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**Assistive Telecommunications Evaluations Services  
RFP Number 060B8400093  
Pre-Proposal Conference**

Held at:

Telecommunications Access of Maryland  
Baltimore, MD

June 28, 2018

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

*CART CAPTIONING PROVIDED BY:  
Claire Baldi, RPR  
clairebaldi@gmail.com*

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**Assistive Telecommunications Evaluations Services  
RFP Number 060B8400093  
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June 28, 2018**

**Interim Procurement Officer:**

LaShella Miller

**TAM STAFF:**

Brenda Kelly-Frey, Director  
Sabrina Fields

**ATTENDEES:**

Dapheny McCray, DoIT  
Kimberly Becker  
Barbara Welsh  
Mike Bullis  
Janet Parke  
Marsha Legg  
Pattie Tingle  
Lori Markland  
Patricia Foley

**CART CAPTIONER:**

Claire Baldi

>> LaShella Miller: Okay. Good morning, everyone. We're going to go ahead and start today's pre-bid meeting. First of all, I'd like to welcome everyone. I'm LaShella Miller, the interim procurement officer for this contract. We welcome you to today's pre-bid meeting.

I would like to briefly note that this is a preproposal conference, and the summary for today's meeting, along with the sign in sheets, agenda, and all pertinent documentation will be provided and uploaded to e-Maryland marketplace within two days after today.

This conference will be broken down into several parts. General procurement information, proposal submission requirements, discussion of MBE and VSBE goals for this solicitation. Brief discussion regarding the scope of work. And a question and answer period.

Before we really begin, I wanted to give the team of the state employees who are part of this procurement to introduce themselves as well.

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: Good morning everybody, and thank you for coming. My name is Brenda Kelly-Frey, and I'm the director here. The equipment distribution program was my baby. I was the one who wrote the legislation, got it passed, and it became law, and then here we are! Many, many years later. 12 years-ish later.

It has evolved. We gave out just land line phones in the beginning. And we always have had evaluation centers from the very beginning.

My philosophy was, if the state is spending money on equipment for individuals to become independent, we need to make sure they know how to use it and are using it, and not just, well, you're -- you have this disability and therefore this phone, one size fits all. Because my glasses... you can't use. Right?

Everybody has a different ability. And so we set up evaluation center policy, so people come in and get evaluated. They try out the different pieces of equipment with an evaluator. And then they are ordered the proper piece of equipment that we feel is good for them, and the key is "we", the evaluators feel fit their needs. Then we feel more confident that they will use that piece of equipment, rather than having it collect dust on the shelf.

So I'm glad to see you all here, and listen carefully, and we look forward to your proposals!

>> Sabrina Fields: I'm Sabrina Fields, the contract administrator in this office. That's all I have to say.

(Laughter.)

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: And was an evaluator until we stole her away. And now she's a state employee.

>> Dapheny McCray: Hi. I'm Dapheny McCray, with DoIT. I'll be your procurement officer.

>> LaShella Miller: Okay. Okay.

So before we start, I just want to let everyone know you should not rely on the verbal communication or answers given today as a formal response from the State.

If you would like your question addressed in the official question and answer submission, please see page 12 of the RFP and review the submission guidelines.

Please take note and review the key information summary sheet, which is included in the RFP. This sheet has all pertinent contact information, deadlines, time adherences, and it will be updated after July 3rd with the new procurement officer's information. So an amendment will be sent out after July 3rd.

The closing date for the questions to be submitted is June 29th. Tomorrow at 2:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, which is observed by the State of Maryland as local time.

The actual proposals are due Friday, July 23, 2018, at 2:00 p.m.

Your proposal must be received by the State -- to the State on the due date and time specified. This is very important. If your proposal is even late by one minute, we cannot and will not accept it. Requests for extensions will not be granted under any circumstances, no exceptions. So please allow sufficient time for you to prepare the proposals and have them accurate enough for your submission.

