

**NM ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
DRINKING WATER BUREAU**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) Questions & Answers

**Professional Services for Capacity Development Assistance
for Public Water and Wastewater Systems
in the State of New Mexico**



RFP#

<15-667-00-0011>

Release: March 23, 2015

Vendor Questions

Date Received	Question	ANSWER	RFP Amendment Required?
3/24/15	Is it a conflict of interest if Offeror already provides capacity development services to vendor's clients?	Procurement Manager (PC): Offerors who currently offer capacity development services to New Mexico clients can include a page with the Proposal packet that lists client names and specific types of capacity development services being offered by Offeror. This page will not count toward total page count.	No
4/2/15	<p>Page 34 of the RFP referenced above states that "All individuals providing technical assistance and training must be a licensed public water supply operator in the State of New Mexico certified at a level to perform the work that is the subject of the training. Evidence of this fact is required."</p> <p>NMED's operator certification program is set up to ensure that individuals are qualified to <i>operate</i> a water utility not to train water operators. Operator certification does not ensure someone is qualified to train nor does it have any ability to tell if a person is a good trainer or not. Furthermore, the position of NMED's operator certification program managers, both past and present, is that the intent of the program is to certify operators not assistance providers or trainers. They would require some kind of waiver, as I understand it, for a trainer to receive certification. If NMED wishes trainers and technical assistance providers to be certified, they should design a program for this purpose or modify the current certification program. Please clarify if the intent of this section in the RFP is to restrict all assistance and training to ONLY certified operators.</p>	Evaluation Committee (EC): The certified operator requirement has been removed from this section; please see RFP Amendment No. 001 (to be issued April10, 2015).	Yes
4/2/15	Company was asked to complete an "Organizational Reference Questionnaire" and finds the form limiting.	(PC) Complete the form in its entirety so it will be deemed "compliant"; can also include another page to write additional details.	NO

4/3/15	Is it required to be a firm or organization to submit a proposal?	EC: Anyone meeting the required qualifications can submit a proposal.	NO
	Sometimes a deficiency is not readily correctable. How does that affect compensation?	EC: Line item 6 in the menu of services indicates that assistance with compliance deficiencies will be assigned with an hourly limit defined in the work order on an individual basis. Compensation for this line item is hourly, not based on a deliverable.	NO
	Will there be multiple selections for technical assistance?	EC: Yes multiple awards for services will be made for all items on the menu of services.	NO
	I deal mainly with water and compliance, with limited experience with wastewater. Is that a problem?	EC: Experience in just one field is not a problem; experience as it relates to water or wastewater systems for individual (or multiple) line items will be accepted. Experience should be demonstrated in the proposal and references.	NO
	I may or may not be able to attend the April 6 pre - proposal due to a pre commitment. Will I still be able to get the answers?	(PC) Standard response to submission of questions: "Thank you for your submission – the questions and responses will be published on the website, as described in the RFP, April 10, 2015. "	NO
4/2/15	Is it possible to publish the responses to written questions before April 10 in order to give Offerors sufficient time to incorporate the information contained in the responses into their proposals?	(PC) Standard response to submission of questions: "Thank you for your submission – the questions and responses will be published on the website, as described in the RFP, April 10, 2015. "	NO
	Can we hire new staff that will work under the NMED contract after it is awarded?	EC: Yes, resumes should be submitted by vendors for new staff as they are hired to show that their qualifications meet contract requirements.	NO
	Are we required to pay for training facility rentals, and should that be included in our cost pricing?	EC: Yes training facility rentals should be included in the proposed cost.	NO
	Can we include subcontractors in our application that are also included in another Offerer's application?	EC: Yes	NO
	Can a subcontractor included in our application apply as a lead in a separate application?	EC: Yes.	NO
	Can we use our own guidelines to conduct	EC: The current guideline documents are linked and updated as	NO

