



Solicitation Information
August 5, 2015

RFP# 7549784

TITLE: Epidemiological and Analytical Service Support

Submission Deadline: September 3, 2015 at 10:00 AM (Eastern Time)

PRE-BID/ PROPOSAL CONFERENCE: No

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases at david.francis@purchasing.ri.gov no later than **August 14, 2015 at 10:00 AM (ET)**. Questions should be submitted in a *Microsoft Word attachment*. Please reference the RFP# 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

David J. Francis
Interdepartmental Project Manager

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

Note to Applicants:

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

THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION FORM

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Rhode Island Department of Administration/Division of Purchases, on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), is soliciting proposals from qualified consultants to provide technical assistance and training in accordance with the terms of this Request for Proposals and the State's General Conditions of Purchase, which may be obtained at the Rhode Island Division of Purchases Home Page by Internet at www.purchasing.ri.gov.

The initial contract period will begin approximately January 1, 2016 for one year. Contracts may be renewed for up to four additional 12-month periods based on vendor performance and the availability of funds.

This is a Request for Proposals, not an Invitation for Bid. Responses will be evaluated on the basis of the relative merits of the proposal, in addition to price; there will be no public opening and reading of responses received by the Division of Purchases pursuant to this Request, other than to name those offerors who have submitted proposals.

Instructions and Notifications to Offerors:

1. Potential vendors are advised to review all sections of this RFP carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.
2. 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 RFP will be rejected as being non-responsive.
3. All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content shall be borne by the vendor. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.
4. Proposals are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than 60 days following the opening date, and may not be withdrawn, except with the express written permission of the State Purchasing Agent.
5. All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.
6. Proposals misdirected to other state locations, or which are otherwise not present in the Division at the time of opening for any cause will be determined to be late and will not be considered. For the purposes of this requirement, the official time and date shall be that of the time clock in the reception area of the Division.
7. It is intended that an award pursuant to this RFP will be made to a prime vendor, or prime vendors in the various categories, who will assume responsibility for all aspects of the work. Joint venture and cooperative proposals will not be considered. Subcontracts are permitted, provided that their use is clearly indicated in the vendor's proposal and the subcontractor(s) to be used is identified in the proposal.

8. All proposals should include the vendor's FEIN or Social Security number as evidenced by a W9, downloadable from the Division's website at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
9. The purchase of services under an award made pursuant to this RFP will be contingent on the availability of funds.
10. Vendors are advised that all materials submitted to the State for consideration in response to this RFP will be considered to be Public Records as defined in Title 38, Chapter 2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, without exception, and will be released for inspection immediately upon request once an award has been made.
11. Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Division of Purchases website on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFP.
12. Equal Employment Opportunity (G.L. 1956 § 28-5.1-1, et seq.) – § 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 to all areas where State dollars are spent, in employment, public services, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation.
13. In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation, a corporation without a Rhode Island business address, 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 is a requirement only of the successful vendor(s).
14. The vendor should be aware of the State's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) requirements, which address the State's goal of ten percent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements. For further information visit the website www.mbe.ri.gov
15. Under HIPAA, a "business associate" is a person or entity, other than a member of the workforce of a HIPAA covered entity, who performs functions or activities on behalf of, or provides certain services to, a HIPAA covered entity that involves access by the business associate to HIPAA protected health information. A "business associate" also is a subcontractor that creates, receives, maintains, or transmits HIPAA protected health information on behalf of another business associate. The HIPAA rules generally require that HIPAA covered entities and business associates enter into contracts with their business associates to ensure that the business associates will appropriately safeguard HIPAA protected health information. Therefore, if a Contractor qualifies as a business associate, it will be required to sign a HIPAA business associate agreement
16. In order to perform the contemplated services related to the Rhode Island Health Benefits Exchange (HealthSourceRI), the vendor hereby certifies that it is an "eligible entity," as defined by 45 C.F.R. § 155.110, in order to carry out one or more of the responsibilities of a health insurance exchange. The vendor agrees to indemnify and hold the State of Rhode Island harmless for all expenses that are deemed to be unallowable by the Federal government because it is determined that the vendor is not an "eligible entity," as defined by 45 C.F.R. § 155.110.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Background