It is important to note that DoIT strongly desires submission proposals to be submitted by e-mail. The submission requirements are all listed in Section 5 of the RFP, and e-mails will be provided, my e-mail was listed, and again the amendment will go out with the new e-mail contact information where they'll be submitted for the 23rd.

Per Section 5, all proposals shall be submitted in two separate volumes: Volume I being the technical proposal, and Volume II being the financial proposal.

DoIT can receive e-mails up to 25MB in size. If there's a split submission without there being two separate parts, it will not be accepted. It cannot be a consecutive document. It has to be separated.

Both the technical and financial proposals need to be password-protected, and the instructions, again, for that and how to do it is listed in Section 5.

Please keep in mind the following when preparing your technical proposal: Please identify the solicitation point of contact while the proposal is in the evaluation process. Often it can be difficult to determine who the appropriate point of contact should be, so it is a good idea to always list the solicitation contact on the cover sheet or near the beginning of your proposal.

In addition, the financial volume must contain all price information in the format specified, which is the spreadsheet that was attached with the actual RFP submission.

Finally, both the technical and financial proposal volumes, again, as I stated, must be password protected. As far as it relates to the MBE and VSBE goals, there are none associated with this RFP. Those requirements do not have to be met.

At this time, I would like to -- well, Brenda, you pretty much already gave an introduction. So we're going to go ahead and open up the floor to anyone here who has questions and answers specifically as it relates to the proposal document, submission requirements, or any questions you feel you would like to bring to the floor.

>> Marsha Legg: For the sake of breaking the silence --

(Laughter.)

For the password protection, is any encryption system we're currently using acceptable?

>> LaShella Miller: Yes. For Microsoft Word or PDF, anything listed in the document is acceptable, yes.

>> Mike Bullis: So your solicitation mentions the number of -- the number of evaluations throughout the state. We can reasonably calculate how many that would be in any given region, but I'm wondering if you can give us a better sense of how many of the evaluations are going to be in-house and how many are going to be at the person's location.

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: That's really hard to answer, Mike. We highly encourage individuals to come to our centers. And the reason for that is because even though they disclose the disability on their application form and the doctor attests to it, we have found through experience that there are some disabilities that are just not thought of. And so if we were to take -- let's say it's a hard-of-hearing person, and we take some amplified phones to their house. Say we did that. Well, say we get there and find out they can't hold a handset. Well, we didn't bring that type of equipment with us. So we have to go back again and again, and that's not cost effective for you or us or whatever.

And it's good for their psyche to go to the center. They say, sometimes, I don't have a way to get out. But yet they get to the doctor or the grocery store. So they may not want to bother their neighbor or family member for a raid, but it really helps them to come in. So we really keep the home visits for evaluation purposes at a minimum.

So I can't answer that. It really varies. We try to talk them out of it, let's just say.

Hi, welcome.

>> Barbara Welsh: Good morning.

>> Kimberly Becker: I think Daphne e-mailed you some questions she had. Is that part of the formal submission?

>> LaShella Miller: When we receive that way, it's going to be part of the formal question and answer submission. So it will be uploaded to e-Maryland marketplace and be provided for all of you.

>> Kimberly Becker: Thank you.

>> Mike Bullis: Your proposal mentions that you may pick more than one evaluator per region. In fact, as I sit here now, there are several in region 7, my likely guess is.

Can you -- because it affects the infrastructure costs, that is, the amount of space that needs to be rented has to be sort of built into the price, can you give us a sense of how you'll decide how many vendors you might have in each region?

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: Um, no. There's going to be multiple evaluation centers, unlike the way we currently have it. We have, like, one per region. We've decided to do it differently this time, where we have multiple evaluation centers in the regions, so that it makes it more convenient for our individuals to get to you.

We realize that, you know, some people live in -- and we also realize that where they go for an evaluation may not be the closest to their residence. It may be closest to where their daughter or son lives, or where their ride is. So we want to give them the option of going where it's more convenient.

