New York State Department of Health

Request for Proposals RFP #20072
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children
Management Information System and Mobile Applications
Maintenance and Operations Services

Questions and Answers Document

June 16, 2022

RFP Section 4.0, Scope of Work

1. Is it also expected form vendor to fix defects in the NYWIC application seven modules (Administrative, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, Clinic, Finance, Investigations, State Office, and Vendor)? Will you provide required documents, training along with code?

   Answer: Yes, as stated in RFP Section 4.0, the Contractor shall work with NYS WIC and NYS ITS to ensure operational integrity through maintenance and operation activities throughout the length of the contract for NYWIC and all Mobile Applications. Support includes updates, patches and repairs, defect resolution, software upgrades, operating system updates, mobile hardware releases, technical support, and program configuration changes needed to stay current with program policy updates during the term of the contract. Required documentation and code will be provided.

RFP Section 4.1.3, NYWIC Maintenance and Operation Requirements

2. You have indicated that production servers and connectivity will be managed by NY ITS and vendor will be responsible for managing development and test environment. Would you like vendor to provide the hosting environment and required infrastructure for development/testing or vendor can use NYS Data Center and provide managed services for the same?

   Answer: As stated in RFP Section 4.1.3.1 "The Contractor will host and manage a NYWIC Development environment (See Exhibit V, NYWIC Database Schema Tables.)" This includes the hosting environment and required infrastructure for development and testing. The NYS Data Center will not be used for this purpose.

3. Is vendor responsible for hardware purchase for server, client machine, peripherals and mobile hardware as well? We understand the production environment and networking will be managed by NY ITS. If vendor has to host staging/development environment that will provide cost for same based on response to question above.

   Answer: The Contractor is not responsible for the hardware purchase for servers, client machines, peripherals, and mobile hardware for the Production, Training, and User Acceptance Testing environments. The Contractor is not responsible for the purchase of end user machines, peripherals or mobile hardware.

   The Contractor is responsible for hosting and managing a NYWIC Development Environment and development environments for the mobile applications. This includes the hardware purchase for servers, client machines, and mobile hardware necessary for the development environments. Peripheral equipment will be sent to the Contractor for their own testing station. See RFP Sections 4.1.3.1, 4.2.3.1, 4.3.3.1, and 4.4.3.1.

4. What is the size of the current MIS Application (number of screens in the application, number of webservices and interfaces being deployed etc.)?

   Answer: The NYWIC MIS application contains about 600 unique .aspx files and 8 application services. Please refer to RFP Exhibits I and II for additional information.

5. What inventory management system is in due to document and manage the hardware and software of the NYWIC environments?

   Answer: SharePoint

6. "The Contractor will assist NYS WIC in maintaining documentation of the hardware and software components of the NYWIC environments including Production, Training, UAT, as well as peripheral equipment (e.g.: signature pads, scanners, and WIC EBT card readers)." What type of privileges does the contractor get in all the environments to monitor the error logs that are produced by the application to investigate issues and provide support for a resolution?

   Answer: The Contractor will be provided access to a Splunk data repository hosted by New York State, which consumes all error logs produced by the Applications. Please refer to RFP Exhibit II.

7. "The Contractor will deliver updates, fixes, and associated documentation in four (4) releases per year, with patches deployed as needed. The four (4) releases are scheduled for production deployments quarterly." Is the contractor responsible for full OS, database and application updates and fixes on a regular quarterly basis?

   Answer: Oracle and operating system patches are deployed and tested within the NYS Data Center by NYS ITS. Refer to RFP Section 4.6, Division of Responsibilities for additional information.

8. Is there any issue tracking tool being currently used to log and monitor issues?

   Answer: Yes

9. How is the existing system's documentation maintained? Is there a documentation library in place? What software is used to update and maintain system documentation?

   Answer: Documentation is maintained on SharePoint using Microsoft Word.

