



**Solicitation Information
April 21, 2016**

RFP# 7550547

TITLE: SNAP Policy Revision and Handbook

Submission Deadline: May 20, 2016 at 10:00 AM (Eastern Time)

PRE-BID/ PROPOSAL CONFERENCE: No

MANDATORY: NA

If YES, any Vendor who intends to submit a bid proposal in response to this solicitation must have its designated representative attend the mandatory Pre-Bid/ Proposal Conference. The representative must register at the Pre-Bid/ Proposal Conference and disclose the identity of the vendor whom he/she represents. A vendor's failure to attend and register at the mandatory Pre-Bid/ Proposal Conference shall result in disqualification of the vendor's bid proposals as non-responsive to the solicitation.

DATE: NA

LOCATION: NA

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases at david.francis@purchasing.ri.gov no later than **May 2, 2016 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 Human Services (DHS), is soliciting proposals from qualified vendors to provide in-depth policy analysis for the Rhode Island Department of Human Services' Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) code of rules, 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 chosen vendor will simplify DHS' current administrative rules and assist with the creation of a procedural manual written in plain language for use as a handbook for staff and a guide for community stakeholders. The vendor will pay particular attention to targeted error prone areas including but not limited to income, deductions and household consistency. The vendor will also look at opportunities for waivers and review state options to help reduce the SNAP error rate, as well as suggest web software to improve the design and navigational abilities within the rules and manuals.

The initial contract period will begin approximately July 2016 for one year. Contracts may be renewed for up to one additional 12-month period 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.
17. The successful vendor must be registered with Sams.Gov prior to contracting with the DHS. The successful vendor shall sign an agreement with the DHS using the DHS’ boilerplate.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

AUTHORITY TO REQUEST SERVICES

Pursuant to the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) requires Rhode Island Department of Human Services to create a Payment Error Reduction/ Reinvestment plan. Though this plan, DHS is authorized to solicit for revisions/improvements to the Department of Human Services Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rules and regulations. DHS will not contract without FNS funding; FNS shall approve the winning bidder.

SNAP BACKGROUND

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a nutrition program funded and administered by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). SNAP helps low-income residents and families buy the food they need to enhance their health and well-being. Benefits are provided on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Card that is used like an ATM card and accepted at most grocery stores. SNAP benefits are designed for use by participants to purchase eligible foods. The SNAP regulation details the eligibility requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility). The SNAP code of rules, also known as the administrative rule book, can be found on the DHS website (www.dhs.ri.gov/Programs/SNAP_Rules_and_Regulations.pdf). At this time, there is no SNAP procedural manual written in plain language for use as a handbook.

SECTION 3: SCOPE OF WORK

GENERAL SCOPE OF WORK

The vendor shall review DHS' existing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rules and provide an analysis of areas where there may be inconsistencies with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and make recommendations for changes. The vendor will assist with differentiating between what is required to be included in DHS' administrative rules and what should be placed in a SNAP plain language handbook. Additionally, the vendor will explore waiver opportunities and state options to help reduce payment errors. The vendor will then assist with the creation of the administrative rules and SNAP handbook with a focus on the error prone topics, the handbook should be written in plain, understandable language. The vendor will help procure software for a web-based tool to improve the usability and design of the manuals and train DHS Policy Office staff on the use of the web software as well as how to write in plain, understandable language. All software must be pre-approved by DHS, the Rhode Island Department of Administration (DOA) and any other state or federal required entity.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

The vendor must possess extensive experience writing and revising rules for a state or federally funded assistance program such as SNAP, TANF, Medicaid or similar. The vendor should have familiarity with the Code of Federal Regulations and web software tools available to present an easy-to-navigate public-facing manual. The vendor must also have the ability to train current state policy staff on the error prone areas; and on the use of web software. The vendor must train staff on how to write rules in simple, understandable language.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES / TASKS

1. The vendor will complete a thorough review of the current DHS SNAP rules. The rules will be compared with the SNAP federal regulations and inconsistencies should be documented in detail. The vendor will provide written recommendations for corrections and updates. Prior experience with the review of administrative rules and federal regulations is required.

2. The vendor will gather information regarding available waivers and state options for the Supplemental Nutrition Program that would mitigate payment errors and make recommendations to the State.
3. The vendor will analyze DHS' current rules and separate those that must be placed in an administrative rule book from those that should be placed in a handbook. The vendor will assist with the writing and promulgation of the administrative rules and development of the handbook. The vendor will ensure that the handbook is written in plain, understandable language. The handbook must address the error prone areas.
4. The vendor will assist with the procurement of web-based software for a user-friendly, readable and easy-to-navigate public facing administrative rules book and SNAP handbook. The software must be compatible with Microsoft Office and will require pre-approval from DHS, DOA, and any other state or federal required entity. The vendor will assist DHS in obtaining all approvals. Ongoing software costs shall be identified to the Department advance prior to approval.
5. DHS will retain total ownership rights of any materials created, printed and/or reproduced.
6. The vendor will provide training to DHS Staff on the use of the web software as well as how to write further policy/rules in plain, understandable language.
7. At the DHS' request, the vendor will meet with community stakeholders and present the plans for an administrative rule book and SNAP handbook.
8. For at least the first month, the vendor will provide weekly updates on the progress of the activities, request follow-up from DHS, and submit all payments and/or payment activities for the prior week.
9. At minimum, the vendor agrees to meet either in person or through teleconference with the DHS administrative and policy team on a twice-monthly basis to provide updates on the progress of activities.
10. Within the first six weeks of the contract, the vendor will provide a written work plan and schedule to DHS for approval; the work plan must detail the steps for completion of the project.
11. Upon DHS request, additional reports shall be completed and provided by the vendor.
12. Funding Requirements: This project is solely funded by FNS. All bids and contracts are contingent upon federal funding. If federal funding is not provided, DHS will terminate this RFP and/or contract at no cost to the DHS or the State.