So it may be a person living in, I don't know, let's say Clarksburg, and yet -- and that's Montgomery County. And they may end up going to Silver Spring for their evaluation in Montgomery County. Because they spend the weekends with their daughter in Silver Spring, and it's easier for the daughter to get them to the Silver Spring one than to get them to a Gaithersburg one.

So it will be given to them, the option of where they would like to go.

But the appointments will be made with the evaluation center.

>> Mike Bullis: To what extent are you receptive to the idea of multiple organizations applying under one application?

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: Explain that a little bit better, Mike.

>> Mike Bullis: Since she's sitting next to me --

(Laughter.)

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: Like you contracting with them?

>> Mike Bullis: Yeah.

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: We're fine with that.

>> Sabrina Fields: Completely open to that.

>> Marsha Legg: So you're suggesting that it may be multiple entities in one evaluation center?

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: Well, that's news to her.

>> Marsha Legg: No, that's awesome. If you're open, I didn't read the openness in the RFP, but if it's an option, obviously --

>> Sabrina Fields: Open to partnerships, contracts, etc.

>> Mike Bullis: You just want to have a primary contractor, right?

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: Right.

>> LaShella Miller: Anyone else?

>> Janet Parke: TEDPA is mentioned in there. Is it required for 2018 to go? Or is it next year? Because it's short notice.

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: Right. Okay. TEDPA, for those of you who may not be familiar with that, it's Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association, TEDPA. They have an annual conference, and this year it happens to be in September sometime in Minnesota, not too far from the Mall of America, if that is of interest to anyone.

But we do give an amount of money annually, and the reason behind that is to encourage the evaluators to go, to see new equipment that's being presented, to learn about the current equipment that's there. Vendors, they have tons and tons and tons of vendors there with their equipment on display, and they're always available to answer your questions. And the answer is, it would be very nice to, yes, have the new evaluation center send a representative to the TEDPA conference.

>> Janet Parke: It's an expensive place to fly into. And Bloomington is an expensive place to stay.

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: I've never -- what is the hotel -- do you know the hotel rates?

>> Sabrina Fields: The rates? Um...

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: Do you remember?

>> Sabrina Fields: I want to say they're around our typical \$130 a night.

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: Our conference rate...

>> Janet Parke: Maybe not last minute, though.

>> Sabrina Fields: Right. So I will say, you know, you're completely correct. It's going to depend on when this is awarded. When we can get started. And all of that. Because it is the first weekend of September. If it were not to be awarded until the last weekend of

August, that obviously would be unreasonable. Not unreasonable, but it would be ideal if the contract has started by then, that the people go.

But, we're reasonable people. There may not be room at the hotel anymore by that point. Who knows? We consider those things?

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: The goal of this is to get this ball rolling, yet give you enough time to read over and send a proposal. So we don't want to -- you know? It's like we shortened the beginning. Then you have a longer time after -- for us to get to the award, and then a contract in place, and then go. Or do we lengthen the beginning so you have plenty of time, and shorten the end? It, you know, it's a no-win situation. But ideally, I would like for the evaluation center -- because that's where they get so much information in one place.

We do provide training here. But it doesn't cover everything and every piece of equipment. We do our best to bring out the samples and stuff like that, talk about each piece of equipment. But that's where you would get it the best. And you couldn't go unless you were an evaluation center anyway, awarded a contract. So it's not something that you could say, oh, well I'm just going to show up at this conference. It's not open. So... Mike.

>> Mike Bullis: Sorry for so many questions.

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: That's okay. That's why we're here.

>> Mike Bullis: Been writing them down for a couple of days.

Your contract, which makes total sense to me, talks about being able to disapprove of employees for criminal background issues, etc. Are there any other circumstances in which you would tell a contractor that they couldn't hire a particular person or needed to not have a particular person working on the project?

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: I can't think of anything. Can you, Sabrina?

>> Sabrina Fields: If you're talking about someone who meets the basic requirements of having the experience or education, outside of an awful performance experience and stating someone can no longer continue --

>> Mike Bullis: But those can be pretty objective.

