**CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER (CSC) RFP**

**SOLICITATION #: OS/CSC-15-001-S**

**QUESTIONS and RESPONSES: SERIES 2**

**August 20, 2014**

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| Question# | RFP Section | RFP Page # | Question / Response |
| Question #2 |  |  | Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this?? (From India or Canada) |
| Revised  Response |  |  | Companies from outside of the USA can submit a Proposal in response to this solicitation; however, please see the Revised Response to Question #4 below. |
| Question #4 |  |  | Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA?? (From India or Canada) |
| Revised  Response |  |  | Tasks related to the RFP cannot be performed outside of the USA. The successful Offeror is required to provide a single facility located within the Continental United States in order to maintain the necessary Customer Service Center (CSC) infrastructure, technology and administrative support. See RFP Section 3.4, Functional Requirements and Amendment #2. |
| Question #6 |  |  | Our Company provides call center services from our headquarters in Michigan. Is it an absolute requirement that the call center for this contract has a location in Maryland? |
| Revised  Response |  |  | See the Revised Response to Question #4 above and Amendment #2. |
| Question #7 |  |  | Names of countries that will be eligible to participate in this tender. |
| Revised  Response |  |  | See the Revised Response to Question #4 above and Amendment #2. |
| 12. | 1.1 Summary Statement | 7 | Is a Contractor currently performing all of the services requested in this opportunity? If not, what services are new to this opportunity? |
| Response |  |  | No, a Contractor is not currently performing all of the services requested in this opportunity. Call center services are currently provided by two (2) Contractors. Active Network, LLC provides live customer service representatives for the call center. The IVR equipment is owned by DHR and maintained by Contact Solutions.  The new services being requested under this RFP will include, but not be limited to CRM, expanded IVR and expanded CSR services program account maintenance.  The expanded scope for CSEA’s support on incoming calls could include; system updates and/or work processes that could potentially be handled by CSRs are the following:   * Address changes * National Medical Support Notice (NMSN) * Termination Notice * Emancipation School Verification Form * Process Wage Withholding Orders   The expanded scope for FIA will be as follows  Support on incoming calls that will be based on the Desk Reference Guide prepared by FIA could potentially include the following:   * Address changes * Changes in rent/shelter costs * Add or remove a household member * Delete a person * Earned income change * Unearned income change * Child care expense change * Student status change * Request to close case     Please refer to the summary of the services required by the Administrations in Attachment Q. |
| 13. | 1.2 Glossary: Service Access Information Link (SAIL) | 14 | Will CSC staff be expected to screen applicants for various benefit programs? |
| Response |  |  | No, CSC staff will not be expected to screen applicants for various benefits. |
| 14. | 1.2 Glossary: Service Access Information Link (SAIL) | 14 | If the CSC staff is to screen applicants for various benefit programs, on average, how many screenings should bidders expect to complete each month? |
| Response |  |  | The CSC staff will not screen applicants for benefit programs. |
| 15. | 1.30 Payments by Electronic Funds Transfer | 27 | Must the Offeror register prior to submitting a bid? |
| Response |  |  | Only the successful Offeror is required to register directly with the Comptroller’s Office to receive payments via electronic fund transfer (see RFP Section 1.30). The selected Offeror shall register using the COT/GAD X-10 Vendor Electronic Funds (EFT) Registration Request Form. |
| 16. | 3.2.1 Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), M | 45 | This requirement states that the Contractor is to make satisfaction surveys available through the web. On what website must the Contractor host the survey? |
| Response |  |  | The Contractor shall propose a secure web site to be used for satisfaction surveys. |
| 17. | 3.2.1 Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), M | 45 | Who is responsible (DHR vs the Contractor) for hosting the website? If the Contractor is responsible for hosting the website, what information and functionalities is the website to include? |
| Response |  |  | The Contractor shall host all components required by this RFP. The web components required for the IVR are identified in the following RFP Sections:  3.2.1.M - Customer Satisfaction Survey  3.2.1.R - IVR status/monitoring  3.2.1.Z - Customizable IVR Reporting |
| 18. | 3.2.1 Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), T | 45 | How is the user-id and pin communicated to callers? Who is responsible (DHR vs the Contractor) for communicating the user-id and pin? |