SECTION 4: TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

Narrative and format: The separate technical proposal should address specifically each of the required elements. Please format your response by providing corresponding numbers and letters to the lists below (i.e., (2.) Capability, Capacity, and Qualifications of the Vendor: then the bidder's response). The Technical Proposal is limited to thirty (30) pages in a font no smaller than 12 point.

1. Staff Qualifications – Provide critical staff job summaries and qualifications. Highlight the experience of critical staff who will be involved in this project, including their experience in the writing and revising rules for state or federal assistance programs.
2. Capability, Capacity, and Qualifications of the Vendor – Please provide a detailed description of the vendor's experience in writing and revising rules for state or federal assistance programs. An

example of the vendor’s past work is required, specifically a one-page example of a Federal CFR written in plain language. If no prior example exists, a mock-up will be acceptable in its place. The one page example shall be included in the maximum page allotment.

3. Work plan – Please describe in detail, the framework within which the vendor plans on completing all specific activities / tasks listed under Section 3: Scope of Work. At minimum, the following must be included:
 - a. methods used to identify applicable waivers
 - b. methods for reconciling missing or inconsistent information in DHS’s current rules,
 - c. follow-up measures for future changes to the CFR,
 - d. methods used convert CFRs to plain language, and
 - e. the name or names of the software suggested for this project.

4. Approach/Methodology – Define the methodology to be used for the overall project, highlight how you as a vendor is best prepared to complete this project within the time allowed and on budget. Identify the approach for this project so that the funds are used efficiently and used to reduce targeted error prone areas.

SECTION 5: COST PROPOSAL

Using the format provided in Attachment A: Budget Form, provide a proposal for fees charged for the services outlined in this proposal. Please explain the basis and rationale of your fee structure. The budget proposal should reflect an efficient and federally allowable use of the SNAP funds.

SECTION 6: 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 55 (78.6%) out of a maximum of 70 technical points. Any technical proposals scoring less than 55 points will not have the cost component opened and evaluated. The proposal will be dropped from further consideration.

Proposals scoring 55 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 Human Services reserves the exclusive right to select the individual(s) or 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 Points
Staff Qualifications	5 Points
Capability, Capacity, and Qualifications	30 Points
Work plan	20 Points
Approach/Methodology	15 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 7: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Questions concerning this solicitation may be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at david.francis@purchasing.ri.gov no later than the date and time indicated on page one of this solicitation. Please reference **RFP # 7550547** 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# 7550547 SNAP Policy Revision and Handbook**" 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. A completed and signed three-page R.I.V.I.P generated bidder certification cover sheet (included in the original proposal only) downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at www.purchasing.ri.gov.

2. A completed and signed W-9 (included in the original proposal 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. The Technical Proposal is limited to thirty (30) pages in a font no smaller than 12 point.
4. **A separate, signed and sealed Cost Proposal** using Attachment A: Budget Form reflecting the fee structure proposed to complete all of the requirements of this project, see Section 5: Cost Proposal.
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>.

Attachement A

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

BUDGET

NAME OF AGENCY: _____

FEDERAL EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: _____ DUNS #: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/TOWN: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____ FAX: _____

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: _____

TIME OF PERFORMANCE: FROM _____ TO _____

Federally Assigned Indirect Cost Rate: _____

BUDGET SUMMARY

	COST CATEGORY	AMOUNT
1.	PERSONNEL	_____ \$0
2.	CONSULTANT AND SUB CONTRACT SERVICES	_____ \$0
3.	TRAVEL	_____ \$0
4.	SPACE	_____ \$0
5.	SUPPLIES	_____ \$0
6.	EQUIPMENT	_____ \$0
7.	OTHER COSTS*	_____ \$0
	TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED:	_____ \$0

*Other Costs must be pre-approved

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

BUDGET DETAIL

CONSULTANTS & SUB CONTRACT SERVICES	TYPE, NAME, HOURLY RATE, NUMBER OF HOURS, ETC		COST
	Enter on page 1, line 2		CATEGORY TOTAL→
TRAVEL	PURPOSE, RATE, NUMBER OF MILES, ETC		
	Enter on page 1, line 3		CATEGORY TOTAL→
SPACE	DESCRIPTION	COST PER MONTH	COST
			\$0
			\$0
			\$0
			\$0
	Enter on page 1, line 4		CATEGORY TOTAL→
SUPPLIES	DESCRIPTION	COST PER MONTH	COST
			\$0
			\$0
			\$0
			\$0
	Enter on page 1, line 5		CATEGORY TOTAL→
EQUIPMENT	PURCHASE, LEASE, RENTAL		COST
	Enter on page 1, line 6		CATEGORY TOTAL→
OTHER COSTS	DESCRIPTION	COST PER MONTH	COST
			\$0
			\$0
			\$0
			\$0
	Enter on page 1, line 7		CATEGORY TOTAL→