

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR
EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR THE WELFARE TO WORK PROGRAM, THE FOOD
SUPPLEMENTAL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM, AND THE NON-
CUSTODIAL PARENT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
FOR FREDERICK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
FCDSS/FIA/12-005-S

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES PRIOR TO PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE

Question 1: The number of customers estimated to be referred is specified – 708 per year – but that number does not seem to match other figures shared: TCA averages of 520 per month now (p. 36, 3.1) versus 240 + 92 + 15 (347) served in the year between Nov 2010 and Oct 2011 (chart on p. 37). Perhaps I am not reading the materials correctly, but I'm just asking you to confirm that 59 per month, or 708 per year, is the estimate inclusive of all categories of customer.

Response: The number 708 is an estimate based on the projected number of customers to be referred. The caseload sizes quoted are active cases and not all active cases require services. Also as customers apply for benefits they may be referred but may not necessarily participate as required. The chart indicates those who actually participated.

Question 2: The RFP indicates that phone and Internet services will convey to the successful proposer at no cost. What about other facilities costs, such as utilities, cleaning, repairs, and general maintenance?

Response: There are no costs to the contractor for rental space, utilities, cleaning, repairs and general maintenance.

Question 3: Is the entire remittance based on performance, as outlined in the various payout sections, or is there a base of funding that also would be reimbursed for general expenses. For example, in theory there might be a month where zero work participation occurred despite great effort by staff – so, would there be zero payment? There will be both fixed and variable costs every month for various obligations, regardless of specific performance in a month.

Response: **The entire remittance is based on performance. There is no base funding.**

Question 4: Will you share the total budget allocated for the current year to cover the same, or largely the same, services outlined in the RFP?

Response: **The Department will not divulge this information.**

Question 5: How many incumbent staff are at work now to render these same, or largely the same, services?

Response: **The current contractor currently maintains two staff persons on-site as required by Section 3.3.2 B (2).**

Question 6: This is a request for job readiness and employment services and very little ancillary activities. If you are a company that already delivers job readiness and employment services, where does the State see room for 25% MBE participation?

Response: **There are no restrictions on the subcontracting opportunities under this solicitation, to include the core services, supplies, the purchase of goods or other professional services.**

Question 7: There is quite a lot of monthly reporting stipulated. Can you discuss whether there is some flexibility or is it all mandatory?

Response: **All reports listed in the RFP are mandatory.**

Question 8: Is there an expectation that the successful proposer will provide supportive services – pay for job-related incidentals or items – such as driver’s licenses, eye glasses, child care expenses, tools, work boots, uniforms, etc. and is there a defined budget for such support?

Response: **There is no expectation that the contractor will pay for supportive services. FCDSS maintains a separate budget to provide job readiness items.**

Question 9: Subsidized employment is an option. Any employment subsidies for TANF customers will be paid for separately, correct? They come out of a separate budget, not this program budget?

Response: Correct, subsidized employment comes out of a separate budget.

Question 10: There are numerous references to “the” workshop (e.g. p.19 – the 24-hour workshop; p.20 – the 40-hour workshop) – is this defined somewhere or is this a reference to the 40-hour week of activities, which likely would include workshops, where 24 hours needs to be some mix of core federal activities, etc.?

Response: The workshop is a mixture of soft skills and job search activities. See also Attachment Q.

Question 11: The shown estimate for referrals is 708, so we’d staff for 708 referrals and our anticipated per-customer reimbursement will be based on 708 referrals. What if there are only 508 referrals, or 608 referrals? We’ll not have any chance to recover the sunk costs, even if performance literally is perfect.

Response: Correct. The figure of 708 is a projection of the number that may be referred. The actual number of referrals may vary. The projected numbers and actual historical numbers should be used as guidance. If customers do not come in for a workshop, you cannot bill for them. You can try to contact the customers who did not show to encourage them to participate.

