

Notes from Pre-Bidder's Conference

02/07/12

General Questions

Bidders should concentrate on the two following RBAs: "DSS customers are self-sufficient" and "DSS customers report excellent customer service"

Q: From the Training RFP: When you say that price is a consideration, what do you mean? Please explain further.

A: We will look at the amount per individual that you will be providing the service for.

Q: Is this Power Point presentation going to be available for people to refer to?

A: All Power Points will be posted on the DSS web site. The web site location is included in the RFP.

Q: Will past performance as a contractor with DSS be a factor in the decision making process?

A: It depends on what is included in our proposal and the type of work that you've done. In terms of monitoring, we'll look at what you've been doing right now. (Rhonda reviewed Catherine's slide on "Background on Your History").

Q: People have 5 year eligibility for the Work First program. Does DSS take note of the time the individual has left due to the 5 year time period and share this with the vendor and does that affect their training time so that their time won't expire while they are working with the program?

A: Yes. Work First participants have a federal and state time limit and the time limits are cumulative. Every participant will be at a different point on their time limit. We'll make sure when we refer, that they are able to receive the service.

Q: Does 24 months of eligibility include the training as well as placement components?

A: The 24 months is tied to how long they are eligible for Work First. Participants in Work First time is cumulative and so the number of months used will vary for each participant. Work First training is short-term. RFP must contain information related to the length of the training; from start to completion. The clock is related to the amount of time they are with Work First. The training element is separate from the clock time.

Q: From the Training RFP: What is the definition of "referral rate" located in the RFP?

A: The referrals that will be submitted to a particular vendor. It depends on the service that the vendor is providing and is based on the interest of the individual that is being referred. Referrals will be submitted by DSS Work First Social Workers for Work First participants who are interested in or recommended for the services or trainings offered by the vendor.

Q: Will the Work First Social Workers make the decision of which participants will be referred to a vendor?

A: Yes. Work First Social Workers will make referrals based on the individual participant's needs and interests. There is the potential for multiple vendors to be chosen for the training RFP.

Q: From the Training RFP: Is there a ceiling on the cost per referral?

A: There's not a ceiling, so much as the type of training that is being provided. It's important to add what the cost is per individual and what it means for an individual to complete your training.

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Q: From the Training RFP: On page 8, what are multiple vendors?

A: While a vendor may apply for one RFP, multiple vendors may be chose to provide the service to the participant.

Q: What is the difference between job training and job development?

A: The job developer is on-site at DSS and provides services to place Work First participants in available jobs in the community. Job training provides training to teach Work First participants a specific skill or skills that will enhance their likelihood of being employed in that occupation.

Q: What are vocational rehabilitation services?

A: Vocational rehabilitation services conduct in-depth assessment of the ability of the participant to engage in work activities and provide recommendations regarding type of employment that may be suitable for person. Vocational rehabilitation may make recommendations for further medical testing or may make referrals to other organization that may provide assistance to the Work First participants.

Q: When someone comes to vocational rehabilitation and you determine their best vocation, do you refer them to another place to receive the training or placement services?

A: We refer them to the recipient of the vocational rehabilitation contract to determine what is best for them to do or move them into. That feedback might mean that they may need to go through a medical assessment or something else because they are not able to work.

Q: Could the same vendor provide both vocational rehabilitation services and job development services?

A: There is nothing to prevent a vendor from submitting for both those services, if they submitted proposals for each RFP individually.

Q: Please go over qualifications needed for a job developer for employees of the agency. What credentials are expected of the employees? How will the persons awarding the bids be evaluating a vendor's capabilities?

A: Some qualifications were covered in Catherine's Power Point about what's included in the RFP. (Rhonda reviewed Catherine's slide on "Background on Your History"). Many people submit resumes as part of the extra information for the bid.

Q: Regarding the living wage, is there a cap on the amount a person can be paid?

A: The living wage is set by the county. \$11.55 is the minimum for FY11-12 (this is subject to change for FY12-13). There is no cap. Anything more than this amount is great.

Q: Do you want the proposal single or double spaced?

A: Page 3 of the RFP says it is to be single sided pages. We suggest that you may need to single space some pages in order to meet the 20 page minimum. But, double-spaced pages make it easier to read.