10. Does the State want bidders to propose costs for the potential WUMEI updates or EBT contractor changes as part of the fixed price on the NYWIC column in the pricing template, or will significant changes to the EBT interface be accomplished via a future Change Request?

Answer: Significant changes to the EBT interface will be accomplished via a System Change Request.

RFP Section 4.2.2, WIC2Go Users/User Interface

11. What is the maximum number of concurrent users being recorded using the WIC2Go application?

Answer: There are approximately 462,000 WIC2Go user accounts. There is no limitation to the number of users that can be concurrently using the application. At peak, there are typically about 35 concurrent users.

12. Can the contractor host the development environment at its own premises?

Answer: Yes

13. Will agency allow to build the development environment from its current production instance?
Answer: Yes

RFP Section 4.2.3, WIC2Go Maintenance and Operation Requirements

14. "NYS ITS hosts, maintains, and supports the WIC2Go Mobile App web servers for the Production, and UAT environments."

   a. Is there any training environment being in use?

Answer: No

   b. If yes, does NYS ITS host this environment or will the contractor need to host and manage it along with Development environment?

Answer: Not applicable

RFP Section 4.3, CARA Mobile Application

15. About the application NYWIC, CARA – How is it currently managed? Is it vendor managed? If yes, what is the current team size supporting this application? This will help us in understanding the size and scope of the application as well as the team size required to support this initiative.

Answer: Yes, the application is vendor managed. The current vendor does not have specific staff identified on a staff plan. The bidder, not NYS WIC, will have to determine the team size. Refer to RFP Section 4.3.3 CARA Maintenance and Operation Requirements.

RFP Section 4.5.1, Supplementary Remote Support Requirements

16. Service Desk hours of operations- the listed hours are 8AM - 7PM EST.
   a. Is there adequate staff allowed to cover 2 shifts of call takers?
   b. Does that include a supervisor?

Answer: The Contractor is required to have key personnel to fulfill, at a minimum the Help Desk Manager position and Help Desk Staff as stated in RFP Section 4.7.

17. "The Contractor will provide Help Desk (HD) services to support NYWIC users experiencing issues with certifying or issuing benefits for participants." Is the scope really this limited? No password resets or general application questions/assistance? Transfers/redirects?

Answer: Yes, the New York State NYWIC Help Desk will receive and triage calls to program staff or the Contractor Help Desk. The Contractor Help Desk is not responsible for password resets and general application questions/assistance. The Contractor's Help Desk services are limited to supporting NYWIC users experiencing issues with certifying or issuing benefits for participants.

18. How many simultaneous bugs are there typically? How many of the apps typically have bugs at the same time?

Answer: The number of simultaneous bugs varies. Typically, there are 10 simultaneous bugs per month.

19. Will the NYWIC Help Desk be fielding the basic questions like on how to use the apps, themselves?

Answer: No, the New York State WIC's NYWIC Help Desk fields basic questions.

20. Will NYS ITS will provide the level-1 support for NYWIC and Mobile users?

Answer: No, the New York State WIC's NYWIC Help Desk provides this support.

21. How are priority 1 and 2 tickets defined? Does this include password resets, new staff on boarding, termination of staff form system, etc.

Answer: As stated in RFP Section 4.5.1 (4a) Priority 1 and 2 tickets are defined as Incidents with Service Level Agreements set as Priority 1: 2 hours and Priority 2: 4 hours (see RFP Section 4.5.1 [4a]). The Contractor Help Desk is not responsible for password resets, new staff on boarding or termination of staff from system.

22. The priority 1 & 2 support expected to be 24*7?

Answer: Help Desk staff will be available from 8am-7pm Eastern time, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. See RFP Section 4.5.1 (3a) Hours of Support.

23. Is the "response time" calculated by 24-hour clock, or business hours/days?

Answer: Response time is calculated by business hours with the business hour count rolling to the next business day when applicable. See RFP Section 4.5.1 (3a) Hours of Support and RFP Section 4.5.1 (4a) Issue Tracking and Resolution.