>> Sabrina Fields: Yeah. But those obviously would be discussed at great length. That would not be a mandated decision up here with no explanation. But other than that, generally, no.

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: Can you think of any?

(Laughter.)

>> Mike Bullis: Well, you could... my only thought is you could have somebody who may understand the technology, but might just be a lousy teacher, if that makes sense. Or in



other words, you see that in the ATE field a lot. Where somebody knows their stuff, but they're so geeky.

(Laughter.)

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: They can't speak English.

(Laughter.)

>> Mike Bullis: So you end up this in uncomfortable situation where someone meets all the requirements, but...

>> Sabrina Fields: That would come back to the performance piece and that would be a conversation with additional remedial steps. Maybe they need additional training here to better understand how to teach people how to use the equipment. But that would be on a case by case basis.

>> Mike Bullis: I have one final question, and then I'm done, I promise. Your contract is a three year contract with two option years. Do I read that right that those option years are yours exclusively? In other words, if you decide that we're going to do a fourth year, then we're obligated to do a fourth year? In other words, it's your... am I reading that correctly or not?

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: You are. That's correct.

>> Mike Bullis: Okay. I just wanted to make sure.

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: You are.

>> Mike Bullis: Okay.

>> LaShella Miller: Any other questions?

>> Barbara Welsh: I'm sorry, I walked in late. There was an emergency outside the building and they weren't letting people in.

I guess I missed the first several points, so forgive me if I'm being redundant. But I have a few questions about the actual application. Has that been covered yet? Or...

In terms of the -- let's see -- is there any reason why the RFP starts with the page numbering starts with number 1, again, in the middle? Did anyone note?

>> Janet Parke: Yeah, that was very tricky.

>> Barbara Welsh: It goes from page 19, to page 1. Is that just a...

>> LaShella Miller: You mean the first part of it?

>> Barbara Welsh: Yeah. It goes up to page 19, and then it starts over again with page 1.

>> Marsha Legg: It's like 4.3.3, and then it starts over.

>> LaShella Miller: That's probably the way the technical writer did the layout by sections. So when we made references to the submission requirements, we referred to it based on the sections instead of the pages.

>> Barbara Welsh: Okay.

>> LaShella Miller: If that's something you want clarified, I would suggest...

>> Barbara Welsh: No. I just didn't know if there was some other reason.

>> LaShella Miller: No. I was just going to suggest if it's something you feel you would want more of a thorough explanation, you could submit that as an actual question, for submission, and we could provide a concrete answer.

>> Barbara Welsh: The next thing is something I ran into trouble with the last application. At one point it said the e-mails needed to be password protected. Then at another point it said you wanted the documents password protected. You want the documents password protected, right?

>> LaShella Miller: Yes. That would be your technical proposal, and then your financial proposal, which is the spreadsheet, the Excel spreadsheet which was provided. Those do need to be password protected.

>> Barbara Welsh: So under 5.2.5A, the technical proposal, it said that all supporting material in Microsoft Word format?

>> LaShella Miller: Yes.

>> Barbara Welsh: We have some supporting material that is not in Word format. So I didn't know --

>> LaShella Miller: Is it a PDF?

>> Barbara Welsh: Yes.

>> LaShella Miller: You can provide that with your attachments, and just, you know, in your submission, introduction, just state what those supplements are.

>> Barbara Welsh: So send them as a separate? Okay.

>> LaShella Miller: Yes.

>> Janet Parke: I didn't understand that before. You said you could only send two documents. Now you're saying...

>> LaShella Miller: She's saying that these documents, if I'm hearing you correctly, they cannot be placed into Word?

>> Janet Parke: Like a 990.

>> Barbara Welsh: Right. Exactly.

>> LaShella Miller: So in terms of those types of documents, we will allow it, because they can't be transposed. So you can utilize that as a second form of submission, or sending them in the PDF format.

>> So it would be one, the technical, one e-mail for technical: The Word document. And the PDFs. All within that e-mail. But they're separate files within that?

>> LaShella Miller: Right. Right.