The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) is established by law (RIGL-23) as the only state and local public health jurisdiction in Rhode Island to take cognizance of the interests of life and health among the peoples of the state; make investigations into the causes of disease, the prevalence of epidemics and endemics among the people, the sources of mortality, the effect of localities, employments and all other conditions and circumstances on the public health, and do all in its power to ascertain the causes and apply the best means for the prevention and control of diseases or conditions detrimental to the public health. In addition it adopts, promulgates and enforces rules and regulations, conducts laboratory tests, monitors, publishes and circulates information and takes other actions necessary to promote and assure the public's health including emerging infections and treatment-resistant diseases, emergency preparedness (including bioterrorism), and diseases related to lifestyle, genetic and environmental conditions.

RIDOH strives to protect and promote the health of Rhode Islanders with the following outcomes:

- Assuring that everyone has the opportunity for equal life chances
- Reducing the burden of disease and disability in the population
- Assuring safe and healthy human environments
- Assuring access for all to high quality health services
- Assuring appropriate utilization of health services
- Planning for a health service environment that matches resource to need
- Assuring infections disease control
- Promoting healthy behaviors and practices

The technical disciplines underlying public health are specialized and extensive including five core components: epidemiology, biostatistics, environmental health, health services administration, and social and behavioral science. These are augmented by a number of specialized newer fields such as health informatics, genomics, health risk communication, cultural competence, community-based participatory health research, health policy and law, global health, and health ethics. These areas of knowledge and practice are available in only a few places—especially in Rhode Island where specialties tend to be concentrated.

Purpose

The purpose of this RFP is to improve epidemiology, program evaluation, community needs assessment, and other public health related data analysis consultant services provided to RIDOH, by competitively procuring the services of a qualified organization that has extensive experience and expertise in the above mentioned areas. In addition the organization must demonstrate examples or other information that evidences the firm's experience working with government agencies and/or public health data.

The overall goal is to provide epidemiological and analytical support to RIDOH programs for short and long-term projects.

It is expected that staff of RIDOH and the Contractor will share the responsibilities under the overall guidance of senior RIDOH personnel. As a result of this project, RIDOH will increase its capacity in 1) assessing the burden of disease and disability in the population, 2) assuring safe and healthy human

environments, 3) assuring access for all to high quality health services, 4) promoting healthy behaviors and practices, 5) promoting health services that match resource to need, 6) assessing utilization of services and their impact on health outcomes, and 7) assessing health disparities and evaluating programs that aim at their reduction.

SECTION 3: SCOPE OF WORK

General Description

Responders to this proposal should be able to provide the following scope of services throughout the duration of the contract, but are not limited to:

- Epidemiology of acute and/or chronic disease phenomena
- Application of biostatistics, public health research design, and statistical analysis to public health problems
- Surveillance, planning and evaluation of current or emerging diseases programs
- Public health application of geographic information systems (GIS)
- Design and conduct clinical and community-based public health research trials or demonstrations
- Design, development, implementation and coordination of public health surveys in schools, workplaces, community-based agencies, and other organizations
- Provide and link consistent and potentially layered data among multiple projects, enable comparison with other state and national data, and support community health planning
- Formative research, public health literature review, focus groups and key informant interviews
- Professional public health conferences and/or continuing education
- Health care services research and recommendations
- Health care quality research, analysis, reporting and quality assurance
- Participation in clinical, translational, technological, genomic or applied research within a public health framework
- Bioterrorism or public health preparedness planning, research, training or applications
- Protection of human research subjects and health ethics
- Public health services design, implementation, training and assessment
- Education of public health trainees, employees, officials and other health practitioners including those in community-based organizations
- Application of public health sciences and methods to diseases, risk factors and policies
- Public health database development, management and operations
- Conduct needs assessments
- Evaluation of public health programs, policies and processes
- Implement subcontracts related to any public health services and functional areas
- Support of expert personnel to carry out key services and functions
- Development and or application of laboratory sciences to public health problems
- Translations of technical public health information for professional and lay audiences
- Other consultant-type services, expertise and support activities related to the core areas of public health practice

The number of projects and activities to be performed will be dependent on the needs of RIDOH programs and available funding.

