

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to RFP Number 3767 for the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH)

From: Craig P. Orgeron, Ph.D.

Date: January 8, 2016

Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications

Contact Name: Chris Grimmer

Contact Phone Number: 601-432-8208

Contact E-mail Address: chris.grimmer@its.ms.gov

RFP Number 3767 is hereby amended as follows:

1. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 5.3.1 is being modified to read:

“To access the ~~mandatory~~ Vendor Web Conference, Vendor must contact Chris Grimmer via email no later than Monday, November 30, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. Central Time to receive instructions on how to enter into the web conference.”

NOTE: All other references in the RFP to the Vendor Conference indicate that it was optional.

2. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 5.4 is being modified to read:

“The anticipated start date is **Monday, 4/11/16** ~~10/20/2015~~. Awarded Vendor will be notified of the actual start date upon completion of the evaluation and contract negotiation process.”

3. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 5.5 is being modified to read:

“The department anticipates all project deliverables to be submitted ~~completed~~ within six (6) months from the ~~date of award~~ **contract execution date**.”

4. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 8.5.2.6 is being modified to read:

Requirement #	Deliverable	Desired Due Date*	Proposed Alternate Due Date
8.5.2.6	Cost Benefit Analysis	+12 weeks +14 weeks	

5. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 9.3.1.1 is being modified to read:

“Project Kick-off Meeting - The Awarded Vendor must conduct and attend in person an on-site kick-off meeting **on the date the awarded work is to begin** immediately ~~following contract award~~. The kick-off meeting must include an introduction of the proposed team of awarded Vendor’s key personnel and an overview of their plan to accomplish the tasks of the project and discuss the project schedule. Within five (5) business days of the meeting, the Awarded Vendor must provide the meeting minutes, to include decisions and outcomes of the meeting.”

6. Section IX References, Item 1.3.2 is being modified to read:

“The reference installation must have been an EBT planning and analysis project and must have been **successfully** implemented for at least six (6) months.”

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: Will the State please reference in detail the timeframe for EBT implementation?

Response: 10/01/2018

Question 2: ITS RFP Response Checklist, pg. 2
Does the checklist need to be included in the proposal response?

Response: No. The checklist does not need to be included in Vendor’s response.

Question 3: Section II, Item 8, pg. 6
This section states, “The Vendor may intersperse their response following each RFP specification but must not otherwise alter or rekey any of the original text of this RFP.” Can vendors use their own document format as long as they include the language from the RFP exactly as it appears?

Response: Yes, as long as the requirements are numbered exactly as RFP No. 3767 posted to the ITS website and incorporate the specifications revisions outlined in this memo.

Question 4: Section III, Item 4, pg. 10
Does the seven days refer to business days or calendar days?

Response: Seven (7) calendar days.

Question 5: Section III, Item 14, pg. 12
Where in the proposal are vendors to respond to this item?

Response: The Vendor may respond to the Item in this Section and Item # and/or provide their response if a requirement in another section of RFP No. 3767 applies to the same topic as Section III Item 14. The Vendor may also use the Proposal Exception Summary Form in Section V to note any exceptions to a particular requirement in this RFP.

Question 6: Section IV, Item 16.1, pg. 18
Where in the proposal are vendors to acknowledge this item?

Response: The Vendor may respond to the Item in this Section and Item # and/or provide their response if a requirement in another section of RFP No. 3767 applies to the same topic as Section IV Item 16.1. The Vendor may also use the Proposal Exception Summary Form in Section V to note any exceptions to a particular requirement in this RFP.

Question 7: Section IV, Item 18, pg. 19
Where in the proposal are vendors to provide subcontractor agreements?

Response: Vendor may provide their subcontractor agreements as Exhibits in their RFP proposal response. Vendor should label the Exhibits with an appropriate title.

Question 8: Section IV, Item 30, pg. 21
Where in the proposal are vendors to acknowledge this item?

Response: The Vendor may respond to the Item in this Section and Item # and/or provide their response if a requirement in another section of RFP No. 3767 applies to the same topic as Section IV Item 30. The Vendor may also use the Proposal Exception Summary Form in Section V to note any exceptions to a particular requirement in this RFP.

