

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**  
**RFP 17-013**

**PROGRAM**

1. I wanted to verify if each of the 12 RIC's need to complete these docs. like we did back in 2011 for RFP 10-030 of the Medicaid Grant?

A: Each potential contractor must submit a proposal including the required documents described in Request for Proposal (RFP) 17-013. The deadline for submitting a proposal is March 10, 2017 at 3:00 PM.
2. Do you have any formatting guidelines for the technical proposal (in regards to single- vs. double-spaced, font size, margins, etc.)?

A: Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, and the electronic version submitted must be in Microsoft Word (CD format). There are no formatting guidelines such as single vs. double-spaced, font size, margins, etc.
3. Is there a maximum length for the technical proposal narrative?

A: There is no maximum length for the technical proposal narrative.
4. Can we put the workplan in a chart? And do you have preferred formatting, if we do?

A: There is no preferred format for the workplan which is required as part of the technical proposal. The workplan may be prepared as a chart.
5. We see mention of Appendix D (on pages 26 and 36 of the RFP) as a Program Workplan. Is this to be provided with the application? And if so, can you direct us to where it is available?

A: Pages 26 and 36 of the RFP reference the appendices in the contract resulting from the RFP. Appendix D, the contract's Program Workplan, is prepared by NYSED and contains the RFP's description of the scope of work, as well as the contractor's submitted proposal.
6. Can you we hand deliver our application? Or must we mail via the post office?

A: Proposals may be hand-delivered. All proposals must be received by NYSED by 3:00 PM on March 10, 2017.
7. If we can hand-deliver our application, in the past, we have been required to have a person's name for delivery purposes when we arrived at NYSED. Can you provide a name that we can use?

A: If hand-delivering proposals, please enter through the main (Washington Ave) entrance and ask the security desk to contact Jessica Hartjen at 474-9834.

8. If we must mail, does it need to arrive at NYSED by 3 p.m. on March 10? Or if it's postmarked by March 10, is that sufficient?

A: Proposals must be received by NYSED by 3:00 PM on March 10, 2017. Please allow necessary time for proposals to arrive by the deadline.

9. Page 1 of the RFP states, "The eligible applicants are for-profit and non-profit organizations, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and municipalities." And, "NYSED will award twelve contracts pursuant to this RFP to cover each of the regions identified in Attachment 1..."

- If the BOCES is part of a Regional Information Center, RIC, can or should, the proposal be written from with the RIC framework or the BOCES framework, that is who should be the "submitter" or "offerer" be the RIC or the BOCES?

A: The proposal submitter or offerer should be the legal entity with whom NYSED would contract. In the case described above, the contract would be prepared with the BOCES. The proposal should detail the specific staff and organizational structure relevant to the project.

10. Under Technical Assistance on page 5, "...will refer to DOH inquires related to procedures for NYS MMIS submissions."

- Does this mean ePACES submissions? And/Or, does this include submissions made on behalf of a district by a MSB?

A: The previous contracts for regional support included responsibility for technical assistance to school districts and counties in use of the CNYRIC billing/claiming service. The NYSED-sponsored CNYRIC billing/claiming service is ending effective with the 2016-17 school year, and the technical support function will no longer include support for use of billing/claiming software or systems. A school district or county with questions related to the functions of billing/claiming software or systems, such as ePACES (a NYS Department of Health system) or a Medicaid Service Bureau would be directed to contact the provider of the software or system. The technical support function will not include training school districts or counties on use of billing/claiming software or systems.

11. On page 6 – it states that staffing needs levels are to be less in 2017 – 18 (change in required tasks noted), but what is used to measure the reduction? Is there a suggested method for determining this measurement?

A: The 2016-17 staffing levels are provided as background information to potential bidders. There is no suggested method for determining the staffing a bidder will include in their technical proposal. Bidders should determine the appropriate levels of staff based on the services described, and information provided, in the RFP.

12. In the work plan, when the RFP asks for the “benchmarks used to measure success” – does that mean you want to know the tools we would use to evaluate if we met our measure of success? So for example, are you looking for tracking sheets, surveys, etc. that would show progress on our identified measures of success? Or are you looking for us to benchmark our work against that of other organizations? (And in that case – who should we be benchmarking ourselves against?)

