

RFP #20070
New York State Department of Health
Division of Chronic Disease Prevention
Bureau of Tobacco Control

New York State Smokers' Quitline

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

July 20, 2022

All questions are stated as received in the Bureau of Tobacco Control (BTC) by the deadline.

The responses to questions included herein are the official responses by the Department to questions posted by potential applicants and are hereby incorporated into the RFP #20070 issued on June 14, 2022. In the event of any conflict between the RFP and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.

2.1. Introductory Background

Q1. Why has this bid been released at this time?

DOH Response: The current New York State Smokers' Quitline (NYSSQL) contract is set to expire 04/30/2023.

3.1 Minimum Qualifications

Q2. Is previous experience with any specific customer information systems, phone systems, or software required?

DOH Response: No.

Q3. Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada)

DOH Response: Any vendor that meets Section 3.0 Bidders Qualifications to Propose is eligible to submit a proposal.

In addition, reference RFP Section 4.2.1.B Call Center Operations: The Quitline call center will be located and operated within the continental United States. The bidder should identify the actual or anticipated location, if known.

4.2.1.B Call Center Operations

Q4. To what extent will the location of the bidder's proposed location or headquarters have a bearing on any award?

DOH Response: Bidder's location or headquarters is not relevant to the procurement. What is relevant is the Bidder's call center domicile.

Reference RFP Section 4.2.1.B Call Center Operations: The Quitline call center will be located and operated within the continental United States. The bidder should identify the actual or anticipated location, if known.

Q5. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada)

DOH Response: No.

Reference RFP Section 4.2.1.B Call Center Operations: The Quitline call center will be located and operated within the continental United States. The bidder should identify the actual or anticipated location, if known.

Q6. What is the minimum required total call capacity?

DOH Response: DOH does not have this information.

Q7. What is the minimum simultaneous inbound call capacity?

DOH Response: DOH does not have this information.

Q8.What is the maximum hold time?

DOH Response: Reference RFP Section 4.2.1.B Call Center Operations: Upon completion of the initial three (3) months transition period (if new Contractor) deliver Quitline services through live Quitline specialists during the hours of operation with a wait time of less than 30 seconds, and an abandonment rate of less than 5% after the 30 second threshold.

Q9. What percentage of inbound calls must be answered by a live operator?

DOH Response: Reference RFP Section 4.2.1.B Call Center Operations: Upon completion of the initial three (3) months transition period (if new Contractor) deliver Quitline services through live Quitline specialists during the hours of operation with a wait time of less than 30 seconds, and an abandonment rate of less than 5% after the 30 second threshold.

Q10.What percentage of calls must be resolved without a transfer, second call, or a return call?

DOH Response: Reference RFP Section 4.2.1.B Call Center Operations: Upon completion of the initial three (3) months transition period (if new Contractor) deliver Quitline services through live Quitline specialists during the hours of operation with a wait time of less than 30 seconds, and an abandonment rate of less than 5% after the 30 second threshold.

Q11. Is there a minimum or maximum number of operators and supervisors?

DOH Response: No.

Reference RFP Section 4.9 – Staffing- Quitline will ensure an organizational capacity and staffing structure that provides the required capacity and expertise to complete all deliverables outlined in Section 4.0 Scope of Work and provide sufficient oversight of the entire project while maintaining excellent communication between the vendor and all components of the TCP throughout the duration of the resulting contract. Staffing structure will include internal management of the project and a physician or nurse practitioner in a medical director role to provide adequate oversight to ensure the integrity of policies and procedures of the Quitline throughout the course of the contract period. Baseline qualifications for core call center staff would include never or former smoker, strong customer service and communication skills, and the ability to triage a large number of incoming calls while maximizing phone utilization time. Client-centered motivational interviewing skills and the skills to build rapport with callers and display empathy are necessary. The ability to speak another language would be desirable, as well.

Q12. What is the current number of seats for operators and supervisors at your existing call center?

DOH Response: DOH does not have this information.

Q13.What is the required degree of dedication for the operators?

DOH Response: DOH has not specified a degree of dedication for the call center or the operators.

Reference RFP Section 4.9 – Staffing - Quitline will ensure an organizational capacity and staffing structure that provides the required capacity and expertise to complete all deliverables outlined in Section 4.0 Scope of Work and provide sufficient oversight of the entire project while maintaining excellent communication between the vendor and all components of the TCP throughout the duration of the resulting contract. Staffing structure will include internal management of the project and a physician or nurse practitioner in a medical director role to provide adequate oversight to ensure the integrity of policies and procedures of the Quitline throughout the course of the contract period. Baseline qualifications for core call center staff would include never or former smoker, strong customer service and communication skills, and the ability to triage a

large number of incoming calls while maximizing phone utilization time. Client-centered motivational interviewing skills and the skills to build rapport with callers and display empathy are necessary. The ability to speak another language would be desirable, as well.