Question 9: Section IV, Item 36, pg. 22
For the proposal bond, should vendors use ITS' address or MSDH's? If MSDH, please provide the address and contact name to include on the bond.

Response: The Vendors can use MSDH's address for the proposal bond. The address is as follows:

**570 East Woodrow Wilson
Jackson, Mississippi 39216**

ITS will hold all Vendors' proposal bonds until the Notice of Award and contract with the awarded Vendor has been executed.

Question 10: Section IV, Item 41, pg. 24
Where in the proposal are vendors to acknowledge this item?

Response: The Vendor may respond to the Item in this Section and Item # and/or provide their response if a requirement in another section of RFP No. 3767 applies to the same topic as Section IV Item 41. The Vendor may also use

the Proposal Exception Summary Form in Section V to note any exceptions to a particular requirement in this RFP.

Question 11: Section VII, Item 5.4, pg. 36

The anticipated start date is shown as 10/20/2015. What is the actual anticipated start date?

Response: Refer to Clarification Number 2 in this Memorandum.

Question 12: Section VII, Item 5.5, pg. 36

This section states that project deliverables are to be completed within six months from the date of contract award. Given that there are two months between contract award and anticipated contract start, should this read six months from date of contract start?

Response: Yes. Refer to Clarification Number 3 in this Memorandum

Question 13: Section VII, Item 5.5, pg. 36

In listing the deliverables and desired completion dates, does the six month completion date(s) include FNS approval timeframes?

Response: No.

Question 14: Section VII, Item 5.6, pg. 36

Development of a QA RFP is not typically included in a planning project because it will preclude the planning contractor from supporting the QA project. However, many states have found it useful to be able to have the same planning and QA contractor as it adds continuity between the projects. Would the State consider removing the QA RFP task in order to allow the selected planning contractor the opportunity to bid on the QA project?

Response: No.

Question 15: Section VII, Items 6.10 – 6.12, pg. 38

Can vendors provide one reference letter that covers all three of these requirements?

Response: No.

Question 16: Section VII, Item 7.1, pg. 38

We are assuming that the "EBT Planning Consultant" referred to in this section is the individual typically referred to as the Project Manager. Please confirm.

Response: Yes, the EBT Planning Consultant can be referred to as the Project Manager.

Question 17: Section VII, Items 7.9 – 7.11, pgs. 41-42

Attachment A and Attachment B are called out as being attached to the RFP. These documents cannot be found in either the Word or PDF versions of the RFP. Would the State please make these documents available.

Response: These documents are located on the ITS website on the RFP 3767 page and can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.its.ms.gov/procurement/pages/3767.aspx>

Question 18: Deliverables and Outcomes, pg. 45

The Retail Vendor Technical Capacity and Equipage Assessment (8.5.2.5) is due at the same time as the Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) (8.5.2.6). Since the data from the retailer equipage assessment is needed to complete the CBA, would the Department accept a later date, say 15 weeks, for the CBA?

Response: Refer to Clarification Number 4 in this Memorandum.

Question 19: Section VII, Item 9.3.1.2, pg. 45

The state is requiring 6 quarterly onsite meetings which would take the project to approximately 18 months. If the state desires the deliverables to be completed within 6 months, even adding on the FNS 60 day review and approval, this will be shy of the requested 6 quarterly meetings. Will the State please further explain the anticipated timeframe and anticipated activities especially in the 4th, 5th, and 6th quarter?

Response: Quarterly onsite meetings will be held as long as the project is ongoing.

Question 20: Section VII, Item 9.3.1.2, pg. 47

Please confirm it is the intent of the State that the planning contractor will attend quarterly onsite meetings for the duration of the project and six onsite meetings are not being specified.

Response: Yes, the awarded Vendor must attend all quarterly onsite meetings until the project is completed.

Question 21: Section VII, Item 9.3.1.2, pg. 47

This section indicates that the vendor is to attend one kick-off meeting and six quarterly meetings. However, the project length is only 6 months long. Further down in the paragraph it says "However, at a minimum, the Awarded Vendor will be expected to meet on-site with the State of Mississippi representatives for the kickoff meeting and at least quarterly to provide updates to the analysis process." Quarterly in this case would be twice. Could the Department provide some clarification here?