24. How many of the 150-200 tickets result in code fixes on average?

Answer: Approximately 5 per month.

25. How many tickets on an average do you get for priority 1 and 2?

Answer: Monthly average is 150-200. Approximately 5 priority 1 and 2 tickets daily.

26. Is test/staging environment, client machines, devices and mobile devices are currently managed by inhouse team or by an external vendor? In scope section you have mentioned that vendor must support and ensure client machine, peripherals and mobile devices are up and running. In the Responsibility Matrix the responsibility is not clear even though it says that production environment and networking is NYS ITS responsibility. For client machine, devices, and mobile devices we understand that vendor has to manage the required documentation and provide remote support for supporting system upgrade.

    Answer: NYS WIC has testing equipment set up including peripheral equipment (e.g., signature pads, scanners, and WIC EBT card readers). Peripheral equipment will be sent to the Contractor for their own testing station. The Contractor will provide technical support for issues with equipment (e.g., signature pads, scanners, and EBT card readers). In regard to scope of maintenance and operations requirements of NYWIC application and the mobile applications, the Contractor must ensure the applications are fully functional in all environments.

RFP Section 4.10, System Changes and Documentation

27. Is there any dedicated NYSDOH staff to test the code fixes deployed in the UAT instance?

    Answer: Yes

RFP Section 4.11, Information Technology

28. "The application database is hosted on high availability Oracle servers using active-active Data Guard replication and replicated in real-time to database servers at the Disaster Recovery site." What are the current versions of oracle databases and is the Data Guard replication ACTIVE-ACTIVE or ACTIVE-PASSIVE "?

    Answer: Oracle 19c is the current Oracle database version. The Data Guard replication is ACTIVE-ACTIVE.

29. "The NYWIC mobile applications access the same production Oracle servers as the NYWIC MIS. The mobile application services also interface with the WIC EBT Contractor's web services via Akana and site-to-site VPN tunnel." What are the Oracle database hardware details like OS, CPU Cores and Memory for Production/UAT?

    Answer: See RFP Exhibit II.

30. How many reports are expected from the system? Would the State be able to provide a rough number of such reports?

    Answer: The application uses SQL Server Reporting Services for creating ad-hoc reports within the MIS. These reporting databases are hosted on a high-availability pair of MSSQL servers. Canned reports are available for NYWIC users to run based on account role permissions. There are approximately 100 reports available in the system.

General Questions

31. Why is the department looking to change the maintenance and operation services from the existing vendor?

    Answer: The current contract is ending. New York State is required to conduct a competitive procurement to continue the services provided.

32. What are the pain points in the current application maintenance, the department is facing in this initiative?

    Answer: The awarded Contractor is required to meet the deliverables as outlined in this RFP.

33. Will the Contractor team be required to use state-issued laptops? If not, will the State provide secure VPN (or equivalent) access?

    Answer: The Contractor's team will not be issued state equipment. The State will provide secure access to DOH resources, as needed.

34. Will the State provide additional software licenses if required?

    Answer: Software licenses needed to support the application(s) will be provided by NYSDOH (ex: Dynamsoft for scanning functionality). Licenses needed for software development or project management are the responsibility of the Contractor.

35. Can you please explain expectation for client machines, peripherals and mobile devices from the vendor?

    Answer: The contractor is not responsible for client machines or personal mobile devices. The Contractor will provide technical support for issues with peripheral equipment associated with the NYWIC application (e.g. signature pads, scanners and EBT card readers). The Contractor will assist NYS WIC in maintaining documentation of the hardware and software components for peripheral equipment.

36. Are you expecting vendor to apply patches and upgrades for client machines, peripherals, and mobile devices?

    Answer: The contractor is not responsible for client machines or personal mobile devices. The Contractor will provide technical support for issues with peripheral equipment associated with the NYWIC application (e.g., signature pads, scanners and EBT card readers). The Contractor will assist NYS WIC in maintaining documentation of the hardware and software components for peripheral equipment. The Contractor is responsible for ensuring the applications are fully functional in all environments.