rate studies rather than the EFC guidance (Item #23 in Attachment A)?	necessary on the website as listed in the RFP. Line item 23 (as posted online) does include both EFC and RCAP/C based guidance documents for rate studies. http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/dwb/assistance/CapacityAssistanceContracts.htm	
Do we have to justify how we calculate costs for each individual item, or can we submit a general statement describing how we arrived at our costs for the proposal as a whole?	EC: No justification of costs is required; a general description for the proposal as a whole is acceptable.	NO
Does the emergency response requirement apply to all items in the scope of work or just specific items? Which items?	EC: The RFP (p. 36) describes desirable specifications for Bidders who could respond to emergency requests for onsite technical assistance and training specific to the Safe Drinking Water Act. If a bidder chooses to respond, detail bidder's plan to be available as soon as possible and what is the additional fee. This request is specifically relevant to line item 6 in the Menu of Services "Achieve compliance with the SDWA- Correction of Sanitary Survey Deficiencies and Violations".	NO
How do we reference promotional material we include in our proposal?	EC: Any promotional material submitted should relate to the proposal criteria and will be included in the page limit.	NO
Does promotional material count against our narrative page limit?	EC: Any promotional material submitted should relate to the proposal criteria and will be included in the page limit.	NO
Does the requirement on page 33, part 4. B regarding licensed public water supply operators apply if we are not teaching an operator certification class?	EC: The certified operator requirement has been removed from this section; please see RFP Amendment No. 001 (to be issued April10, 2015).	Yes
Can tribes participate if we're offering training in a system that is regulated by the state?	EC: Tribes are welcome to attend DWB sponsored classroom trainings.	NO
Are operator certifications from other states acceptable for trainers in New Mexico?	EC: The certified operator requirement has been removed from this section; please see RFP Amendment No. 001 (to be issued April10, 2015).	Yes
Regarding Appendix D, Item 23, what is EFC Guidance? Can we use our own RCAC	EC: The current guideline documents are linked and updated as necessary on the website as listed in the RFP. Line item 23 as posted	NO

	guidance?	online does includes both EFC and RCAP/C based guidance documents for rate studies. http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/dwb/assistance/CapacityAssistanceContracts.htm	
	Regarding Appendix D, Item 37, what is the statewide asset management guidance for mapping of assets?	EC: Currently the statewide asset management criteria do not include any specific mapping requirements. NMED DWB is working to develop basic mapping requirements for contract services, which will be posted as guidance for line items 5 and 37 as soon as possible.	NO
	{company} is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. As such, our assumption is that we are not subject to the New Mexico Gross Receipts Tax at the rate of 5% for Out of State companies. Please verify.	PC: Per the New Mexico Tax & Revenue Department, non-profit companies are not subject to the gross receipts tax [under this RFP], unless they had unrelated trade or business. If you need further information, you can go on to the tax website and look for FYI-103.	NO
	The RFP refers to water and wastewater systems throughout. Are wastewater systems definitely included?	EC: Yes wastewater systems are definitely included, but do have more limited eligible funding sources. DWB will issue work orders for wastewater systems as the need for assistance and funding status allows. Line items in the menu of services that are specific to the Safe Drinking Water Act do not apply to wastewater systems.	NO
	On Page 33, under Business Reference information, what does “Technical Environment” mean?	EC: The <i>technical environment</i> reference information request refers to the technical scope of the project completed, as the examples illustrate in the RFP text, this is specific to any <i>information technology</i> utilized in the project.	NO
	On Page 38, what does Item #4, “Reserved”, refer to?	EC: This is a placeholder from the Department’s template document	NO
	Regarding Appendix D, Items 13 and 14, which EPA Energy Efficiency Guide is being referred to?	EC: The current guideline documents are linked and updated as necessary on the website as listed in the RFP http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/dwb/assistance/CapacityAssistanceContracts.htm Guidance document titles currently posted online for lines 13 and 14 are: EPA Energy Use Assessments at Water and Wastewater Systems Guide; EPA Energy Use Assessment Tool for Drinking Water Systems	NO

