

Department of Administration / Division of Purchases  
One Capitol Hill, Providence, Rhode Island 02908-5855  
Tel: (401) 222-2142 Fax: (401) 222-6387  
Web Site: www.purchasing.state.ri.us

05 March 04

Addendum #2

RFP # B03391

Title: Laboratory Supplies & Equipment

Submission Deadline: 16 March 04 @ 2:00 PM

PLEASE NOTE. There are fourteen (14) pieces of information in this addendum:

1. In the RFP text, under Section IV. COST PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, subsection B. General Instructions On Pricing Grids (page 21), the language "RFP#TBD\_Cost\_Proposal.xls" should be replaced with "RFP#B03391\_Cost\_Proposal.xls."
2. In the RFP text, under section IV. COST PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, subsection C. Contract List Pricing Proposal (page 21), the language "the list of TBD" in the first paragraph shall be replaced with "the list of 304".

#### Questions and Answers from Pre-Bid Conference Held 3 March 2004

3. Question: With regard to the Cost Proposal grids, the current format does not allow for easy importation and manipulation of data due to the protective measures activated with regard to the structure of the MS Excel file. As a result, the grids are lost when attempting to "cut and paste" information from other MS Excel files. Can the state remove these protective measures? If not, can the row heights and column widths be revealed?

*Answer: The issued MS Excel Cost Proposal has protective measures activated to ensure the integrity of the content and structure is maintained. However, in order to assist bidders in the completion of the Cost Proposal, the following column width and row height detailed is provided:*

*Pricing Grid C.1 – Laboratory Supplies & Equipment Contract List*

*Row Height: 13.50 (18 pixels)*

*Column Widths: Column I – 16.43 (120 pixels)*

*Column J – 17.00 (124 pixels)*

*Column K – 14.71 (108 pixels)*

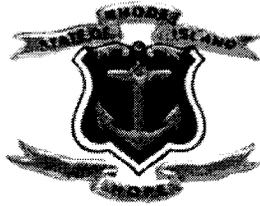
*Column L – 23.00 (166 pixels)*

*Column M – 23.00 (166 pixels)*

*Column N – 10.14 (76 pixels)*

*Column O – 9.57 (72 pixels)*

*Column P – 34.43 (246 pixels)*



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*Column Q – 9.00 (68 pixels)*

*Column R – 10.43 (78 pixels)*

*Column T – 12.43 (92 pixels)*

*Pricing Grid D.1 – Laboratory Supplies & Equipment Substitute List*

*Row Height: 12.75 (17 pixels)*

*Column Widths: Column I – 17.14 (125 pixels)*

*Column J – 16.75 (121 pixels)*

*Column K – 12.57 (93 pixels)*

*Column L – 23.14 (167 pixels)*

*Column M – 14.86 (109 pixels)*

*Column N – 9.57 (72 pixels)*

*Column O – 9.43 (71 pixels)*

*Column P – 26.00 (187 pixels)*

*Column Q – 11.71 (87 pixels)*

*Column R – 13.43 (99 pixels)*

*Pricing Grid E.1 – Laboratory Supplies & Equipment Manufacturer Off-Contract Discount List*

*Row Height: 12.75 (17 pixels)*

*Column Widths: Column B – 39.71 (283 pixels)*

*Column C – 22.71 (164 pixels)*

*Column D – 39.14 (279 pixels)*

*Column E – 32.86 (235 pixels)*

*Column F – 29.43 (211 pixels)*

*Pricing Grid F.1 – Laboratory Supplies & Equipment Off-Contract Category Discount Schedule List*

*Row Height: 12.75 (17 pixels)*

*Column Widths: Column B – 39.71 (283 pixels)*

*Column C – 22.71 (164 pixels)*

*Column D – 49.43 (351 pixels)*

*Column E – 27.14 (195 pixels)*

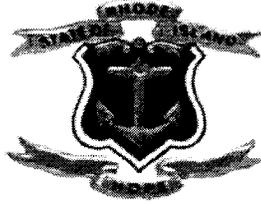
*Pricing Grid G.1 – Incentives, Discounts and Rebates*

*Row Height (except Row 23): 15.75 (21 pixels)*

*Column Widths (except Row 29):*

*Column C – 31.43 (225 pixels)*

*Row 29 (Column B & C) – 69.43 (496 pixels)*



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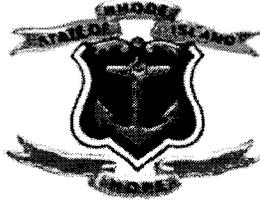
4. Question: With regard to the Cost Proposal pricing grid C.1 – Laboratory Supplies & Equipment Contract List, column Q “Unit List Price,” entries greater than “\$999.99” are displayed with “#” symbols in the cell. As a result, one cannot review the numbers entered in this column after entries are made. Does this result in the actual number not being represented when the pricing grids are printed? If so, can the State offer new MS Excel files with a wider column Q?