| Response |  |  | The Contractor shall propose a solution to meet the requirements of this section. |
| 19. | 3.2.1 Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), T | 45 | How will the Contractor access the database/information required for the contractor to provide personalized information? |
| Response |  |  | Data necessary to populate the IVR with current customer information is extracted from the DHR systems and provided in nightly batches as a flat file through a secure https connection into a SFTP server that gets ingested into the IVR. \ |
| 20. | 3.2.1 Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), T | 45 | Will any information from DHR’s systems be provided to the Contractor via a file transfer for the Contractor to load into their CRM? |
| Response |  |  | DHR will consider expanding the fields extracted for the download to include data needed to pre-populate data in the CRM. |
| 21. | 3.2.1 Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), V | 45 | How will the Contractor interface with the DHR databases? |
| Response |  |  | The Contractor’s systems will not interface directly with any DHR databases. Data will be transmitted to the Contractor per the Response to Question #19. Updates to DHR systems will occur via direct data entry by CSRs into the appropriate system. See Amendment # 2 |
| 22. | 3.2.4.1 General CSR Requirements, D | 48 | What types of correspondence is necessary? |
| Response |  |  | Per the definitions, Correspondence includes any inquiry response sent via mail, fax or email, and may include:  For CSEA upon request:   * Payment Summary * Direct Deposits * Applications * Stop Payment * Fax Verifications * eMail   For FIA upon request:   * Applications for benefits * Change forms * Benefit statements * Duplicates of approval/denial/closing notices * Requests for Fair Hearing   A cover letter will need to be populated by the CRM/CSR to be sent along with the correspondence. |
| 23. | 3.2.4.1 General CSR Requirements, D | 48 | What types of correspondence will the Contractor need to develop? |
| Response |  |  | None. DHR will provide the Memo templates for the correspondence. |
| 24. | 3.2.4.1 General CSR Requirements, D | 48 | How is postage paid for all types of correspondence (e.g., on a pass-thru basis)? |
| Response |  |  | Postage is a direct expense paid as a pass-through (see the Financial Proposal Form. Attachment F, tab for the 5-Year Contract Period). |
| 25. | 3.5.1 General, E | 55 | What information will be sent via file transmissions? |
| Response |  |  | The dedicated circuit will be used to access the state network. This circuit will support data transmissions for the IVR and other applications, provide access to state systems of record for CSRs, and carry voice and data traffic for CHR monitors. |
| 26. | 3.5.1 General, E | 55 | Please describe all file transmissions between DHR and the Contractor, including the frequency, data included in each file, and transmission method.\ |
| Response |  |  | See the Response to Question #19. |
| 27. | 3.5.1 General, N | 56 | What systems must the IVR interface with to provide case specific information? How will this interface occur? |
| Response |  |  | See the Response to Question #19. |
| 28. | 3.5.1 General, N | 56 | What systems must CSRs interface with to provide case specific information? |
| Response |  |  | CSRs will get case specific information directly from CARES, CSES, CIS, ECMS, WORKS, OHEP and HBX and other systems as needed to fulfill the requirements of this RFP. |
| 29. | General |  | Regarding vendor interfaces with the state, state designees, etc. Please provide the number of data files that each entity/organization will provide/send. |
| Response |  |  | The Question is not clear. Please provide a RFP reference. |
| 30. | 1.2.1 (41), 3.16.2.F | 11, 103 | Will CSRs be doing warm or cold call transfers? |
| Response |  |  | The system should accommodate both. |
| 31. | 3.2 | 43 | Can DHR provide the number of calls received per hour per day? |
| Response |  |  | This data not reported under the current contract. |
| 32. | 3.2.1.D | 44 | Will there more than one toll-free number coming into the CSC? |
| Response |  |  | Yes, currently there are 5 toll-free numbers **coming into the CSC?** |
| 33. | 3.2.1.C | 44 | Regarding “speech recognition,” is the contractor’s IVR required to have true voice response technology? |
| Response |  |  | We are not clear what is meant by “true voice response technology. The requirement is for speech to text and text to speech. The system should support voice response technology currently available. |
| 34. | 3.2.1.T | 45 | Regarding “Require Customers who have applied for DHR benefits to enter a User-id and pin to gain access to confidential information.” Please provide details how the vendor will access the state’s system or database to provide the “confidential information” via the IVRS. |
| Response |  |  | See the Response to Questions #18 and #19. |