Q14. Are callers required or allowed to connect with a message verification system or pre-recorded message before connecting to a live operator, or must a live operator be the initial contact?

DOH Response:

Reference RFP Amendment 1: Within the first three (3) months of contract start date, provide voicemail, recorded messages and tips, and messages for managing, triaging, and servicing calls during hours when the Quitline is not staffed. In addition, provide messages for managing, triaging and servicing calls when callers make initial contact with the Quitline during business hours. Callers may be connected with a message verification system or pre-recorded message before connecting to a live operator.

Q15. What are the recording requirements for inbound and outbound phone calls and how long must recordings be maintained?

DOH Response:

Reference RFP Section 4.2.1.B Call Center Operations: Within the first contract year, establish an information and data management system to facilitate easy and comprehensive documentation of each call, appropriate services provided to each caller and disposition of each call. All calls are tracked, recorded, and archived.

Reference Attachment 8 Appendix A Standard Clauses for NYS Contracts Section 10. RECORDS. The Contractor shall establish and maintain complete and accurate books, records, documents, accounts and other evidence directly pertinent to performance under this contract (hereinafter, collectively, the "Records"). The Records must be kept for the balance of the calendar year in which they were made and for six (6) additional years thereafter. The State Comptroller, the Attorney General and any other person or entity authorized to conduct an examination, as well as the agency or agencies involved in this contract, shall have access to the Records during normal business hours at an office of the Contractor within the State of New York or, if no such office is available, at a mutually agreeable and reasonable venue within the State, for the term specified above for the purposes of inspection, auditing and copying. The State shall take reasonable steps to protect from public disclosure any of the Records which are exempt from disclosure under Section 87 of the Public Officers Law (the "Statute") provided that: (i) the Contractor shall timely inform an appropriate State official, in writing, that said records should not be disclosed; and (ii) said records shall be sufficiently identified; and (iii) designation of said records as exempt under the Statute is reasonable. Nothing contained herein shall diminish, or in any way adversely affect, the State's right to discovery in any pending or future litigation.

Q16.What are the recording and storage requirements for non-phone communications?

DOH Response: Reference Attachment 8 Appendix A Standard Clauses for NYS Contracts Section 10. RECORDS. The Contractor shall establish and maintain complete and accurate books, records, documents, accounts and other evidence directly pertinent to performance under this contract (hereinafter, collectively, the "Records"). The Records must be kept for the balance of the calendar year in which they were made and for six (6) additional years thereafter. The State Comptroller, the Attorney General and any other person or entity authorized to conduct an examination, as well as the agency or agencies involved in this contract, shall have access to the Records during normal business hours at an office of the Contractor within the State of New York or, if no such office is available, at a mutually agreeable and reasonable venue within the State, for the term specified above for the purposes of inspection, auditing and copying. The State shall take reasonable steps to protect from public disclosure any of the Records which are exempt from disclosure under Section 87 of the Public Officers Law (the "Statute") provided that: (i) the Contractor shall timely inform an appropriate State official, in writing, that said records should not be disclosed; and (ii) said records shall be sufficiently identified; and (iii) designation of said records as exempt under the Statute is reasonable. Nothing contained herein shall diminish, or in any way adversely affect, the State's right to discovery in any pending or future litigation.

Q17. What is the current average wait time for phone calls?

DOH Response: In 2021 (Calendar year) the average wait time for incoming calls to the NYSSQL was less than 30 seconds.

Q18. What is the current average handle time for phone calls and other types of communications?

DOH Response:

Reference RFP Section 4.2 Program Area 1 Description – Statewide Telephone Tobacco Use Cessation Services: Coaching consultation consisting of telephonic coaching sessions, up to 30 minutes each.

Reference RFP Section 4.2 Program Area 1 Description – Statewide Telephone Tobacco Use Cessation Services: Non-Coach assisted calls refer to those calls where individuals chose not to speak with a coach and select to either listen to a taped message or leave a voicemail message. This Non-Coach assisted service will be available 24 hours per day every day.

Reference RFP Section 4.2.1.B Call Center Operations: Upon completion of the initial three (3) months transition period (if new Contractor) deliver Quitline services through live Quitline specialists during the hours of operation with a wait time of less than 30 seconds, an abandonment rate of less than 5% after the 30 second threshold, and 7-

day quit rate prevalence of 20% for tobacco users who received coaching and materials only and 30% for tobacco users who received coaching, materials and tobacco cessation medication. If incumbent Contractor, services to begin upon contract start date.

Reference RFP Section 4.3. Program Area 2 Digital Tobacco Use Cessation Services: Visitors seeking a call or text messaging from the Quitline or requesting tobacco cessation medication will receive a response within two (2) business days.

Reference RFP Section 4.5.1 Program Area 4 Contract Deliverables: Ship cessation medication and relevant informational material to approximately 40,000 individuals annually via first class mail within two (2) business days of receiving Quitline services. Ship informational materials, without cessation medication to approximately 1,000 individuals via first class mail within two (2) business days of receiving Quitline services.