*Answer: The issue of “#” symbols being displayed in cells within column Q for entries greater than “\$999.99” can be corrected without adjusting the column width or issuing new pricing grids. On the MS Excel toolbar, the file zoom viewing percentage is defaulted to “75%” upon opening the pricing grids. Adjusting the viewing percentage to a higher number (e.g. “100%”) will alleviate the current issue of entries being replaced with “#” symbols. Regardless of whether the zoom feature is altered, entries should be visible when the pricing grids are printed. For the purpose of reviewing entries in this column or any other columns where existing column widths might prohibit adequate viewing, please adjust the zoom viewing percentage on the toolbar as described above.*

5. Question: With regard to the pricing grid C.1 – Laboratory Supplies & Equipment Contract List, items are requested that contain proprietary manufacturer SKU numbers or descriptions unique to a specific vendor. This circumstance requires all other vendors to enter different SKUs and/or item descriptions than that specifically stated by the State. How are vendors to communicate that their submitted item is identical, but different in name and/or SKU number only? Should these items be entered instead on pricing grid D.1 – Laboratory Supplies & Equipment Substitute List?

*Answer: Please enter exact product matches in pricing grid C.1. If the proprietary SKU number is slightly different from the standard manufacturer SKU number, even though the product is the same, a bidder should still enter a “YES” in column T (“Exact Match”) to indicate that this product is indeed an exact match. In columns J-R, please enter the vendor-specific item information (number and description) as it relates to your firm. For example, a proprietary manufacturer SKU number may have a suffix or prefix that distinguishes it as proprietary, even though the item itself is the same product and thus an exact match. Likewise, a specific vendor may have an agreement with a manufacturer to label their products with a proprietary name that may not be available to other vendors, even though the item itself is the same product and thus an exact match. Please refer to subsection C. Contract List Pricing Proposal of the RFP text (pages 21-22) for further clarification.*

*If the item itself is an altogether different product, yet is considered an equal alternative to the specific SKU presented by the State, please input the alternative item’s SKU number and product description in columns J and M, and mark “NO” in column T (“Exact Match”). In this manner, vendors may differentiate actual exact matches, differing in labeling only, from proposed equal alternatives. Per subsection C. Contract List Pricing Proposal (page 21), equal alternatives should only be submitted in cases where the exact match is not possible. For all instances where an exact*



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*match is not possible and an equal alternative is provided, please cite in an attached addendum the item and an explanation why an exact match is not possible.*

6. Question: With regard to the previous question regarding exact matches and equal alternatives, how does one differentiate between an equal alternative and a lower cost substitute, sought on pricing grid D.1? How does a vendor know an item to be a lower cost substitute without knowledge of his competitors' pricing?

*Answer: As stated in Question 3, exact match items potentially differ only in item description and/or manufacturer SKU, due to proprietary agreements; equal alternatives possess differences beyond labeling/identification issues but are determined by the vendor to possess equal standards and measures of quality as the item listed by the State on the contract list. Per subsection C. Contract List Pricing Proposal (page 21), equal alternatives should only be submitted in cases where the exact match is not possible. A lower cost substitute item is not an equal counterpart to the listed contract item, but instead is determined by the vendor to possess the minimum Rhode Island requirements for the listed contract item. A bidder determines an item to be a lower cost substitute based on its price relative to the bidder's exact match or equal alternative. Knowledge of a competitor's pricing is not necessary to submit lower cost substitutes on pricing grid D.1.*

7. Question: In the past, various agencies have purchased items over \$500 through bids outside of the general Master Price Agreements (MPAs). Will this continue?

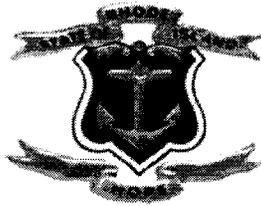
*Answer: Per section C.5 "Contract Users," all Rhode Island state agencies and departments are authorized to utilize the State of Rhode Island's contracting pricing and discounts resulting from this RFP. Furthermore, the State will encourage all agencies and departments to purchase all laboratory supplies and equipment through this RFP's resulting Master Price Agreement(s).*

8. Question: In addition, certain agencies and departments have previously required unique invoicing procedures apart from the processes generally in place with the State. Will this continue?