A: The technical proposal’s work plan must include measures of success and benchmarks used to measure success for Items A and B in the Deliverable and/or Project Description Section. The benchmarks identified by the bidder, a point or standard at which the measure of success is evaluated, may be based on performance by the bidder and/or by another external entity . A description of the analysis tools to be used to collect the measures of success, or to compare those measures to the benchmark standard, may be included by the bidder in either the measures of success or benchmarks used to measure success.

13. How will related service providers be trained and who will be responsible for doing that training (contractor, NYSED or DOH)?

A: Related service providers are employed or contracted by the school district or county responsible for delivery of the service to the student. The school district or county is responsible for determining what training is necessary. Technical assistance questions related to the provision and documentation of reimbursable services will be handled by the contractor. The contractor will assist the school district and county in identifying training resources, but will not deliver the Introduction to Medicaid “Medicaid 101” training. The Introduction to SSHSP, or “Medicaid 101” training is available as a resource on the Medicaid-in-Education website.

14. Can RICs join together to provide these services, especially the maintenance of a call center to meet the two business day requirement of responding to emails and phone calls?

A: A proposal submitted by an entity may identify services to be provided by a subcontractor. A proposal for a region must include all required services for that region. Each resulting regional contract will be with a single prime contractor.

15. Will the following services be provided by the Contractor, or will contractors be referring customers to another source for answers/training?

- a. Assistance/Answering questions related to IEP Ratios?
- b. Assistance/Answering questions related to Random Moment Time Studies?
- c. Assistance with affiliation of providers?
- d. Assistance with ETINs?
- e. Will they still be distributing Medicaid Alerts?
- f. In person training for new staff and/or related service providers?

A: The items described in “a.” and “b.” are functions associated with the Certified Public Expenditure cost settlement process, and related questions should be directed to the NYS Department of Health’s contractor, currently Public Consulting Group, Inc. The items described in “c.” and “d.” are functions associated with claim submission through the Medicaid

Management Information System (MMIS), operated by the NYS Department of Health, and related questions should be directed to their contractor, currently CSC/CSRA. The technical assistance to be provided by a contractor will help providers identify support contacts for these functions. The Medicaid Alerts issue important policy and procedure information for the SSHSP. Contractors must be familiar with the Alerts and prepared to answer technical assistance inquiries related to the Alerts, but will not be responsible for distribution. The contractor will provide technical assistance via phone or email, but is not responsible for in person training.

16. What form will the Intro to Medicaid (Medicaid 101) trainings take now that the Contractors are no longer providing those? Who will be providing this training?

A: The Introduction to SSHSP, or “Medicaid 101” training is available as a resource on the Medicaid-in-Education website. Presentation of the training is not part of this RFP. State program staff will develop and present future Introduction to SSHSP training materials.

17. How will the update meetings be provided and what format will be used? Web Ex, Video, In-person Training?

A: Annual update trainings are conducted by State program staff from NYSED and the NYS Department of Health. Trainings have been mostly in-person sessions, with some use of Web Ex. State program staff are expected to continue to present update trainings. This RFP does not include the provision of meeting space or support services for these sessions.

18. Is NYSED going to provide the specific claims to be reviewed in the Documentation Training?

A: NYSED will provide the contractor with the services for which supporting documentation will be reviewed as part of a site visit. Because the site visit is a review of claiming procedures and sample supporting documentation, not a review of any payment which NYS Medicaid may have made under the SSHSP, the items identified for supporting documentation are referred to as services rather than claims.

19. Under the proposed contract, would RICs be responsible for training districts on how to review reports related to billing in these software applications, or is that outside the scope of this contract?

A: The technical support function under this RFP will not include training school districts or counties on use of billing/claiming software or systems.

20. On the bottom of page 13, Section 2 “Submission,” it states:

“Any proprietary material considered confidential by the bidder will specifically be so identified, and the basis for such confidentiality will be specifically set forth in the proposal by submitting the form “Request for Exemption from Disclosure Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law,” located in 5) Submission Documents.”

Is there any information within our submitted proposal that we will not be able to identify as confidential?

A: A bidder may identify any portions of the proposal which it believes fall within the exemptions noted in Public Officers Law §87(2). The bidder has the burden of establishing that the information falls within one of the exemptions. If necessary, NYSED will decide on the applicability of the request in accordance with law. Please see the Request for Exemption from Disclosure form for additional information.