		EPA Energy Management Guidebook for Water and Wastewater Systems; EPA Energy Efficiency in Water and Wastewater Facilities Guide	
4/6/15	Can you extend the RFP Proposal Submission deadline?	EC: The section <i>II A. Sequence of Events schedule deadline table will be revised</i> to reopen the distribution list for more interested Offerors due to the amended scope language. Please see Amendment No. 001, <i>to be issued April 10, 2015. The Acknowledgement of Receipt form MUST be submitted by the Distribution List deadline listed in the amended schedule in order for an Offeror to be eligible to submit a proposal.</i>	Yes
4/6/15	Will awards be based solely on cost or some combination of cost and quality and services?	EC: Awards will be based on both qualifications and reasonable cost. Multiple awards for all line items will be made to vendors that meet qualifications and charge a reasonable cost. Work orders for line items will be issued to available vendors awarded the contract as needed by DWB and available funding allows. No amount of work is guaranteed to any vendor awarded the contract.	NO
	Are “external customer references” different from “organizational references” ?	EC: The four <i>External Customer References</i> should specifically be public water and/or wastewater systems in New Mexico. The three <i>Organizational references</i> may be private or local government water or wastewater systems or another type of private, state, or local government partnership agency that is in or outside of New Mexico, depending on the type of project.	NO
	Can NNED provide the “Organizational References form electronically, in a WORD document, for easier use by references?	No. Please instruct references to complete the form in its entirety so it is deemed “compliant.” References can add another page to provide more details, if needed.	NO
	IF the Probosal Submission deadline is extended, will NMED re-open the receipt deadline for “Acknowledgement of Receipt” form?	EC: The section <i>II A. Sequence of Events schedule deadline table will be revised</i> to reopen the distribution list for more interested Offerors due to the amended scope language. <i>Please see Amendment No. 001 to the RFP, to be issued April 10, 2015. The Acknowledgement of Receipt form MUST be submitted by the Distribution List amended listed in the amended schedule in order for an Offeror to be eligible to submit a proposal.</i>	Yes
	Can any entity submit an RFP Proposal? Non-profit? For-profit? Government?	EC: Yes, any qualified entity type can be awarded the work.	NO

	If non-profit agency does not have to bid including sales tax, doesn't that give advantage to a non-profit agency?	EC: Awards will be based on both qualifications and reasonable cost. Multiple awards for all line items will be made to vendors that meet qualifications and charge a reasonable cost. Work orders for line items will be issued to available vendors awarded the contract as needed by DWB and available funding allows. No amount of work is guaranteed to any vendor awarded the contract.	NO
4/6/15	Would a local courier service, such as is used for delivering legal documents, be considered an "express service" for purposes of delivering the finished proposal package?	EC: Yes. The amended RFP language allows for hand delivery of proposals. Please see Amendment No. 001 to the RFP, to be issued April 10, 2015.	Yes
	For purposes of #22--Facilitation of Public Meeting with Presentation--could a subcontractor be utilized to present specialized information, understanding that the subcontractor must be approved by NMED in advance?	EC: Yes.	NO
	For #24--Source Water Protection--what are the two meetings that are anticipated?	EC: The minimum two public meetings that are fundamental to community SWP planning process are an introduction meeting to explain the SWP planning process and receive community feedback on necessary action, then an exit public meeting to present the resulting SWP plan back to the community.	NO
	For facilitated meetings, a Unit Cost is called for. What provision is there for differential travel and lodging expense, meeting preparation and duration, etc.?	EC: Travel and lodging costs should be included in the unit cost proposed. The RFP scope describes the facilitation work as a 4 hour community meeting and describes the expected preparation and follow up work that should be included in the proposed cost as well on page 7 and 8.	NO
4/7/15	Will it be necessary to include copies of driver licenses in the proposal?	PC: No. Offerors who successfully contract through this RFP process will have to provide driver license copies of all staff prior to being assigned work.	NO
4/7/15	Will the date the submittal of proposals be extended? As discussed at the pre-proposal meeting, the answers to questions will not be available until Friday, and the proposals will have to ship Monday to make the submittal	EC: The section II A. Sequence of Events schedule deadline table will be revised to reopen the distribution list for more interested Offerors due to the amended scope language. Please see Amendment No. 001 to the RFP, to be issued April 10, 2015. The Acknowledgement of Receipt form MUST be submitted by the Distribution List deadline	Yes