*Answer: Unique invoicing procedures with certain agencies and departments may continue, and may be addressed during negotiations.*

9. Question: With regard to the use of the term "Off-Contract" on the pricing grids and throughout the RFP text, confusion exists in terms of what is meant. To what does this term refer?

*Answer: For the purpose of this RFP, "On-Contract" items refer to those specific 304 line items provided on pricing grid C.1 – Laboratory Supplies & Equipment Contract List. All other laboratory supplies and equipment items purchased by the State are considered "Off-Contract," and shall be*



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*addressed by the Manufacturer Discounts or the Category Discount Schedules (alternative terminology for this distinction would be "Core" vs. "Non-Core" items). Per Section D. Manufacturer Off-Contract Discount Proposal and Section E. Off-Contract Category Discount Schedule Proposal (pages 22-23), in the event that both a manufacturer discount and a category discount schedule both apply to an item, the supplier shall guarantee the better of the two discounts whenever the Contract Users (as defined in section C.5) shall order said item. The contracting pricing and discounts of the resulting Master Price Agreement shall cover all laboratory items and equipment purchased by the State.*

10. Question: The current Master Price Agreement of the State is set to expire soon. Will the expiration of that Master Price Agreement be extended to account for the gap between the expiration and the implementation of the new Master Price Agreement?

*Answer: Yes. The current Master Price Agreement is set to expire on 31 March 2004. The expiration date will be extended by the State to cover the time between 31 March 2004 and the implementation of the new Master Price Agreement.*

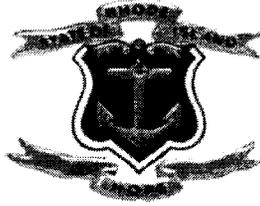
11. Question: With regard to previous questions concerning the formatting and content of the Cost Proposal, will new pricing grids be released? If so, will the current submission deadline be extended?

*Answer: As discussed in Questions 3 and 4, the questions raised with regard to the formatting and content of the Cost Proposal do NOT warrant or necessitate the issue of new pricing grids for the Cost Proposal portion of the RFP. As a result, the current submission deadline of 16 March 2004 will NOT be extended.*

12. Question: With regard to Section IV. COST PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, subsection B. General Instructions on Pricing Grids, the pricing grids are said to be "pre-formatted to provide information either in dollars, rounded to the nearest cent, or percentages" (page 21). Does the State want percentages and dollars entered for all items? How do vendors determine whether to place a percentage or a dollar for items?

*Answer: The instructions in subsection B. General Instructions on Pricing Grids are intended to be only general instructions governing all of the pricing grids, some of which request dollars while others request percentages. Sections C, D and their respective pricing grids require bids in dollar amounts while Sections E, F, G and their respective pricing grids require bids in percentage amounts.*

13. Question: With regard to pricing grid E.1 – Laboratory Supplies & Equipment Manufacturer Off-Contract Discount List, some manufacturers offer a range of potential discounts, dependent on the type of item being purchased. How should these possible multiple manufacturer discounts be illustrated on pricing grid E.1?



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*Answer: With regard to the manufacturer discounts requested on pricing grid E.1, vendors should indicate the range of discounts in cases where a single flat rate does not apply. Further breakdown or clarification of these discount ranges within a manufacturer's products should be indicated either within the vendor's category discount schedule (pricing grid F.1) or on in an addendum attached by the vendor to the rest of their submission.*

14. Question: What is the term of the contract pricing? Does it remain fixed for the duration of the 3-5 year contract?

*Answer: Yes. Per section A.1 Term of Pricing, the contract list pricing will remain fixed for the life of the contract for all items, with the exception of those removed due to annual review or those moved to onto the contract list due to annual review, for the duration of the three-year contract and the two potential one-year extensions. With regard to the definition of contract list pricing, all manufacturer discounts and category discount schedules shall remain fixed for the duration of the contract. The three-year period will begin upon the signing of the contract and expire three years to the day; a similar methodology will be applied for the one-year extensions, if applicable.*

Questions regarding the RFP should be submitted in a Microsoft Word document via email addressed to [questions@purchasing.state.ri.us](mailto:questions@purchasing.state.ri.us).

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerome D. Moynihan".

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