP.

22. *Who the current contractor is performing services under this scope of work. Can you provide the name and company contact?*

RESPONSE: The Contractor currently providing EAP services for the State is APS Healthcare Bethesda, Inc. Contract documents, including contact information for the incumbent Contractor, for the current Behavioral Health & Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Benefit Administration Services Contract for 2011-2014 are available at <http://dbm.maryland.gov/contractors/contractlibrary/Pages/BehavioralHealthEAP.aspx>.

23. *Is this RFP for a teaming agreement?*

RESPONSE:

Offerors may team in order to provide the services required under the RFP; however, as for all Offerors, the team must meet the minimum qualifications in Section 2 of the RFP in order to do so.

24. *Why are the employees of the University of Maryland System not included?*

RESPONSE: The employees of the University System of Maryland are not included in the State's EAP as they are under the current EAP contract because the University System has recently completed a separate procurement for its own employee assistance program. See also response to question #14 above.

25. *If the State of Maryland looks at purchasing the optional Online Educational Sessions, would these be available to dependents?*

RESPONSE: The optional Online Educational Modules and Webinars are intended for employees; however, Offerors are to propose how they plan to deliver those optional services, which may determine how much access non-employees have to an Offeror's online materials. For example, materials placed on an unsecured website may be accessed by dependents or others. The price for these optional Online Educational Modules and Webinars, however, is based on the number of employees only.

26. *If the State of Maryland looks at purchasing the Optional Services, Online Educational Sessions, what kind of promotion of these services would be requested?*

RESPONSE: In addition to proposing how employees will access the optional Online Educational Modules and Webinars, Offerors are to propose how employees will be made aware of those services. However, the State is not looking for printed promotional materials. The following examples are provided for illustrative purposes only: Offerors may, for example, propose to provide a link to the online educational material for the State to place on its website, or to supply language that the State could use in e-mail to State HR directors promoting and explaining the online Optional Services.

27. Are the State EAP coordinators and the Agency EAP Representatives employees of the State of Maryland?

RESPONSE: Yes. The State EAP Coordinator and the designated Agency EAP Representatives are State employees.

28. Are stand-alone EAPs permitted to participate? I.E. those not affiliated with a managed care provider or TPA?

RESPONSE: Stand-alone EAPs are permitted to participate as long as they meet the minimum qualifications as specified in Section 2 of the RFP.

29. Please provide average number of grief counseling sessions per year for as many years as possible.

RESPONSE: The State requested approximately four grief counseling sessions in the past year, but data for other years has not been tracked because grief counseling has not been part of the EAP contract until this solicitation.

30. Please confirm that the rate is to be quoted as a per employee, per month fee.

RESPONSE: The rates to be quoted on the Financial Proposal Forms F1-F4 for EAP Counseling Services and the optional Online Educational Modules and Webinars are per employee per month. The rates to be quoted for Grief Counseling are hourly. Please see the detailed instructions for the Financial Proposal Forms in Attachment F of RFP and F-1 of the Financial Proposal Forms in the separate Microsoft Excel file.

31. Will the State provide a list of attendees with contact info to be distributed to everyone attending the conference?

RESPONSE: Yes. Please see the Pre-Proposal Conference Attendees List and Summary issued with this Q&A.

32. Why is the Third Party Administrator registration required for this solicitation?

RESPONSE: Registration as a Third Party Administrator is a minimum qualification for this solicitation for purposes of State and employee-protective quality control, given the required scope of service including but not limited to administrative duties such as the payment of providers. The scope of services supports the need for and protections provided by registration with the Commissioner.

33. After the maximum of three counseling sessions covered by the EAP, can counselors self-refer to EAP employees?

RESPONSE: There is nothing in the Contract that would prohibit an EAP counselor from continuing to see a client whose initial contact with the counselor came in the form of an EAP referral. The State is not involved with the clinical relationship between the employee and counselor after the EAP counseling (up to three hours) has concluded. However, the employee must go through their medical benefit for continued payment, or if the counselor is not in their

network, be made aware that the employee would have to pay out of pocket for further counseling services. Please note the State does not take any position with respect to the ethical implications of this practice as it would not be involved in the decision to continue the clinical relationship, nor is the State intending, encouraging, seeking, or endorsing any financial relationship with or gain for any counselor outside of the parameters of the EAP.