Qualifications and Staffing

Applicants must have experience and capacity to carry out the activities listed above. Specifically, the contractor must have the following capabilities:

- Demonstrated experience in epidemiology, research studies, program evaluation, performance measurement, needs assessments, journal publications and other data dissemination strategies.
- Experience in the development, enhancement, and maintenance of public health data sets. Specifically, applicant has capacity to clean data for data analysis, consolidate and analyze available data, and build and link analytical tools.
- Demonstrated experience working with health care providers and community-based organizations.

Services required will be based on the needs of individual programs, and may include one or more of the categories above.

The Contractor must have a designated staff person to oversee all activities described in the Required Tasks.

The Contractor must clearly indicate the person(s) who will be responsible for each task and the number of hours they are budgeted for on the project.

The Contractor may subcontract limited components of the work as may be appropriate. All subcontractors considered for use in performing the basic scope of work must be clearly identified, including a list of all subcontractor staff, task(s) they will perform, hourly wage(s), and the number of hours they will be budgeted to the project. The subcontractors' budget must be in the same detail as that of the Contractor.

SECTION 4: REQUIREMENTS / REPORTING

Requirements

To ensure compliance, RIDOH shall regularly monitor the activities under this contract. The contractor must provide access to any and all materials relevant to the evaluation and monitoring activities and requirements described herein. The contractor will be responsible for supervision, performance and adherence to contractual language of all its subcontractors. The State will retain total discretion of all administrative decisions regarding the management and billing of and/or receipt of payments for services rendered. The contractor must have sufficient liability insurance coverage.

Eligible applicants must be in good standing with the federal government.

RIDOH reserves the exclusive right to:

- Align the contract with the state fiscal year end, even if the activities are scheduled to end at an earlier date.
- Establish a later effective date in the contract if circumstances are such that it is in the State's best interest to delay it, or if funding availability is undetermined.
- Terminate the contract within the first contract year if the contractor is not able to meet the specified requirements. In addition, with a thirty (30) day notice from RIDOH, this contract may be cancelled anytime for cause.

Reporting

The contractor will be required to submit a monthly activity report to reflect activities conducted by the 10th of each month following the delivery of services. The activity report is to be accompanied by a monthly invoice and appropriate supporting documentation.

SECTION 5: TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

The separate technical proposal should address specifically each of the required elements:

Agency Qualifications (10 points)

- Agency has adequate resources and capacity to provide the full range of services outlined in the request.
- Work samples submitted are high quality and reflect that the Agency has the capacity to meet the requirements outlined in the request.
- Reference responses are positive.

Agency Experience (40 points)

- Agency staff has extensive experience working with data and with government agencies,
- Agency has substantiated with examples its extensive experience in handling data, analyzing data, working with data for evaluations and developing performance indicators, using data for policy purposes, providing technical assistance,
- Agency has substantiated its solid experience in preparing written reports to document the processes and steps that they have taken to prepare data for the given projects.
- Agency has broad range of experience working with a variety of datasets, in terms of their complexity, number of fields/tables, types of data they contain, and type of work they had done with the data.
- Agency has substantiated its experience in the preparation of management and scientific, well-written reports containing the findings of the data related projects.

Staffing (20 points)

- Staffing plan demonstrates the capacity to complete the necessary tasks (as described in Section 3: Scope of Work) in a timely and professional manner
- Staff designated to work on account are appropriately qualified and possess skills in epidemiologic methods, health services research, public health statistics and surveillance. For example, staff possess a Master of Public Health Degree and have gained experience through employment involving the collection and analysis of health related data.
- Staff have knowledge of the techniques necessary to prepare and publish statistical data; and have the ability to analyze data to evaluate the effectiveness of health programs.
- Staff have experience in conducting needs assessments.
- If the applicant is an organization, it must employ or plan to hire a fiscal staff member with a proven record of responsible budget management. This staff member will be responsible for invoicing and tracking expenditures.
- Tasks and functions assigned to staff are appropriate given their qualifications.
- Agency is MBE certified or has submitted a plan to meet subcontracting plan that addresses the State's goal of ten- percent participation by MBEs in all state procurements.
- Applicant has described a feasible plan to recruit and engage public health professionals.
- Applicant has described current public health programs/research centers that will be part of this project.