| 35. | 3.2.1:C | 46 | Please detail the features in the IVR that will make use of speech to text and text to speech. |
| Response |  |  | The Offeror shall propose how it intends to utilize these features and meet the requirements of the RFP. |
| 36. | 3.2.4 | 47 | Does Contractor staff need to be certified in any of the State programs/applications/software? |
| Response |  |  | There is no specific requirement for certification in any of the State benefit programs. However, the CSC shall have dedicated personnel trained and qualified to meet the requirements of the RFP. |
| 37. | 3.2.4.1.F.6 | 48 | Does DHR allow CSR staff to handle fulfillment requests via email if that is possible and appropriate, such as sending applications and forms to callers? |
| Response |  |  | Yes. DHR will authorize CSRs to send blank forms to callers via e-mail without PII. The e-mail address shall not allow replies to the sender. |
| 38. | 3.2.4.2.A | 49 | Is staff currently assisting callers with applications? If so, how long does it take to complete one? How many different applications are there |
| Response |  |  | Call center staff are not assisting callers with applications. CSRs will assist individuals with questions regarding SAIL and the CSEA and FIA Applications, but will not provide line by line assistance. These calls will be referred to the Maryland Benefits Center. Timeframe varies, but the assistance will be limited. DHR will work with the various Administrations and the selected Offeror to set appropriate limits to fit within the requirements of the Desk Reference Guides and the SLAs specified in the RFP. DHR uses a common application for all benefit programs provided by FIA. CSEA currently has a separate application.  The Maryland Benefits Center helps customers file applications and gathers supporting documents. MD Benefits Center customer service representatives provide a valuable service to applicants who need assistance filing applications on the SAIL portal. |
| 39. | 3.3.1.E | 50 | Is the current vendor collecting demographics on each caller? If so, please describe the data being collected. |
| Response |  |  | The CSC shall collect demographic information for any new caller and validate the information for existing customers. |
| 40. | 3.3.1.H | 50 | Please define what the purpose and method of integration with DHR’s email, Calendar and contacts will be. How will this integration point be used by staff? |
| Response |  |  | This requirement will be deleted per an amendment to the RFP. |
| 41. | 3.3.1:M:11 | 51 | Please provide detailed diagram of the requested workflows. |
| Response |  |  | The Contractor shall propose a general workflow process. Detailed functional requirements will be developed with the successful Offeror. |
| 42. | 3.4.5.C | 54 | How many paper documents are stored currently? Does DHR expect this to increase or decrease? Does DHR expect the current vendor to transfer a current store of paper documents to the Contractor? If so, what is the quantity? |
| Response |  |  | This is not provided under the current contract so the number of documents to the stored is not available. Based on expanded services the number of documents required to be stored may increase. Vendors to use the data available in 3.4.5.B to estimate volumes. |
| 43. | 3.5.1.I | 55 | Regarding- Update the Customer’s information on the State's automated systems via electronic transmission of data through the software product designated by the State. This electronic transmission must be done daily. Can the state support SFTP (ftp over ssh) for secure data transmission? |
| Response |  |  | Yes. See the Response to Question #19. |
| 44. | 3.5.1:F | 55 | Develop and maintain a Section 508 compliant web-based Correspondence workflow process to facilitate electronic Correspondence between Customers and DHR in compliance with the Federal Guidelines for Web Accessibility, available at www.section508.gov. Please provide details on the feature functionality and workflow needs of this web-based system that will be used by Customers and DHR. |
| Response |  |  | Refer to the RFP Sections 3.2 ACD/IVR & 3.3 CRM for functionality requirements. It is up to the Offeror to describe in its proposal how it intends to meet the requirements of this section. |
| 45. | 3.5.2.2.D | 59 | Regarding- Office of Technology for Human Services (OTHS) will have full control of the Contractor supplied network equipment, including but not limited to physical and remote access and configuration control. Please describe/define what “full control” means. |
| Response |  |  | For audit purposes and general monitoring, OTHS shall have the ability to access all network equipment at any time to inspect configurations and validate compliance with security requirements. OTHS does not intend to provide day-to-day maintenance or operation. |
| 46. | 3.6.1 | 72 | What is the current Live Answer Rate? |
| Response |  |  | Refer to Attachment R, Call Volumes Matrix, of the RFP. |
