

Emergency Call Center RFP
0901150403
Questions and Answers

Question: IV. (Project Specifications) A. page 2. When does the 4 hour ramp window begin? (ex. Initial notification or when the NYSDH provides final script information)?

Answer: The contractor must have the capability to ramp-up call center operation to fully operational status within four hours after the Department provides the contractor with the Department's "Questions and Answer" script and data collection form for use by call center operators. This means that the contractor must have the facility, technology, and staffing in place to start taking calls within four hours after receiving the Department's "Question and Answer" script and data collection form. The Department will attempt to provide more than four hours, if possible, as the Department prepares to respond to an event.

Question: IV. (Project Specifications) C. 1. (g) page 4. Can you provide a breakdown of expected volume by language (English, Spanish & any others)?

Answer: The expected volume of calls by language cannot be estimated. The volume of calls is influenced by the specific characteristics of each outbreak such as the number of individuals potentially exposed, the perceived significance of the event by the general public, geographic area of the state impacted and the corresponding population density. These characteristics vary from event to event and cannot be estimated.

Question: Will there be multiple numbers for different languages?

Answer: The plan is to release one "800" number and provide the caller with the option to press "1" for English, "2" for Spanish, etc.

Question: IV. (Project Specifications) C. 4. Page 5. Will the NYSDH provide an application for the agent desktop, or will the vendor be expected to provide a desktop application for agent use in processing these calls?

Answer: The contractor is responsible for providing the application to be used by call center staff.

Question: How long after the contract award does NYSDH expect this program to go live?

Answer: The Department expects that an awardee will have all of the requirements in place to be able to respond to an emergency four hours after the Department provides the contractor with the Department's "Questions and Answer" script and data collection form for use by call center operators. The Department cannot predict when the next public health emergency will occur that will require call center services since the contract is for an as needed, per event response. If it were to occur immediately after the contract is executed, the contractor must be prepared to respond four hours after receipt of the aforementioned script and data collection form.

Question: What carrier will control the transport for all inbound numbers utilized by this program?

Answer: Unclear what the question means. Inbound calls to the call center will be made directly by the general public.

Question: Who will be COR (Customer of Record) for all inbound numbers utilized by this program?

Answer: The New York State Department of Health.

Question: Section V.C.3. Section 2: Cost Worksheet, Page 13 – First paragraph, second sentence states; The Cost Proposal Worksheet (Attachment J) must be completed. Attachment J is identified as Vendor Responsibility Attestation; please clarify attachment. Attachment J is also identified at top of page 13, Transmittal Letter, Section 2 and Section VIII. Attachments, page 25.

Answer: Errors were made in referencing the correct letter of the attachment. The title of the attachment is correct. Note that the following letters correspond to the correct attachment:

- Attachment J is the Vendor Responsibility Attestation
- Attachment L is the Cost Proposal Worksheet

Question: Section VI.H. Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire, Page 20 – Last sentence Bidders must complete and submit the Vendor Responsibility Attestation (Attachment I). Attachment I is identified as State Consultant Services FORM B; please clarify attachment. Attachment I is also identified in Section VIII. Attachments, page 25.

Answer: Errors were made in referencing the correct letter of the attachment. The title of the attachment is correct. Note that the following letters correspond to the correct attachment:

- Attachment J is the Vendor Responsibility Attestation
- Attachment I is the State Consultant Services Form B, Contractor's Annual Employment Report

Question: Section VI.I. State Consultant Services Reporting, Page 20 – Last paragraph; Both of these forms are included as attachments of this document (Attachment G and Attachment H, respectively). Attachment G is identified as New York State Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire For-Profit Business Entity and Attachment H is identified as State Consultant Services FORM A; please clarify attachments. Attachment G and H are also identified in Section VIII. Attachments, page 25.

Answer: Errors were made in referencing the correct letter of the attachment. The title of the attachment is correct. Note that the following letters correspond to the correct attachment:

- Attachment H is the State Consultant Services Form A, Contractor's Planned Employment from Contract Start Date through End of Contract Term

- Attachment I is the State Consultant Services Form B, Contractor's Annual Employment Report

Question: Section IV.C.1. Accessibility and Staffing. b, Page 3 – Do the “Question and Answer” scripts and data collection forms to be used by call center operations currently exist? If so, how many scripts will there be and what is the average number of pages or number of Questions and Answers. If they do not exist, will they be created before a potential health emergency or will it be part of the 4 hour ramp up process during an event?