21. How many vendors received this request for RFP?

A: Approximately 40 different entities were individually notified of the issuance of this RFP. In addition, the RFP was advertised in the NYS Contract Reporter.

22. In regards to supervision, what type of oversight is provided by the school system?

A: School districts and counties are responsible for ensuring that services billed to the SSHSP comply with program requirements, including Under the Direction of / Under the Supervision of.

23. How are awarded firms notified of individual needs for providers?

A: The contractor will notify all current and potential SSHSP providers of the availability of technical support, and the procedures for requesting assistance. SSHSP providers are expected to contact the contractor directly. The bid technical proposal should describe the contractor's proposed methods and procedures for provider contacts. In some instances, NYSED or other offices may refer an SSHSP provider's request for technical assistance to the contractor. NYSED will notify the contractor of the SSHSP providers which are selected for site visits.

24. Will NYSED consider the inclusion of these services for multiple regions in the RFP's scope of work?

A: A separate bid must be submitted for each region. A bidder may submit a separate proposal for any or all 12 regions.

25. On accompanying Attachment 1 it lists 95 providers as potential billers. Is it expected that the contractor work with non-billing LEAs/non-participants that are not yet participating in SSHSP?

A: The contractor will notify all current and potential providers of the availability of technical support services. The potential billers are those school districts and counties which were not identified by NYSED as having recent claiming activity under the SSHSP as of October 2016. This information is intended only to assist potential bidders in estimating how many providers are not participating in the SSHSP and may not request technical assistance. Any provider, whether a current or potential biller, may request technical assistance from the contractor.

26. What is rationale for the 20% increase of site visits on page 6?

A: NYSED has determined that site visits are an effective method of providing direct training assistance to school districts and counties participating in the SSHSP.

27. How will NYSED determine the providers who require site visit? What is the anticipated lead time for the selected vendor to schedule and perform site visits based on that determination?

A: As noted in the RFP, NYSED's objective in this contract is to ensure compliance with the SSHSP State Plan Amendment and assist providers in obtaining federal Medicaid reimbursement under the SSHSP. There are many factors which may be used by NYSED in selecting SSHSP providers for site visits. Generally, 2-3 weeks in lead time is the guidance given by NYSED for initiating work after notification of the provider. All required site visits are to be completed during the contract period.

28. Is there a specific reason that Big 5 school districts are not included as part of the Regional Support?

A: NYSED program staff will provide technical assistance to the New York City, Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester and Yonkers school districts.

29. How does the performance of school districts in SSHSP affect the state's satisfaction with selected vendors? How will that be measured?

A: The bidder's technical proposal must include measures of success and benchmarks to be used by the contractor to measure success for the technical assistance and site visit functions. NYSED will review the performance of any contractor based on deliverables in the contract.

## **FISCAL**

30. I noticed that a two year budget summary form does not seem to be included with the cost proposal information. Would you please advise where this form is located?

A: The two year budget summary form is found on the second tab of the "17-013 Cost Proposal Workbook" excel document. This document is posted on the RFP 17-030 section of the NYSED Medicaid-in-Education web page: [http://www.oms.nysed.gov/medicaid/rfp\\_17-013/](http://www.oms.nysed.gov/medicaid/rfp_17-013/).

31. Do you want a budget narrative?

A: Yes.

32. Do the first and second year budgets need to be for the same amount? Or can year 2 be larger, such as to accommodate negotiated salary increases?

A: The first and second year budgets do not need to be for the same amount. Negotiated salary increases and all other anticipated cost changes should be factored into the budget. The Financial Criteria portion of the RFP will be scored based upon the grand total of the 2 year budget summary.

33. How will the size of future budgets (if we're given a one-year extension) be determined? For example, will they be limited to the size of our proposed year 2 budget? Or year 1 budget?

A: A bid proposal will include a budget for year 1 and year 2. Future extensions are subject to successful negotiation of costs (among factors listed on page 8 of the RFP). The scope of any extension period is expected to be comparable to years 1 and 2, so cost increases are anticipated to be minimal.

34. Are there any restrictions or guidelines on the distribution of grant funds over the two years of the grant-funded period? For instance, should districts aim for roughly equal distribution?