Reference RFP Section 4.6. Program Area 5 Quality Improvement and Evaluation: Descriptive ad hoc requests are expected to be delivered to DOH within two (2) business days of the request. For more complex analyses, DOH will work with the vendor to identify a timeline for report delivery.

Q19. What is the current average after-call work time for operators?

DOH Response: DOH does not have this information.

Q20. Over the past year, what is the percentage of calls received in English versus non-English?

DOH Response: In 2021 (calendar year) 97.22% of NYSSQL callers spoke English; 2.45% spoke Spanish; 0.33% spoke another language.

Q21. Over the past year, what percentage of calls received were in Spanish?

DOH Response: In 2021 (calendar year) 2.45% of NYSSQL callers spoke Spanish.

Q22. What time of day, days of the week, or times of the year do calls typically peak?

DOH Response: In 2021 (calendar year) the NYSSQL call volume was consistent at about 4000-6000 monthly calls and increased to about 6000-7250 monthly calls relative to the intensity of national, state, or local media campaigns promoting tobacco use cessation. Historically, calls have peaked in the fall and through the New Year, when media is running that promotes the Quitline.

4.9 Staffing

Q23. Whether we need to come over there for meetings?

DOH Response: Reference RFP Section 4.9 – Staffing. Staff participation is expected either remotely or in person as specified in the following meeting schedule. In-person requirements may be changed to remote, as needed. Travel costs for the in person meetings are to be included in the bid proposal.

4.13 Transition

Q24. Has the current contract gone full term?

DOH Response: Yes

Q25. Have all options to extend the current contract been exercised?

DOH Response: Yes

Q26. Who is the incumbent, and how long has the incumbent been providing the requested services?

DOH Response: The incumbent is Health Research Inc., Roswell Park Cancer Institute. They have been providing the requested services under the last RFP since 05/01/2017.

5.9 Subcontracting

Q27. We are capable of providing the required services for the New York State Smokers' Quitline – RFP #20070. However, we would like to consider teaming with other interested companies to pursue this opportunity. I wanted to know if there has been any provision made to facilitate connecting companies interested in partnering to pursue this RFP?

DOH Response: Reference RFP Section 5.9 Subcontracting.

Q28. We just reviewed the RFP for New York State Smokers' Quitline and wanted to know if there was a contact that handles media, specifically out of home? Gateway is the sole source for advertising on several NY county transit systems buses and convenience stores throughout the state and were hoping there might be a interested in working together.

DOH Response: The Department of Health Bureau of Marketing and Creative Communications (bmcc@health.ny.gov) is used for media.

6.3 Cost Proposal

Q29. Are bidders permitted to deviate in any way from any manner of quoting fees you may be expecting? For example, if there is a pricing page in the RFP, can bidders submit an alternate fee structure? If there is no pricing page in the RFP, do you have any preference for how bidders should quote fees or can bidders create their own pricing categories?

DOH Response: No.

Reference RFP Section 6.3 Cost Proposal: The Cost Proposal shall comply with the format and content requirements as detailed in this document and in Attachment B. Failure to comply with the format and content requirements may result in disqualification. The bid price is to cover the cost of furnishing all the said services, including but not limited to travel, materials, equipment, overhead, profit and labor to the satisfaction of the Department of Health and the performance of all work set forth in said specifications.

Q30. How are fees currently being billed by any incumbent(s), by category, and at what rates?

DOH Response: DOH is unable to share how fees are currently being billed by any incumbent(s), by category, and at what rates.

This information may be requested under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). To submit a FOIL request, please write to the Department's Records Officer at FOIL@health.ny.gov.

Additional information regarding the FOIL process is available online at <http://www.health.ny.gov/regulations/foil/>.

Q31. What estimated or actual dollars were paid last year, last month, or last quarter to any incumbent(s)?

DOH Response: The initial five-year contract value of the current contract was \$20,591,981.00 and RFP section 2.1 (background) states that historically, the value of the Quitline contract has been \$4.15 million annually.

DOH is unable to share the estimated or actual dollars paid last year, last month, or last quarter to any incumbent(s).

This information may be requested under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). To submit a FOIL request, please write to the Department's Records Officer at FOIL@health.ny.gov.

Additional information regarding the FOIL process is available online at <http://www.health.ny.gov/regulations/foil/>.

7.0 Proposal Submission

Q32. Can we submit the proposals via email?

DOH Response: No.

Reference RFP Section 7.0 Proposal Submission for additional information.

8.1 General Information

Q33. Please describe your level of satisfaction with your current or recent vendor(s) for the same purchasing activity, if applicable.

DOH Response: The performance of the current vendor is not a determining factor for award. For additional information regarding the evaluation process please see RFP section 8.0 Method of Award.