- See Section 3, “Consultant Qualifications and Staffing” for a description of required staff experience and capabilities

Format: The proposal must be typed, 12 Times Roman or an equivalent font, English, double-spaced, paginated, 1-inch margins, and one-sided.

Narrative: The separate technical proposal should address specifically each of the required elements:

Section I. Executive Summary

The Executive Summary is intended to highlight the contents of the technical proposal and provide the State evaluators with a broad understanding of the organization’s technical approach and ability, including experience with similar projects.

Section II. Agency Qualifications and Experience

Submit a brief narrative (10-page limit) summarizing the organization’s experience and qualifications as requested below. Requested reference documents and samples of work should be referenced in the summary and attached in appendices. In preparing the narrative, address the following points:

Background:

- Provide a brief description of the organization including its mission, historical development, philosophy, and a list of the services provided. Describe how this contract would fit into that mission.
- Include the most recent version of your organization’s Annual Report and a certified financial statement of the most recent accounting year and/or a copy of the agency’s most current federal tax return.

Structure:

- Indicate organization’s status as a minority Business Enterprise (MBE), certified by the Rhode Department of Administration. If the organization is not MBE-certified, describe measures to be taken to meet subcontracting plan that addresses the State’s goal of ten- percent participation by MBEs in all state procurements.
- Detail the organization’s criteria for determining a “billable hour” and describe how billable hours are tracked.

References:

- Names, addresses, telephone numbers and permission to contact three references for which your organization has performed work in the last three years. If possible, these references should be from the public health field.
- Provide any other information that would assist the State in assessing the organization’s qualifications.

Section III. Plan for Staffing and Administration

Submit a brief narrative describing the organization’s staffing plan for this contract. List all organization staff and/or subcontractors proposed to work on this project describing the duties, responsibilities and concentration of effort that apply to each, indicate how long they have been with the organization, and provide a list of accounts they have worked on. For the management and executive staff (i.e., the executive director and financial/administrative director) estimate the amount of time each will spend on this account.

SECTION 6: COST PROPOSAL

Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative

The vendor must prepare a separate, signed and sealed Cost Proposal using Appendix A: Cost Schedule Spreadsheet for fees charged for the preparation and delivery of the strategic plan outlined in this proposal for a 12-month term. When formulation the cost proposal, vendors should present their costs by position with a fully loaded hourly rate. Please explain the basis and rationale of your fee structure.

The applicant must submit a budget and budget narrative for the first 12-month period. Submitted budget and supporting documentation must appropriately reflect the agency's financial capacity to implement the project in a timely manner. Clearly identify a cost-effective budget. Line items are to be accurate and consistent with objectives and program activities.

In the Budget Narrative, please detail need for proposed expenses for Year One. The budget narrative must be descriptive and complete.

Allowable Expenses

PERSONNEL: Indicate each staff name and position for this project. Show the percentage of time allocated to this project, the hourly rate, and the total amount requested.

Funds may not be used for capital expenses.

Applicants are advised that RIDOH is not responsible for any expenses incurred by the Applicant prior to the contract award.

Duplication of Services/Cost Avoidance

Applicants must be certain to assure RIDOH that the funds to be utilized associated with this scope of work are not duplicated in other areas of their agency. These funds are specific to the agreed upon scope of work via this contract and therefore should be utilized to meet the deliverables articulated in the RFP.

SECTION 7: EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Proposals will be reviewed by a Technical Review Committee comprised of staff from state agencies. To advance to the Cost Evaluation phase, the Technical Proposal must receive a minimum of 60% out of a maximum of 70 technical points. Any technical proposals scoring less than 60 points will not have the cost component opened and evaluated. The proposal will be dropped from further consideration.

Proposals scoring 60 technical points or higher will be evaluated for cost and assigned up to a maximum of 30 points in cost category, bringing the potential maximum score to 100 points.

The Department of Health reserves the exclusive right to select the individual(s) or firm (vendor) that it deems to be in its best interest to accomplish the project as specified herein; and conversely, reserves the right not to fund any proposal(s).