A: Contract deliverables are the same for both years of the contract. Contractors will submit quarterly vouchers to NYSED detailing the actual costs incurred during each quarter of the contract.

35. Are there any ineligible expenses?

A: All expenses must be reasonable and necessary for the project. Please keep in mind that this is a "best value competitive procurement" with 30 percent of the total available points awarded based on cost, with lowest cost proposals receiving the highest score. For additional guidelines, please see the Technical Assistance Center Certification found in the Submission Documents.

36. I have a question regarding a notation under "Financial Criteria" which states "NYSED reserves the right to request best and final offers. In the event NYSED exercises this right, all bidders that meet the minimum technical score will be asked to provide a best and final offer. The Contract Administration Unit will recalculate the financial score." As we always try to be fiscally responsible when preparing our budgets and attempt not to budget for more than we need, what are we expected to do if we are asked for our best and final and do not feel comfortable reducing any of our budget categories for fear of running short of funds. Can the "best and final" be resubmitted with no decrease in the bottom line if we feel we have allocated funds correctly?

A: If NYSED chooses to request best and final offers from bidders within a given regional competition, all bidders within the region that met the minimum technical score will be given the opportunity to submit a best and final offer. Bidders are not required to submit a lower price. The final cost score will be calculated using the best and final offer prices, or the original price submission for bidders that elect not to submit a best and final offer.

37. We are looking for more information about the Project Manager and his or her role/responsibilities. Should this be the only administrative/supervisory person on the budget?

A: The project manager will serve as the central point of contact for NYSED program staff, including responsibility for submission of deliverables to NYSED. These deliverables are described in the RFP. The bidder's proposal must include information in the technical proposal's Experience/Organization and Workplan sections describing the proposed staffing. One person will serve as the Project Manager, but others may perform administrative or supervisory functions.

38. Is it allowable to include the Project Manager and that person's immediate supervisor in the budget, if the immediate supervisor is overseeing the program's budget?

A: Bidders should include only staff in the salary line who will be working directly on the contract (including a Project Manager). Bidders may budget for indirect costs.

39. Can you tell me where to find the "Bid Form Cost Proposal" as referenced as item C-1 on the application check list? (Cost Proposal Package, Bid Form Cost Proposal)

A: The Bid Form Cost Proposal, listed as item C-1 on the checklist, is the Year 1 Budget Detail. The form is found on the first tab of the "17-013 Cost Proposal Workbook" excel document. This document is posted on the RFP 17-030 section of the NYSED Medicaid-in-Education web page: [http://www.oms.nysed.gov/medicaid/rfp\\_17-013/](http://www.oms.nysed.gov/medicaid/rfp_17-013/).

40. What is the current salary range for all SSHSP Providers by type? How many days of vacation and sick time do they receive?

A: It is not clear what is meant by Providers – school districts/counties, which are called Providers in the RFP, or current SSHSP Regional Support providers. In both cases, individual salaries vary across the state, and NYSED does not routinely release salary-level information as part of the RFP process.

41. What was the rate per hour you were billed in the past for the services being requested?

A: The current contracts for Regional Support for the SSHSP are not billed to NYSED based on an hourly rate. Each contractor submitted an annual budget for all services to be performed under the workplan. The budgets were not broken down to detail the proposed cost for each different service in the workplan.

42. Has NYSED determined total budget for technical assistance vendors?

A: NYSED is not providing a total budget for technical assistance vendors. Bidders will propose budgets based on the services described in the RFP. Please note that all proposed expenses must be reasonable and necessary for the project. Keep in mind that this is a "best value competitive procurement" with 30 percent of the total available points awarded based on cost, with lowest cost proposals receiving the highest score.

43. What is the preferred fee structure to the selected contractor?

A: Contractors will be reimbursed quarterly based on actual expenses. All anticipated expenses are to be included in the submitted cost proposal.

## **MWBE**

44. Do we need a waiver if we have 10% of our budget going to an WBE, but 0% to a MBE?

A: No, a justification explaining the change in percentages would be sufficient.

45. Are there any exclusions from the 10% M/WBE requirement – i.e. is it 10% of the full budget excluding salaries and benefits?

A: The percentage is applied to the total amount of the contract. The M/WBE Unit is available to assist bidders in meeting participation goals and can be reached at [MWBE@nysed.gov](mailto:MWBE@nysed.gov).