	date/time of Tuesday at 3 pm.	listed in the amended schedule in order for an Offeror to be eligible to submit a proposal.	
	If the submittal date is extended, will the date for submitting the Acknowledgement of Receipt Forms be extended?	EC: The section II A. Sequence of Events schedule deadline table will be revised to reopen the distribution list for more interested Offerors due to the amended scope language. Please see Amendment No. 001 to the RFP, to be issued April 10, 2015. The Acknowledgement of Receipt form MUST be submitted by the Distribution List deadline listed in the amended schedule in order for an Offeror to be eligible to submit a proposal.	Yes
	Will the list of firms who submitted Acknowledgement of Receipt forms be made available? This is useful for teaming.	No. As described in the RFP, only a public log of potential Offeror(s) who attend the Pre-Proposal Conferences will be made available.	No
	Will the list of attendees at the pre-proposal meeting be made available?	Yes.	No
	Is operator certification/licensure required for all menu items?	EC: The certified operator requirement has been removed from this section in the amended RFP language to be issued April 10, 2015.	Yes
4/7/15	The RFP calls for bio's and resumes to be included of key staff personnel so what is required to adhere to the 25 page maximum limit?	EC: The experience of the Offerors' staff that will be performing the services offered should be represented as requested in the RFP. This description is included in the 25 page maximum. The required forms in the appendices do not count as part of the 25 pages.	NO
	the RFP calls for three references in one part of the document and yet four within another part of the document so please clarify	EC: The four <i>External Customer References</i> should specifically be public water and/or wastewater systems in New Mexico. The three <i>Organizational references</i> may be private or local government water or wastewater systems or another type of private, state, or local government partnership agency that is in or outside of New Mexico, depending on the type of project.	NO
	Do the attachments count as part of the maximum 25 page limit?	EC: The required forms in the appendices do not count as part of the 25 pages.	NO
	Table 1 is NOT included within the body of the RFP	EC: The Menu of Services, Table 1 is on page 8 of the body of the RFP.	NO

	Can the requirement for Surety Bond be removed	PC: This question has been submitted for procurement and legal review. The answer will be posted to this list of questions as soon as it is provided.	TBD
4/7/15	<p>A more detailed question re: unit cost.</p> <p>I am concerned that the unit cost for some activities could be unfair to either a contractor or to NMED, as not talking into account actual times or distances. That is, a high unit cost for an event or service that is relatively quick and nearby could be disadvantageous to NMED's valuable financial resources. Conversely, a more modest unit cost could leave a contractor in the lurch if the service is at a distant corner of the state and takes longer than anticipated.</p> <p>Could unit costs be provided along with affiliated hourly rates?</p>	EC: Costs proposed should be listed as described in the menu of services for each line item. The unit cost process used in the RFP is designed to streamline the contract deliverable certification and invoicing process for a large contract with the potential for many simultaneous active work orders from multiple vendors. It will be pivotal to cost effectively manage such a large contract with multiple vendors without inflating administrative costs for contract management which would otherwise be necessary to review and approve actual travel and expense costs for each line item issued.	NO
4/8/15	When NMED issues a Task Order to a contractor stating that X # of hours will be spent on that task, (for example Task #15) can the invoice reflect the real time spent to complete the task, including travel and prep time, OR will the Task Order and the invoice from the contractor only be allowed to reflect the actual time spent on-site?	EC: When the DWB issues a work order with a number of hours to be spent, this will represent the maximum number of hours that should be provided assisting onsite and the maximum hours that can be invoiced for the work order. If less time is required to complete any work order issued it should be billed as such. The hourly rate should include any potentially required travel time to make the onsite visit.	NO
4/8/15	Please clarify the requirements (amount required) for the performance surety bond.	PC: This question has been submitted for procurement and legal review. The answer will be posted to this list of questions as soon as it is provided.	