



Solicitation Information
20 Sept 10

Request for Proposals # 7447847

TITLE: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training

Submission Deadline: 18 Oct 10 @ 11:00 AM (Eastern Time)

Pre-Proposal Meeting: No

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases, at questions@purchasing.state.ri.us, no later than **1 Oct 10 @ 12:00 Noon (ET)**. Questions should be submitted in a *Microsoft Word attachment*. Please reference the RFP / LOI # on all correspondence. Questions received, if any, will be posted on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

SURETY REQUIRED: No
BOND REQUIRED: No

Jerome D. Moynihan, C.P.M., CPPO
Administrator of Purchasing Systems

Vendors must register on-line at the State Purchasing Website at www.purchasing.ri.gov

Note to Vendors:

Offers received without the entire completed three-page RIVP Generated Bidder Certification Form attached may result in disqualification.

THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION FORM

The State of Rhode Island, Department of Administration / Division of Purchases, on behalf of the Department of Human Services (DHS), is seeking to establish a contract with an entity to manage a program for recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) who are referred to and participate in employment and training (E&T) components. The initiative is intended to leverage private resources to match federal SNAP E&T funds to enable an expansion of work-focused education and training services to low income households receiving SNAP benefits in Rhode Island, in accordance with the terms of this solicitation and the State's General Conditions of Purchase, which is available on the internet at www.purchasing.ri.gov. All applicants must meet all of the bid criteria listed below.

INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS TO OFFERORS:

Potential offerors are advised to review all sections of this Request carefully, and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.

Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this procurement are solicited. However, proposals which depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this Request will be rejected as being non-responsive.

All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this Request, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content, shall be borne by the offeror. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.

Proposals are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than sixty (60) days following the opening date, and may not be withdrawn, except with the express written permission of the State Purchasing Agent.

All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.

Proposals misdirected to other State locations or which are otherwise not present in the Division of Purchases at the time of opening for any cause will be determined to be late and will not be considered. The "Official" time clock is in the reception area of the Division of Purchases.

In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.1 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation shall have the right to transact business in the state until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040). *This will be a requirement only of the successful bidder (s).*

Offerors are advised that all materials submitted to the State of Rhode Island for consideration in response to this Request for Proposals will be considered to be public records, as defined in Title 38 Chapter 2 of the Rhode Island General Laws.

Also, Submitters should be aware of the State's MBE requirements, which addresses the State's goal of ten per cent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements. For further information, contact the State MBE Administrator at (401) 574-8253 or cnewton@gw.doa.state.ri.us Visit the website <http://www.mbe.ri.gov>

Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Division of Purchases web site on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFP / LOI

Equal Employment Opportunity (RIGL 28-5.1) § 28-5.1-1 Declaration of policy. – (a) Equal opportunity and affirmative action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island state government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards and authorities, and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employment. This policy applies in all areas where the

state dollar is spent, in employment, public service, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation. For further information, contact the Rhode Island Equal Employment Opportunity Office, at 222-3090 or via email raymondl@gw.doa.state.ri.us

Subcontracts are permitted, provided that their use is clearly indicated in the offeror's proposal, and the subcontractor(s) proposed to be used are identified in the proposal.

If you wish to seek to do business with the State of Rhode Island, you must register and utilize the E-Verify Program. Please refer to www.dhs.gov/E-Verify or the Division of Purchases website at www.purchasing.ri.gov for more information.

Bidders are required to submit a proposal narrative of no more than 15 pages, using a font no smaller than 12 point, and include a proposed budget and budget narrative in support of the proposed implementation of the Scope of Work.

It is the intent of DHS to obtain a single entity that either delivers SNAP E&T components directly or functions as an intermediary for community-based organizations that deliver SNAP E&T components. Any contract resulting from this RFP may run up to 3 years, contingent upon performance.

The amount of the contract is tied to the annual, formula-based, preliminary allocation from the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS). In the first year (approx. Nov 2010 – Nov 2011), \$179,112 is available. However, more funding is available as reimbursement from FNS if 50% match funding is identified and offered through the community-based organizations participating in the expanded SNAP E&T program.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Human Services is the administrative entity for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and its Employment and Training program (E&T). Basic work rules are covered in 7 CFR 273.7, Department of Agriculture regulations and should be thoroughly reviewed by offerors. See Electronic Code of Federal Regulations at <http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/>. In addition, an annual state plan describes the parameters of the program in Rhode Island, cites the number of work registrants and the number of able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) - a subset of work registrants. Presently, the State has a waiver for ABAWDs and the State plan for SNAP E&T is, therefore, focused on voluntary participants. The plan also cites anticipated E&T expenditures in broad categories. The draft, pending approval by the Food and Nutrition Services, will be posted as a supplement to this Request for Proposals.