46. Is the 10% M/WBE required over the two years of the grant – i.e., can we spend 10% of the two-year budget on M/WBE. In other words, could we spend 20% of the budget in year 2 on M/WBE, but 0% in year 1, and meet the requirement?

A: The MWBE percentage is based on the total contract amount. The vendor must include detailed information on how this will be achieved.

47. Do we need to include M/WBE expenses in every budget?

A: Please see Question #45 and Question #46.

48. All purchases of our BOCES are subject to the provisions of General Municipal Law Sections 103, which stipulates that purchases of commodities, on which the BOCES spends in excess of \$20,000 annually, must be procured through BOCES bid, NYS contract, or other viable government contract. BOCES does not have a discretionary spending threshold for M/WBE purchases. In the grant application, BOCES will specify the items for which funding is requested, along with the anticipated M/WBE vendors of those products, with the greatest degree of accuracy possible. However, in instances where an item is not available on an already-established contract through an M/WBE vendor, it may become necessary to go through the competitive bid process, which cannot be undertaken prior to the grant award due to the uncertainty of funding.

A: It is up to each bidder to determine how they will structure their proposal. M/WBE participation includes any labor, services, supplies, materials and/or equipment purchased from New York State certified minority and women-owned firms. The MWBE Coordinator is available throughout the application and procurement process and can be reached at [MWBE@nysed.gov](mailto:MWBE@nysed.gov).

A similar situation may arise in multi-year grant awards, when purchases are planned from a specified M/WBE vendor's NYS or other contract. If the contract in question expires during the grant period, it may become necessary to issue a bid for the commodity, or to seek an alternate contract which can meet the M/WBE purchase requirement.

A: Any change to an approved contract must first be approved by SED. If the change impacts M/WBE then it must be approved by the M/WBE Unit. Please contact MWBE@nysed.gov on guidance how to handle this situation should it arise.

How is the grant recipient required to handle these situations? Including, is it okay if we have to change M/WBEs during grant implementation, if a competitive bid process after receiving the award dictates we use a different M/WBE than listed in our application?

A: A request to change M/WBE firms approved in contract must first be approved by the M/WBE Unit prior to competitive bid process. Please contact MWBE@nysed.gov on guidance how to handle this situation should it arise.

49. We have concerns about the requirement to use M/WBE and the encouragement to use SDVOB. As the RFP is currently written, we will have very few costs that are not personnel and travel costs, which will leave us very little ability to meet these requirements. Do you have any suggestions?

A: It is up to each bidder to determine how they will structure their proposal and document their Good Faith Efforts. M/WBE participation goals of 10% includes any labor, services, supplies, materials and/or equipment purchased from New York State certified minority and women-owned firms. The MWBE Coordinator is available to assist in meeting goals and can be reached at MWBE@nysed.gov.

50. In regard to the specification for the M/WBE on the Medicaid RFP, it is stated that we are required to meet an overall goal of 10% of the **total amount** of the contract – 5% for MBE and 5% for WBE's. What happens if this amount is above what we are asking for supplies? The M/WBE amount in the previous contract was based on **non-personal services**.

A: The MWBE percentage is based on the total contract amount. M/WBE participation goals of 10% includes any labor, services, supplies, materials and/or equipment purchased from New York State certified minority and women-owned firms. Good Faith Efforts (Form 105) documentation copies are required for any percentage less than 10%. The M/WBE Coordinator is available to assist bidders and can be reached at MWBE@nysed.gov.

51. The current grant we have, we have been purchasing from two suppliers. I just checked the web site to confirm both are Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises. We would like to continue purchasing the needed computer and office supplies along with infrastructure items that support videoconferencing and customer support.

1. It looks like I need to complete the M/WOB form indicating the companies we intend to work with and what they will be providing to us, correct?

A: Yes.

2. It looks like there is a portion of the form that we need to have a company representative complete, sign and send back to us to submit with the RFP, correct?

A: Yes.

3. How would I determine the amount for supplies and materials?

A: This would be based on the budget in your proposal.

4. Is it recommendation I obtain quotes for the items we hope to purchase to determine this number?

A: It is up to each bidder to determine how they will structure their proposal and budget anticipated costs.