Response: Refer to Clarification Numbers 2 and 5 in this Memorandum.

Question 22: Section VII, Item 9.3.1.5, pg. 48

Are the weekly status calls referenced in the task the same as 9.3.1.4?

Response: Yes, they are the same.

Question 23: Section VII, Item 9.3.4, pg. 49

This section says Work Plan and Schedule is due within 10 business days of project kick-off meeting, but in table on page 45, Deliverables and Outcomes, it

says desired date is 3 weeks from project execution. Do we assume that the kick off meeting will be 5 days from project execution?

Response: No. Refer to Clarification Number 6 in this Memorandum.

Question 24: Section VII, Item 9.3.4.1, pg. 49
We are assuming that it is acceptable to insert the workplan prepared using MS Project into the Word document. Please confirm that the State does not want the MS Project file provided separately.

Response: The work plan can be inserted in the document or as an attachment/exhibit, but also provided electronically in Microsoft Project.

Question 25: Section VII, Item 9.4, pg. 49
Has the State selected a technology (online or smart card)? If so, which technology? If not, is the state expecting a cost analysis of both technologies to be performed?

Response: Yes, Online technology.

Question 26: Section VII, Item 9.4.1.1, pg. 49
a) How many existing food distribution centers is the contractor expected to analyze?
b) What specific items are we expected to examine and how does the State expect this to impact the future MS WIC EBT Program?

**Response: a) One – WIC Central Office Shipping & Receiving for special formula distribution.
b) Examine the process for distributing special formula to MSDH's clients. MSDH expects the awarded Vendor to tell MSDH the future impact based on their findings.**

Question 27: Section VII, Item 9.4.4, pg. 51
a) Will the State have already identified vendors that will be authorized for the WIC Program for this assessment?
b) Will the State be providing the planning contractor with a list of vendors that should be included in the assessment?
c) How many vendors will we be responsible for evaluating?

**Response: a) No.
b) Yes.
c) Approximately 75-100.**

Question 28: Section VII, Item 9.4.5.4, pg. 52
Are Farmers Markets in the state SNAP authorized? Does the State expect the Contractor to develop a plan to implement WIC EBT in farmers markets?

Response: Yes, to both questions.

Question 29: Section VII, Item 12.1.3, pg. 54

Should vendors intersperse their value-add products/services within the appropriate sections of the scope of work response or should vendors include this information in response to Section VII, 12.1.3?

Response: The Vendors should intersperse their value-add products/services within the appropriate sections of the RFP requirements.

Question 30: Section VII, Item 12.4.2.1, pg. 54
Will the State please further define in what it means regarding the term “reference site.”

Response: Reference site means previously completed State where the proposed Vendor has provided this service as requested in this RFP. This site will be used as the Vendor’s reference as part of the evaluation process.

Question 31: Section IX, Items 1.3.1 -1.3.2, pg. 59
The requirement for references to be drawn from clients who not only have an approved IAPD but have also implemented their EBT system “for at least six (6) months” does not reflect the pace of WIC EBT implementations nationally and could significantly hinder competition for this project. For instance our firm has successfully completed IAPDs in four (4) states in the past two (2) years whose implementations have been significantly delayed by the departure of JP Morgan Chase from the EBT business. If this requirement is mandatory we are not certain we would qualify. Would the Department consider removing the requirement that references should be provided for states with referenced implementations?

Response: No.

Question 32: Section IX, Items 1.3.2, pg. 59
Please clarify what is meant by “...must have been implemented for at least six months”. Does this mean that EBT must have been implemented or the vendor’s planning project must have been completed for at least six months?

Response: Implemented. MSDH want to be sure that the Vendor’s plan was validated by being implemented successfully.

RFP responses are due January 20, 2016, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time).

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Chris Grimmer at 601-432-8208 or via email at chris.grimmer@its.ms.gov.

cc: ITS Project File Number 41114