The Department wishes to expand work-focused education and training services to low income households receiving SNAP benefits in Rhode Island, by leveraging private resources to match federal SNAP E&T funds. This can be done through the 50% reimbursement mechanism, therefore, offerors must have capacity to manage cash flow and to determine and assure that match (its own or from subgrantees) derives from non-federal sources.

SNAP recipients who meet criteria described in CFR 273.7 must register for work. Some mandatory work registrants may receive state-defined exemptions. Able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) must participate in the E&T program, if referred by the State, or risk losing eligibility for SNAP benefits. Any other SNAP recipient may volunteer to participate, and

volunteers, if they dis-engage, have no consequence. Participants must have been referred to E&T components, not already in them. Review FNS guidance for clarification on this point.

Employment and training component options include but are not limited to:

- independent job search;
- job search training and placement assistance;
- educational programs to improve employability including ESL, ABE, GED
- vocational training;
- work experience in a public or private non-profit entity to improve employability;
- other employment-oriented activities (e.g., job placement, WIA services);
- self-employment training

E&T funds may also be used to provide support services to participants but must be funded through 50% match. Support services may include:

- Transportation service which are reasonably needed to participate in the program including bus passes and fuel for cars
- Cost of testing and/or securing permits needed for training or to support job search activities
- Cost of tools, uniforms, protective clothing required for training
- Cost of textbooks, training materials and reasonable school supplies necessary for training. Assistance with tuition, lab fees and other education related costs necessary for training.
- General clothing assistance to purchase appropriate interview attire

States receive an allocation of SNAP E & T funds that are 100% federal. Rhode Island's 2011 allocation is \$179,112. In addition, states may seek additional funding for their E & T programs through a cost reimbursement program. States and SNAP E&T contractors/program providers may spend non-federal public and/or private funds on allowable services for eligible participants and receive reimbursement for 50% of such expenditures. A 2006 Q & A Package on E&T Financial Policy is helpful, as well as subsequent FNS clarifications. All are available on the FNS website. See <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/rules/Memo/Support/employment-training.htm>

The SNAP E&T program may operate statewide. It may begin as a pilot in limited geographic areas to test its effectiveness.

SCOPE OF WORK:

Required elements are: (1) a program that offers, directly or through sub-agreements, multiple E&T components including, at minimum, adult education, skills training, job readiness and job search, (2) a program that engages at least 2 community-based organizations, which may include the applicant agency, if a pilot in the first year, or a minimum of 4 community-based organizations, which may include the applicant agency, if offered statewide, (3) a program that leverages 50% match funds from 2 or more organizations, (4) a program that clearly identifies the incentives for SNAP recipients to participate, which may be monetary or in-kind, but additionally articulates the message or marketing pitch to voluntary participants, (5) a program that assures voluntary SNAP E&T clients are referred to participate in components, in accord with FNS instructions, (6) a program with capacity to adjust its approach if the State were not to be eligible for an ABAWD waiver in future years of the contract and thus certain SNAP participants were required to participate in E&T activities.

Specifically address the following questions in the body of your proposal:

- What is the offeror's program design for the first year and what flexibility does the offeror have to adjust the plan for subsequent years, anticipating growth or changes in federal funding or in state status with regard to ABAWD waiver eligibility?
- What is the administrative capacity with regard to either directly providing E&T components or functioning as an intermediary for community-based organizations (CBOs) that provide E&T components? Specifically, how would participants and their outcomes be tracked? How would 50% match funds be identified in each organization, with assurance it was not already being utilized to match other federal funds? How would expenditures be tracked and tallied for subsequent submittal to FNS for reimbursement? What is the plan for sharing reimbursements with participating CBOs?
- How would participants be referred or recruited and what is the proposed method of confirming their eligibility, in collaboration with DHS?
- How would the offeror provide the State with necessary participation and expenditure detail to enable timely submission of required federal reports?
- How would CBOs be selected for partnership?
- Describe the message that State staff would use during screening and eligibility meetings to identify volunteers for the SNAP E&T program in the first year and how the messaging would change when the State no longer has an ABAWD waiver.
- What would be the value-added that offeror's or CBO staff would describe to potential volunteers as a reason to participate?
- What E&T components will be offered?
- What support services will be offered?
- Describe anticipated milestones and outcomes for the first year, and estimate for each of the following two years, based on projections for growth.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:

Service must begin as soon after November 1, 2010 as possible and not later than January 1, 2011. The first quarter of federal fiscal year 2011 can be utilized to finalize and set up partnerships and operational details. Contract will be renewed by annual amendment up through 9/30/13, based on successful performance.

