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Summary – Pre-Proposal Conference
Title: Statewide Network Management Services (SNMS)
RFP#: 060B8400023
Pre-Proposal Conference at
7201 Corporate Dr., Hanover MD 21076
DATE: October 20, 2017 @ 2:30 PM EST

The pre-proposal conference began at approximately 2:33 pm EST.

I) Welcome and Introduction:

Sini Jacob, the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) Procurement Officer for this solicitation, welcomed everyone in attendance. Introductions were made by the other State employees in attendance:

David Mangrum – DoIT
Gail Adams – MDOT
Jason Cavey - MDOT
Howard Barr - AAG

II) General Procurement Information:

Ms. Jacob informed the group the purpose of the pre-proposal conference was to give everyone guidance on the State procurement process and to provide an overview of the RFP. She emphasized that today's session was merely for guidance and attendees should not rely on verbal communications for information regarding the RFP. She also advised that questions and comments must be submitted in writing, by email, to the Procurement Officer for a formal response by the questions due date, as listed in the RFP. She then gave an overview of the RFP, highlighting important portions of the solicitation.

She reminded everyone to be sure to review the Key Information Summary Sheet on page 2.

She reminded everyone of the questions due date and that the State estimated answers to be distributed the week of October 30th given the limited number of questions received-to-date.

She also emphasized the due date for this procurement as 2:00 pm on Friday December 1, 2017.

She advised the group to note the proposal due date and allow plenty of time for proposals to arrive. She noted that if the proposal is late, even by one minute, it cannot be accepted.

III) MBE/VSBE Requirements

Ms. Jacob informed the group the RFP has a 25% MBE goal and a 3% VSBE goal. Further, she pointed out the MBE subgoals identified in Section 1.33 of the RFP:

- 7% African-American MBE
- 2% Hispanic-American MBE
- 8% Women-Owned MBE
- Remaining 8% allocable to any MBE

Ms. Jacob then asked if there were any MBEs or VSBEs in attendance and asked them to please identify themselves and their company. Several firms identified themselves, Ms. Jacob thanked them for their attendance, and encouraged everyone to network with these companies after the conference.

IV) Submission Requirements:

Ms. Jacob reviewed the importance of the submission instructions in Section 4 of the RFP and advised the group that proposals must be submitted in two (2) separate volumes, Technical and Financial, both uniquely password protected.

- A. Ms. Jacob directed everyone to Section 4.4 of the RFP which provides guidance on the delivery of proposals. She advised that proposals may be hand delivered, emailed, or sent by private courier, and that regardless of the delivery method, the proposal must be received by the due date. She noted that the State strongly prefers the delivery of proposals by email if possible and to contact her for explicit instructions if choosing to deliver a hard copy.
- B. Ms. Jacob directed everyone to Section 4.4 of the RFP for thorough directions for labeling and requirements of the volumes and the proposal itself.
- C. Regarding actually preparing the proposal, she advised the group to follow the instructions in Section 4.2 of the RFP which describes the exact order that proposals should follow. She advised that following the order as described in Section 4.2 will ensure that a proposal addresses everything that is required and makes it easier for the evaluation team to map responses to the appropriate requirement in the RFP. She also noted the following:
 - a. Page limitations identified in Table 8 in Section 4.2.2.

b. Table that Offerors will need to fill-in and submit listed under Tab E's requirements in Section 4.2.2.6.

- D. Regarding the evaluation of proposals, Ms. Jacob referred everyone to the evaluation criteria in Section 5.2 of the RFP which describes how proposals will be evaluated. She indicated that the criteria are listed in descending order of importance and to keep this in mind when preparing the proposal.
- E. Ms. Jacob advised, when preparing the financial volume, to ensure that it is entirely filled out and signed. She indicated that all fixed prices and labor rates must be clearly entered in dollars and cents and cannot be contingent on any other factors or conditions. She indicated that these rates are the maximum, not-to-exceed rates chargeable during the Contract term. She cautioned that failure to completely fill out the price sheet or to sign the price sheet could deem a proposal not susceptible for award.
- F. Ms. Jacob noted the following tips when creating the technical proposal:
- a. Clearly identify the solicitation point of contact for your proposal and consider listing the solicitation contact on the cover sheet or near the beginning of the proposal in the transmittal letter.
 - b. List the company's profile information in a central location, again, towards the front of the proposal, such as the transmittal letter. Some information to include would be the full company name, address, phone number, federal tax id, eMM #, and the MBE, VSBE or SBR numbers if applicable.
 - c. Lastly, carefully consider the point of contact selected for reference projects as reaching high-level executives is less likely to be successful.

V) **Evaluation Procedure**

Ms. Jacob then reviewed the steps in evaluating proposals:

- G. The Procurement Officer first reviews for responsiveness. During this review, the PO will inspect a proposal for various items. First and foremost, was the proposal submitted on time and with separately sealed volumes? Secondly, did the Offeror include all of the required attachments, and, if so, are they signed? Did the Offeror propose a subcontractor to meet the MBE/VSBE goals? If so, is the subcontractor certified by Maryland as an MBE/VSBE to do the type of work listed in the proposal? All of these things and more are included in the initial evaluation. If one of these items is performed incorrectly in the proposal, then it may result in a determination that the proposal is non-responsive. That means that no further evaluation will take place. Some items can be cured, but most can't; so please be sure to follow the instructions listed in Section 4.
- H. Second is a review of the Offeror's proposal to determine if it meets the minimum qualifications. In this RFP, minimum qualifications are listed in Section 2.1 for the Offeror. Minimum qualifications must be met by the Prime Contractor and not any

subs. All minimum qualifications are pass/fail and each must be passed for the proposal to continue through to the full technical evaluation.