Proposals will be reviewed and scored based upon the following criteria:

| Criteria | Possible |
|--|-------------------|
| Agency Qualifications | 10 Points |
| Agency Experience | 40 Points |
| Staffing | 20 Points |
| Total Possible Technical Points | 70 Points |
| Cost calculated as lowest responsive cost proposal divided by (this cost proposal) times 30 points * | 30 Points |
| Total Possible Points | 100 Points |

*The Low bidder will receive one hundred percent (100%) of the available points for cost. All other bidders will be awarded cost points based upon the following formula:

$$(\text{low bid} / \text{vendors bid}) * \text{available points}$$

For example: If the low bidder (Vendor A) bids \$65,000 and Vendor B bids \$100,000 for monthly cost and service fee and the total points available are Thirty (30), vendor B's cost points are calculated as follows:

$$\$65,000 / \$100,000 * 30 = 19.5$$

Points will be assigned based on the offeror's clear demonstration of his/her abilities to complete the work, apply appropriate methods to complete the work, create innovative solutions and quality of past performance in similar projects.

Applicants may be required to submit additional written information or be asked to make an oral presentation before the technical review committee to clarify statements made in their proposal.

SECTION 8: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Questions concerning this solicitation may be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at [@purchasing.ri.gov](mailto: purchasing@ri.gov) no later than the date and time indicated on page one of this solicitation. Please reference **RFP # 7549784** on all correspondence. Questions should be submitted in a Microsoft Word attachment. Answers to 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. If technical assistance is required to download, call the Help Desk at (401) 574-9709.

Offerors are encouraged to submit written questions to the Division of Purchases. **No other contact with State parties will be permitted.** Interested offerors may submit proposals to provide the services covered by this Request on or before the date and time listed on the cover page of this solicitation. Responses received after this date and time, as registered by the official time clock in the reception area of the Division of Purchases will not be considered.

Responses (**an original plus four (4) copies**) should be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked “**RFP # 7549784Epidemiological and Analytical Service Support**” 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 will not be considered. Proposals misdirected to other State locations or those not presented to 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 in the reception area of the Division of Purchases.

Response Contents

Responses shall include the following:

1. One completed and signed three-page R.I.V.I.P generated bidder certification cover sheet (included in the original copy only) downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
2. One completed and signed W-9 (included in the original copy only) downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
3. **A separate Technical Proposal** describing the qualifications and background of the applicant and experience with and for similar projects, and all information described earlier in this solicitation. Include the resumes of key staff that will provide services covered by this request.
4. **A separate, signed and sealed Cost Proposal** reflecting the hourly rate, or other fee structure, proposed to complete all of the requirements of this project.
5. In addition to the multiple hard copies of proposals required, Respondents are requested to provide their proposal in **electronic format (CD-Rom, disc, or flash drive)**. Microsoft Word / Excel OR PDF format is preferable. Only 1 electronic copy is requested and it should be placed in the proposal marked “original”.

Concluding Statements

Notwithstanding the above, the State reserves the right not to award this contract or to award on the basis of cost alone, to accept or reject any or all proposals, and to award in its 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.

The State's General Conditions of Purchase contain the specific contract terms, stipulations and affirmations to be utilized for the contract awarded to the RFP. The State's General Conditions of Purchases/General Terms and Conditions can be found at the following URL:
<https://www.purchasing.ri.gov/RIVIP/publicdocuments/ATTA.pdf>

Appendix A . Cost Proposal Spreadsheet: Budget Total

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|----------|
| Personnel | \$ | - |
| Other costs | \$ | - |
| Total | \$ | - |

Authorized Agent Signature

Date

Appendix A . Cost Proposal Spreadsheet: Staff

| Role | Name | Fully loaded hourly rate | Hours | Total |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | | | \$ - |
| | | | | \$ - |
| | | | | \$ - |
| | | | | \$ - |
| | | | | \$ - |
| | | | | \$ - |
| | | | | \$ - |
| | | | | \$ - |
| | | | | \$ - |
| | | | | \$ - |
| | | | | \$ - |
| Total | | | | \$ - |

Appendix A . Cost Proposal Spreadsheet: Other Costs

| Item | Description | Cost |
|--------------|-------------|------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Total | | \$ - |