| 47. | 3.6.1, Table 3, Service #7 | 72 | Can a time minimum be placed on calls in order to not count them as an abandoned call? For example, calls of less than 5 seconds may be abandoned because the caller realizes he has dialed the wrong number. When a call drops when still in the IVR, does it count as abandoned even though it wasn’t offered to an agent? |
| Response |  |  | If a call drops within 8 seconds of the call being placed in the IVR, the call will not be considered an abandoned call. |
| 48. | 3.6.1, Table 3, Service #7 | 72 | Are callbacks/voicemails counted as abandoned calls? |
| Response |  |  | Callbacks and voicemails are still calls in progress. Since it could turn into a completed call it will not be considered abandoned. |
| 49. | 3.6.1, Table 3, Quality #3 | 73 | Will CSRs be expected to have a cumulative monthly QA score of 98%? |
| Response |  |  | The 98% service level is based on the average of the CSRs, not individuals. |
| 50. | 3.7.B | 75 | How long does the Contractor need to retain call recordings? |
| Response |  |  | DHR requires all call recordings to be retained for a minimum of 1 year. |
| 51. | 4.2.4 | 105 | May bidders consecutively number each section, rather than the entire proposal (for example, Section F-1, G-1)? Do RFP forms, proposal appendices, and the transmittal letter also need to be numbered? |
| Response |  |  | Offerors may consecutively number each section of their Proposal as demonstrated (Section F-1, G-1). RFP forms and the Transmittal letter do not need to be numbered but should be located as specified in RFP Sections 4.4.2.3 and 4.4.3 respectively, as well as placed in the sequential order requested. Proposal appendices, if used to support and/or fulfill requirements, should be labeled (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.) and a reference provided stating where in the Proposal the Appendix is located. |
| 52. | 4.4.2.7 | 110 | What is the current staffing model for the CSC? |
| Response |  |  | Information on the current staffing model and number is not relevant to this RFP as we are asking for additional services and technologies not provided by the current Contractor. |
| 53. | General |  | What is the current number of employees in the CSC? |
| Response |  |  | See the Response to Question #52. |
| 54. | General |  | Who currently runs the CSC? |
| Response |  |  | Active Network, LLC (formerly The Active Network, Inc.). |
| 55. | 3.2.4 |  | CSR’s must be dedicated to the program. Must the facility be dedicated to the State’s program as well, or may other programs be run in the facility (by different employees)? |
| Response |  |  | The Contractors may run other contracts from the same building or facility that houses the CSC. The CSC space must be secure and completely segregated from other programs (separate entrance, electronic access, video monitoring) from all other vendor call center operations within the facility. |
| 56. | 3.2.3 |  | What ACD is currently being used? |
| Response |  |  | Vendors are to provide their own hardware and software for the ACD. |
| 57. | 3.3.1 |  | What CRM is currently being used? |
| Response |  |  | Vendors are to provide their own hardware and software for the CRM. |
| 58. | 3.6.1 |  | AHT SLA is < 300 seconds. What is current AHT? |
| Response |  |  | See Attachment R, Call Volumes Matrix. |
| 59. | Attachment R |  | Can the Department please provide historical call volumes by county? |
| Response |  |  | County volumes are not relevant to this RFP as this is a statewide customer service center. |
| 60. | Section 1.1.2 | 7 | States that “CSC services will be utilized by all DHR Administrations Statewide, including the Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) and Child Support offices located in all 24 jurisdictions in Maryland.” Does this include the CSES office for Baltimore City? If other Administrations within DHR utilized the CSC, will those calls be similar in type and call length to what is currently being handled by the CSC? |
| Response |  |  | DHR has provided projected volumes for a Statewide CSC. Historical volumes are contained in Attachment R and projected ranges of volumes are in Attachment F. In addition to the current services, the RFP calls for an expanded level of service for the Administrations. |
| 61. | Section 3.5.2.1, | Paragraph A (page 57) | States “Facility: Ensure the CSC facility is completely securitized and protected from unauthorized access,…” Are you requiring a call center completely segregated (separate entrance, electronic access) from all other vendor call center operations within our facility? |
| Response |  |  | Yes. |
| 62. | Section 3.6.1 | #2 (page 73) | Discusses the SLA for Call Transfers. It states that the IVRS is required to resolve more than 75% of the incoming Customer calls. Are you stating that 75% of the total incoming calls must be resolved within the IVR or do you mean that of the total calls presented to the CSR, 75% must be resolved by the CSR with less than 25% being transferred (i.e., to a local office)? |
| Response |  |  | See RFP Section 3.6.1 Page 73 - “IVRS is required to resolve 75% of the incoming customer calls. |