>> Correct?

>> LaShella Miller: Yes.

>> And then one complete PDF of everything? Okay.

>> Janet Parke: I tried in a previous one to embed the PDFs within the Word document, because you can do that. It is nasty.

(Laughter.)

>> Barbara Welsh: And then we, in the 5.3 description of the technical proposal, it jumps from D... no. I'm mistaken. That's right. It goes from D to -- no, from C, D... okay, okay. No, wait, wait. Tab B to tab C, and then tab E. Is there a tab D? I think this mistake was made in the last RFP as well, where you submitted an amendment with corrected lettering. It looks like the same issue.

>> LaShella Miller: It might be a template issue. Can you submit that as a formal question?

>> Barbara Welsh: Yes.

>> LaShella Miller: Okay.

>> Barbara Welsh: And then the last one, sorry, is on this chart. Oh, no. Those are different things. Sorry. Thank you.

>> LaShella Miller: Any other questions?

>> In the RFP, you reference training the evaluators. What's your anticipated time frame of training, and how frequent?

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: We typically like to call training twice a year, typically it's here.

We have them come and sometimes it's two days, and we cover all expenses.

Food, hotel, whatever, just, you know, if they come from a distance. That would be twice a year, I feel, as a minimum.

If we're introducing a new program or a new -- hugely new product, we may call a third. But advance notice and, of course, coordination with your schedules and their schedules would be given.

>> Sabrina Fields: And we do reference in there that the initial training could be up to five days.

>> Marsha Legg: And not reimbursable, correct?

>> Sabrina Fields: Right. We would cover the expenses like another training, right, but the time itself.

>> LaShella Miller: Any other questions?

Okay. So even though we're going to close this session of the open discussion for question and answer, if by chance you think of any questions after today, feel free to include that as a formal question for submission, and we can incorporate that and provide a proper response.

Before we conclude the meeting, I want you to note four reminders when preparing your responses.

An official, again, response for all questions should be submitted to me in writing via e-mail provided on the key information sheet.

Please follow the RFP instructions and include signed copies of all required documents. Electronic signatures are appropriate for documents which will be submitted with your proposal.

A summary of today's meeting, a list of all attendees, will be posted online, as I stated, within two to three days.

Finally, please be aware that the proposal must be submitted by the date and time specified.

And, again, refer to your key information sheet.

Before we actually end the -- or close out the meeting, I do want to give all of you an opportunity to introduce yourselves and the organizations which you represent for this pre-meeting today. We'll start with Mr. Mike.

(Laughter.)

>> Marsha Legg: Since you've been so quiet.

(Laughter.)

>> Mike Bullis: My name is Mike Bullis, the executive director of the IMAGE Center, center for independent living serving Baltimore City and Baltimore and Harford Counties.

>> Marsha Legg: Marsha Legg from the League for People with Disabilities.

>> Patricia Foley: Trish Foley, director of communication services for Independence Now, the center for independent living serving Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

>> Lori Markland: I'm Lori Markland, Maryland Department of Disabilities Assistive Technology Program, director of Access Maryland, and we serve the entire state as the assistive technology program for the state.

>> Pattie Tingle: Pattie Tingle from MAC Inc, the area agency on aging for Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties on the Eastern Shore.

>> Janet Parke, MAC Inc, doing a little bit of everything, including assistive technology.

>> Barbara Welsh: Barbara Welsh with Easterseals, serving DC and Virginia. I'm the grants manager there.

>> Kim Becker with the Arc Baltimore, filling in for our director of assistive technology, who is in the Outer Banks this week.

>> Brenda Kelly-Frey: Where is she, so we can join her?

(Laughter.)

>> LaShella Miller: Okay. All righty. Okay. Well, that concludes the pre-proposal meeting for the assistive telecommunications evaluation services RFP, number 080B8400093. Thank you all for coming.

Just a quick reminder, make sure everyone has signed the sign in sheet. Feel free to take an agenda in case you need to take it for your records.

(The meeting ended at 10:30 a.m.)