Answer: Certain Question and Answer scripts have been written in response to previous emergencies. These scripts need to be modified based on important characteristics of a given emergency, including specific populations or geographic area of the state impacted, for example. Scripts for other emergencies will be drafted in response to the event since it is not possible to anticipate and draft scripts for every type of emergency. There is no average number of Questions and Answers or number of pages since it is emergency specific.

The Department expects that the awardees will have all of the requirements in place to be able to respond to an emergency four hours after the Department provides the contractor with the Department's “Questions and Answer” script and data collection form for use by call center operators.

Question: Section IV. Project Specifications, Page 2 - There is no mention of testing of any kind of the call center operations with the Department of Health in the section. Should the vendors assume that no testing will be done before an event occurs or done periodically as part of an emergency readiness measure?

Answer: The contractor is required to have a written internal quality assurance plan for the monitoring and improving of call center services, which includes training and supervision of staff, ongoing performance assessment of the quality of information provided to callers, and follow up on identified issues. The Department does not plan to test call center operations unless issues arise with the contractor's performance.

Question: Would the Department of Health consider alternative solutions and proposal if it would potentially be more cost effective and provide better service to the State of New York during a public health emergency?

Answer: All bidders are required to respond to the requirements detailed in the RFP. If a bidder wishes to propose additional services beyond those detailed in the RFP, they may do so.

Question: Section V.C.3. Section 2: Cost Worksheet. b, Page 13. Would the department of Health consider adding a start-up fee to the Cost Worksheet to be used by the vendor for initial systems and operations setup outside of per event start-up fee? This would allow for testing of the system and defining processes and operational to be used during an emergency.

Answer: The Cost Proposal Worksheet allows for additional fees. They are to be listed under “Other Fees (please specify type)”.

Question: What is the data structure will FAQ be provided?

Answer: We assume by FAQ (Frequently Asked Question) you mean the “Question and Answer” script. The script will be provided as a Word document to the contractor.

Question: If Contractor builds a SQL driven website, would NY State Dept. of Health require direct access to the website for real-time updates and changes?

Answer: The Department does not currently plan to directly access the contractor’s website to update or change information. Any updates or modifications to the “Question and Answer” script or data collection form will be sent to the contractor for the contractor to make the requested changes, alert and, if necessary, provide additional training to staff.

Question: Sec. IV, C, 1D - Does this section mean the call center needs to be located within New York State?

Answer: No. The call center does not physically need to be located in New York State. The call center must be accessible, however, to all persons throughout the state and have the capability to answer calls from other states and countries.

Question: Sec. IV, C, 1E - Will the Toll Free number be assigned by the Health Dept.?

Answer: Yes. The Department will direct a toll free number assigned to the Department to the contractor for use during the emergency.

Question: Sec. IV, C, 3B- On what time period is the average wait time calculated?

Answer: The time a caller waits after dialing the toll-free number and is connected to a live operator or interactive voice response (if approved by the Department for response to a specific emergency).

Question: Appendix D, Sec. M, 4 - Is a Y2K solution still required?

Answer: Yes

Question: Attachment L - How is this to be calculated? Does the bidder need to estimate the number and call duration of events to generate a price estimate?

Answer: The prices charged by the contractor should be listed based on the fee attached to each service. A multiplier is not needed. For instance, the price, if any, for a “per minute routing fee” should be listed. If the cost would increase over the 5 years of the contract, the price increase in each year should be displayed.

Question: You average anywhere from 600-10,000 calls a month. My question is what number of reps would you like available during these non-emergency times?

Answer: The number of operators a contractor needs to have available depends on the nature of the emergency which cannot be predicted. The contractor must have sufficient staff to adjust the number of staff at the call center to accommodate all call

volume fluctuations, including the potential to accommodate call volume for the entire state, and coordinate with other call center and services, as needed.

Once the emergency is over, the Department will determine when to “turn-off” the call center. No operators are needed to be available once it is “turned-off”. The contractor is not expected to respond to calls after the call center has been deactivated until the next emergency occurs and the call center is reactivated at the request of the Department.

Question: I am with a minority firm that interested in RFP No.0901150403. Due to your requirement of a 1m credit letter it will restrict us from bidding. Consequently the only option for us is that we seek a teaming relationship with a prime contractor. Will you provide me with the name of the current contractor and those who will bid on the "Emergency Call Center Services" RFP?

Answer: The Department does not release the information requested.