BUDGET:

Up to \$179,112 in the first year is available to achieve objectives. To the extent that the offeror identifies otherwise unmatched state, municipal or charitable funding for investment in the program, additional funding is available as reimbursement at the 50%-50% match rate from FNS. The amount of 100% SNAP E&T funding for years 2 and 3 is not yet known and could be higher or lower. Please submit a budget outline and identify a reasonable estimate of match that might be secured in year 1, based on offeror's knowledge of community resources, as well as any in-kind that offeror will contribute to ensure program success.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Program – 40% - Proposals will be judged by the quality and completeness of the proposal, the cohesiveness of the program design, the reflection of knowledge of FNS rules governing the SNAP E&T program, and the extent to which the proposal aligns with and is likely to achieve objectives.

Prior Experience and Management Qualifications – 30% - Offeror must present evidence of its own depth with regard to administrative, fiscal and operational capacity, for implementing a brand new program, for serving SNAP recipients (or similar populations) or partnering with organizations that serve SNAP recipients, particularly in the areas of employment and training. In addition, the proposal will be judged by the extent of the offeror’s knowledge of existing opportunities in the community for contextualized learning, skills training and adult education for low-income Rhode Islanders and evidence of successful collaborative relationships.

Staffing – 15% - Qualifications and experience of key staff should be readily evident with resumes submitted and job descriptions attached for any positions proposed to be hired.

Cost Proposal – 15% - The budget proposal, including any in-kind that may be offered to achieve the objectives of this program, should reflect an efficient and federally-allowable use of the 100% SNAP E&T funds and a projection about how much 50% reimbursement may be secured. A narrative is requested to explain what the 50% funds would be used to accomplish and how the 50% reimbursement funds would flow.

RESPONSES

Responses (**an original plus five (5) copies**), inclusive of budget and budget narrative and any addenda, should be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked “RFP # 7447847: “SNAP E&T” to:

**RI Dept. of Administration
Division of Purchases, 2nd floor
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5855**

NOTE: Proposals received after the above-referenced due date and time may not be considered. Proposals misdirected to other State locations or which are otherwise not presented in the Division of Purchases by the scheduled due date and time will be determined to be late and will not be considered. Proposals faxed or emailed to the Division of Purchases will not be considered. The official time clock is located in the reception area of the Division of Purchases.

RESPONSE CONTENTS:

Responses must include the following:

1. A completed and signed R.I.V.I.P. generated bidder certification cover sheet (downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at <http://www.purchasing.ri.gov>)
2. Evidence of experience providing related services.
3. A proposal narrative not to exceed 15 pages in a font no smaller than 12 point
4. A proposed budget and budget narrative supporting the proposed services
5. Resumes and job descriptions

6. A completed and signed Taxpayer Identification Number Form (W-9), which is available from the Purchases website at www.purchasing.ri.gov . This W-9 addresses Rhode Island's EVerify requirement. For assistance, call the Help Desk at 401 222-3766.

7. In addition to the multiple hard copies of proposals required, respondents/offerors are requested to provide their proposal in electronic format (CDRom, Diskette, flash drive). Microsoft Word /Excel OR PDF format is preferable. Only 1 electronic copy is requested. This CD, diskette, flash drive, should be included in the proposal marked "original."

A Selection Committee will evaluate submitted proposals on the basis of the above criteria items. Consultant Teams may be invited to appear before the Committee for in-person presentations. The Committee will then make a qualifications based recommendation for final selection to the Rhode Island State Purchasing Agent, or his designee, who will make the final award decision.

Notwithstanding the above, the State reserves the right to award on the basis of cost alone; to award in whole or in part; to reject any or all proposals; and, to award in its own best interest. Proposals found to be technically or substantially non-responsive at any point in the evaluation process will be rejected and not considered further. The State may, at its sole option, elect to require presentation(s) by offerors clearly in consideration for award.

End