Q: From the Training RFP: Regarding the proposed cost, when you are talking about the amount per individual to serve. Since such a rotating number of people will be coming in, do you see that this will impact how we report our budget proposal? Is the proposal cost an estimate?

A: The vendor needs to decide how to calculate this in their proposal related to the type of service they are providing. The amount per client would be consistent but the total budget amount would be

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different. Enter this information in the proposal based on your capacity to provide service per individual.

Q: Does the amount you give in your RFP have to be the amount it costs to provide the service?

A: Yes. The cost per individual participant must be clearly stated and based on your capacity to provide the services.

Q: How many pages of extra information are you allowed?

A: There is no limit on the extra information that you can attach. There is a maximum of 20 pages for the actual proposal.

Q: Will this information be posted?

A: It will be posted within 48 hours on the DSS web site. Look for the contracts link on pg. 3, # 2 of the RFPs. The site is located at www.durhamcountync.gov

Q: Do you need 6 copies of the proposal?

A: You need 10 copies per RFP to be submitted.

Q: What is Catherine Williamson-Hardy's email?

A: cwhardy@durhamcountync.gov

Q: When we explain our method of delivering service, is there a particular format that you want us to use?

A: The format is up to you, as long as it follows the RFP 20 page limit. The same is true for submitting "Budget" and "Financial Stability" sections as well.

Q: On page 39, # 3, it asks about reporting any lobbying activities and if you have reported them. How is this to be answered?

A: This is a state form and we don't have all the information on what is to be contained on the form. Judy Carden said she would contact the state for clarification, if needed by a particular vendor, but if this is your initial submission then you would select "a" in box 3 under Report Type.

Q: The "Auditing Requirements" section mentions about going on a web site to apply to grants. Do we have to do that?

A: No. That's only if we're bringing you on to do a grant.

Q: Within the RFP information, there is a statement about an audit, what does that mean?

A: The audit it referred to is by a state or federal agency based on receiving funding from a grant. None of the services discussed today are utilizing grant funding.

Q: Will DSS do site reviews prior to awarding contracts?

A: That is very possible.

Q: Will the people choosing who will receive the awards come from the County?

A: County workers are helping in the process and community partners will also be used in reviewing the RFPs. All participants in the awards selection committees complete a conflict of interest statement.

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Q: How much leeway and creativity do you have in how you want people to be trained?

A: We are here for consultation and assistance. The consultation and assistance that we will provide to the vendor will be to explain how our program works so that you understand how things work. We're not going to tell you how to do your job, but will give you information on what you need to know to do the job. Some will relate to the number of hours a person is in training and the requirements of the Work First program. Some will be related to how long the training will last as well as the expected outcome of training. Once the contract is awarded, DSS and the contractor will meet again to discuss how this is to be done.

Q: With regard to weekly and monthly reporting. Are these reports to include summary or individual information? What is the expectation of the weekly report?

A: Both. The weekly reporting you would communicate to Social Worker about referrals and information regarding weekly contact with individual. Monthly reporting would be more of a summary of the participants and where they are at in the progress. We'll meet with the successful bidder and discuss what you need to provide to us for each of the weekly and monthly forms.

Q: If the proposal is for a certain dollar amount and you want to fund for less than that amount, will you fund for a lesser amount? What if the committee decides that they cannot fund a total contract bid; will that eliminate them?

A: We have to select the winning bid based on the information provided. If price was the only thing that was prohibitive, then yes, we would negotiate a different price with that vendor. That's why it's important to show the cost per client.

Q: When will you let the vendors know who has been selected?

A: By May 4th, letters will be sent to awarded bidders. Between May and June awarded bidders will be receiving paperwork to begin preparing for implementing their service.

Q: The RFP mentions that a bidder may be asked to give a special presentation. When would that occur?

A: After March, but before May. There may also be an on-site visit.

Q: If you are a current contractor, does the renewal process apply to you?

A: Yes. Each year, a decision is made as to whether a contract is renewed or put out for bid.

Q: If you are a current vendor do you need to resubmit all the information listed on the RFP?

A: Yes