37. In client peripherals (user computers—signature pads, scanners, printers, and WIC EBT card readers) and Mobile devices (iPad uses by WIC2Go and CARA Mobile Apps). Are there any other devices being used?

    Answer: Cell phones are used for the WIC2Go application.

38. Is resource/team needs to be onsite or offsite?

    Answer: There is no requirement to be onsite.

39. Is NYS DOH open for offshore team or onshore is must?

Answer: Contractor must be onshore of the continental United States.

40. Can application support and maintenance can be provided from offshore locations with key members based out of New York?

Answer: Contractor must be onshore of the continental United States.

41. Do you expect vendor team to go onsite if for some reason these devices are not working for NYWIC and Mobile Apps (WIC2Go and CARA) users?

Answer: No

42. Onsite support for hardware and peripherals – What is the nature of support required?

Answer: There is no on-site support required.

43. Is there any existing documentation (business and/or technical design) for all the modules and apps mentioned in the RFP?

Answer: Yes, see Exhibit I for details of the NYWIC MIS technical architecture design and Exhibit III for details of the NYWIC mobile applications technical architecture design.

44. What is the current vendor team size supporting the application?

Answer: The current vendor does not have specific staff identified on a staff plan. The bidder, not NYS WIC, will have to determine the team size.

45. What is an acceptable downtime the business can afford?

Answer: The NYWIC MIS is classified as a Business Criticality 1 (BC1) application with a target timeframe of 4 hours for Severity 1 incident resolution.

46. What is the total volume of transactions? What is the peak volume expected at a given time?

Answer: Total volume for the NYWIC MIS can typically be about 2.5 million transactions per week. The NYWIC MIS application logs between 1000 and 1300 transactions per minute at peak.

47. Assuming no changes to Attachment 8, will the Department entertain additional contract provisions in the negotiation of the resulting contract post award that are needed to tailor the final contract to the winning bidder's solution?

Answer: The Department reserves the right to negotiate the terms of the final contract entered into pursuant to this RFP (i) within the scope of the terms of the RFP in the best interests of the State; however, (ii) in submitting a response to the RFP, each Bidder accepts the terms and conditions contained in the RFP without any added conditions, qualifications or exceptions and Appendix A to Attachment 8 will be incorporated into the final contract without any change or amendment (see Section 2.2 at pages 4 and 5, and Section 5.10.12 at page 28, and Attachments 7 and 8 to the RFP).

48. Will the Department permit the inclusion of a mutually agreeable limitation on the contractor's liability in the contract resulting from this RFP?

Answer: No, the NYSDOH will not permit any revisions to the liability provisions stated in the RFP or the New York State Department of Health Contract in the resulting contract.

49. Will the Department permit revisions to the intellectual property provisions of the resulting contract to align to the winning bidder's solution (including, proprietary and third-party intellectual property rights, and escrow requirements)?

Answer: No, the NYSDOH will not permit any revisions to the intellectual property provisions stated in the RFP or the New York State Department of Health Contract in the resulting contract.

50. Will the Department permit minimal changes to the RFP's insurance requirements in the resulting contract that are necessary to conform such language to more accurately reflect a bidder's actual insurance policies?

Answer: No, the NYSDOH will not permit any changes to the insurance requirements stated in the RFP or the New York State Department of Health Contract in the resulting contract. The Department, however, reviews and accepts insurance coverages changes that substantively satisfy the insurance coverage requirements applicable to a Contractor's obligations under the terms of the final contract.

51. Will the Department permit revisions to warranty provisions to align them to the winning bidder's proposed technical solution?

Answer: No, the NYSDOH will not permit any revisions to the warranty provisions in the New York State Department of Health Contract or Appendix F – Technology Terms and Conditions.