34. Why does the State have this model of an EAP?

RESPONSE: The EAP fits the State's desired specifications, which are included in the solicitation.

35. How many employees who went through the EAP were subsequently terminated?

RESPONSE: This information was not tracked as part of the existing EAP. Consequently, the number of subsequently terminated employees is not available.

36. Are psychiatry services needed under the EAP? How many EAP psychiatry referrals have there been in recent years?

RESPONSE: The RFP does not require the Contractor to have psychiatrists in its network. The number of employees, if any, who have been specifically referred to psychiatrists has not been tracked in recent years; however, attachment S of the RFP lists the type of referrals "Presenting Problem Area," which indicates the type of issues requiring counseling under the EAP.

37. Are you accepting any suggestions on the delivery of referrals? Could utilization and statistics or referral forms be transferred electronically?

RESPONSE: Yes, Offerors may propose alternate methods for the delivery of referrals and reports so long as the alternate delivery method(s) suggested adequately address confidentially concerns. Please see Amendment 2 Item 4.

38. Can employees choose which counselor/provider they see?

RESPONSE: No, employees may not choose which counselor they see under the EAP program. The Contractor must assign a counselor to the employee upon receiving the referral of the employee from the State EAP Coordinator. See RFP Section 3.2.1 k.

39. Does the State intend to require the Contractor to schedule 95% of initial referral visits within five calendar days of receipt of referral from the State, as requested by Performance Guarantee in RFP Section 3.2.8?

RESPONSE: Yes, the RFP requires the Contractor to schedule 95% of initial referral visits within five calendar days of receipt of referral from the State, as requested by Performance Guarantee in RFP Section 3.2.8.

40. Is telephone contact by the vendor to the employee acceptable in meeting the Performance Guarantee referenced in Question 39?

RESPONSE: To meet the Performance Guarantee, the Contractor must demonstrate that it has scheduled the appointment within five days after receipt of the referral from DBM. The manner in which it schedules the appointments is to be determined by the Contractor, but the Contractor must submit evidence to show when the appointment was scheduled. The current practice consists of sending employees a letter, which tells them when, where and with whom they are scheduled to meet for a session. The date of this letter serves as sufficient proof of the date the appointment was scheduled, but the Contractor may employ other means to contact the employee so long as the Contractor can verify when it scheduled the employee appointment.

41. Can the State disclose any budget documents that indicate how much the State has spent on EAP services?

RESPONSE: The State cannot offer budget documents specifically related to EAP expenditures.

42. Who determines the number of sessions (resulting in up to three hours of total counseling) needed by the employee?

RESPONSE: RFP Section 3.2.1 paragraph three states, “An EAP...is actually a window that can consist of (1) a single one-hour session or (2) up to three separate one-hour sessions, *as deemed necessary by the Initial Assessor.*” (Emphasis added.) The phrase “Initial Assessor” is defined to mean either the Contractor or a counselor from its network of counselors or both, as appropriate. See Amendment 2 Item 1.

43. Does the State of Maryland have an EAP or similar service in addition to the one referenced in this RFP (e.g. an EAP that employees and dependents access directly rather than through a supervisory referral)?

RESPONSE: No, the State does not have another EAP in addition to the one referenced in this RFP. The University System of Maryland, however, has a separate EAP.

44. On page 27 of the RFP, Section 4.2.2, it states that the electronic version of the Technical Proposal will be submitted in Microsoft Word. May some appendices provided as additional reference be submitted in Adobe?

RESPONSE: Offerors must submit the electronic copy of their complete Technical Proposals in Microsoft Word format; however, they may also submit Adobe files that duplicate the material in their Technical proposal along with the Microsoft Word files.

Remember proposals are due on April 8, 2014, no later than 2:00 p.m. If there are questions concerning this solicitation, please contact me via e-mail at rachel.hershey@dbm.state.md.us or call me at (410) 260-7681 as soon as possible.

Date Issued: 03/13/2013

By:

Rachel Hershey
Procurement Officer