- I. Third is a thorough review of the Offeror's technical volume by the evaluation committee. This is also the stage where the State will invite susceptible offerors to an oral presentation. During this review stage, the evaluation team will be using the evaluation criteria described in Section 5.2 of the RFP to qualitatively evaluate the technical response. The team will capture strengths and weaknesses for each criteria depending on the quality of the proposal, then it will qualitatively rate each criteria. At the conclusion of this stage, the evaluation team will determine a technical ranking with the Offeror ranked #1 having the best technical approach.
- J. Fourth is an analysis of the Offeror's financial volume. Financials are not opened prior to this point of the evaluation process so it is inappropriate to discuss pricing during oral presentations or in the technical volume. This is also the stage of the review where the State may, at its discretion, request a Best and Final Offer. While BAFOs are common, they are not mandatory and should not be expected. At the conclusion of this stage, the Offerors will be ranked financially with the lowest price Offeror being ranked as #1.
- K. The fifth and final is the overall ranking of the Offerors. Section 5.5.3 of the RFP states that technical factors will receive greater weight than financial factors in making the award determination. However, pricing will play a significant role in the overall ranking of proposals. At the conclusion of this stage, the Offeror ranked #1 overall will be recommended for award.

VI) Scope of Work

Dave Mangrum of DoIT provided a brief overview of the intended scope of work, the key changes in this RFP from the last solicitation, and the on-demand services of the scope. Mr. Mangrum highlighted the following:

- a) Section 1.1.1 summarizes the basic scope covered in this solicitation. In general, this solicitation is issued to procure cost effective network management and maintenance services. While not an exhaustive list, some of the more granular services included in the broader description are identified. This section also identifies the role DoIT's networkMaryland plays in supporting agencies and the need for coordination with the vendor supporting that network.
- b) Section 1.1.2 indicates that support of the MDOT Network Program will be the initial work awarded and that work orders issued by the State for additional services are under the scope of the contract.
- a) Section 1.1.3 states that the contract will not be construed to require the State to purchase services exclusively from the Offeror.
- b) Section 1.1.4 indicates there will be a single award.

- c) Section 1.1.5 indicates that, either directly or through subs, Offerors must be able to provide all services and that responsibility remains the Offeror regardless of sub participation.
- d) Section 1.23 identifies Key personnel, two of which must be proposed in your Technical Proposal and four which are to be supplied after the NTP. The Organization Chart provided in your Technical Proposal must reflect all six positions. The remainder of Section 1.23 identifies general and specific substitution provisions.
- e) Section 2.1 provides the minimum requirements for an Offeror to be considered reasonably susceptible for award. In general, we are looking for Offerors who have managed large multi-location networks distributed over a large geographic area which has supported not less than 10,000 FTEs – with all of that being delivered utilizing an ITIL framework. There is also a requirement relative to the establishment and operation of a 24x7x365 network operations center.
- f) Section 2.2 identifies those experiences which are expected when evaluating the technical Proposals of Offerors. I want to state that these are not requirements, but they are experiences that we expect from Offerors who have managed large distributed networks in the past. We also want to point out that an ISO 20000 certification is NOT a minimum requirement, but there is a specific requirement that the organization unit delivering these services must be ISO 20000 certified within two years of the Notice to Proceed. Section 3.3.3 provides more detail as it relates to this requirement as well as timeline, quarterly reporting, and evidentiary requirements. Section 3.3.3 also identifies the liquidated damages of not meeting this requirement.

He then turned the discussion over to Gail Adams of MDOT who discussed the scope of work in regards to MDOT's Capacity Management services. Ms. Adams informed the group to review the Capacity Management task's information regarding the present Service Catalog and that the fixed price portion of the contract is intended to keep the MDOT network running and operational. She also indicated that the fixed pricing includes introducing new technologies to the catalog over time as well. Ms. Adams informed the group that the MDOT Work Order, or Time& Material task use, would be used minimally.

VII) Questions and Answers

At this point, the meeting was opened up to questions. There were many new questions that Ms. Jacob encouraged potential Offerors to submit in writing. She explained that answers to those questions will be distributed as soon as possible. Also, she reminded everyone again that only written answers should be relied upon. For all questions that Offerors wish to receive a formal response, those should be submitted in writing to her via email. Topic areas for questions raised included:



- Request for Primes in the room to identify themselves
- Description of the MDOT Enterprise and how TBUs and the service catalog are organized
- The State's interest in new technologies
- Description of projects applicable under the fixed price task, such as Sustaining Engineering work
- Intended meaning behind Section 3.2.3
- Prime MBE's ability to meet the overall MBE goal
- Inquiry on incumbency
- Information to be provided that drives how Offerors can estimate a price for fixed price work
- Purpose and use of the true-up
- Desired timeframe for past performance examples
- Requests for better estimates of fixed price work/capacity
- Resource sharing limitations
- Advice on resource management for project work
- More specific Lab requirements

VIII) Closing Remarks:

Ms. Jacob concluded the meeting with these reminders:

- a. For an official response, all questions should be submitted to the Procurement Officer in writing.
- b. Please follow the RFP instructions and include signed copies of all required documents.
- c. A summary of today's meeting and a list of all attendees will be posted online as soon as possible.
- d. All proposals must be in to me by the day and time specified. Again, if a proposal is late, even by a minute, it will not be accepted!

IX) The pre-proposal conference adjourned at approximately 4:10 p.m.