Question 12: Is there an advance or pre-payment of some amount? Even if performance is stellar, reimbursement will lag substantially behind achievement. For example, from the first day of the contract, we’d incur 100% of monthly costs, but we’d only have an opportunity to recover a maximum of 40% of the costs for the first two months (and then only 75% the next month).

Response: There is no advance payment.

Question 13: Is there another work space? There are two work stations, perhaps three, for what appears to be a larger staff need.

Response: There is no other work space for the workshops. The SAIL lab which is adjacent to the class room is available on a limited basis for utilization of the computers. Also, there is a small meeting area outside of the office space that is provided for the two workshop trainers. There are two other work stations available on the first floor in the Employment Resource Center.

Question 14: Is there an expectation that the successful proposer would facilitate occupational training for customers and is there a defined budget for such training, like there is for internships, as an example?

Response: No, the vendor will not be providing occupational training.

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES FROM PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE

Question 15: If the vendor selected does not get renewed. Will they be compensated for any customers still in the cycle after the contract year ends?

Response: If the option year(s) are not exercised, the vendor can still be compensated for those customers that were participating in the program prior to the contract end date. Future payouts would be honored but are dependent upon the vendor's continued collection and submission of invoice data to verify the completion of specific pay out points for each customer.

Question 16: If the customer does not meet the number of hours can they continue?

Response: The customer who does not meet the number of required hours should be referred back to the agency within 24 hours for unexcused absences and within two business days for non-participation. No payment is made if a customer does not fulfill the required number of hours. The customer can be re-referred once the non-participation has been addressed.

Question 17: All of the Performance payouts are the same. I thought the FSP did not require participation beyond the 24 hour workshop. Is it reasonable to require the vendor to work beyond the 24 hour workshop for payout?

Response: **Actually, the FSET requirement is that the customer participate in at least one of the following activities: Independent Job Search, Group Job Search, Remedial Education, Vocational Training, Work Experience governed by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements or Part time employment. Therefore, it is appropriate to require the customer to look for and obtain work and require a vendor to be a part of this process.**

Question 18: Are there tools available to document employee wages or does the vendor do this?

Response: **The agency provides the vendor with wage forms to be completed by the employer. The vendor is responsible for giving the wage form to the customer and obtaining the completed wage form from the customer or the case manager.**

Question 19: Is there a page limit to the technical proposal?

Response: **No. However, please refer to Section 2.7 of the RFP for information of proposal preparation.**

Question 20: What is the maximum number of months you can bill for each participant?

Response: **The answer depends on whether the customer obtains employment and then maintains that employment for a maximum of 12 weeks if the customer obtains employment with a minimum wage of \$8.50 per hour and maximum of 17 weeks with a minimum wage of \$10 per hour for up to 25 customers per year.**

Question 21: What happens if referrals are higher than the projected proposal?

Response: **The agency will make sure that no more than the maximum number of referrals are made in any given year.**

Question 22: Who is the current vendor and what are the price points?

Response: The current vendor is ManPower, Inc. The current price points are:

TCA Customers

The Contractor shall be paid monthly on a fixed price basis at the rate of forty percent (40%) of the fixed unit price per customer per year for each customer who registers and attends the first 16 hours of 40 hour training with a guaranteed payment equivalent to thirty (30) customers per month for providing training and daily work activities.

The Contractor will also be paid for pay for performance based on the following specific goals and payout points:

- (i) 15% of the fixed unit price per customer per year when a TCA customer referred to the Contractor successfully completes 40 hour workshop training or a combination of training and employment totaling 40 hours.
- (ii) 20% of the fixed unit price per customer per year when a TCA customer is employed for a minimum of thirty (30) hours per week at an average wage of \$8.00/hour for six (6) consecutive weeks.
- (iii) 25% of the fixed unit price per customer per year when a TCA customer is successfully employed for a minimum of thirty (30) hours per week at an average wage of \$8.00/hour for seventeen (17) consecutive weeks.

The billable services of the contractor will end when a TCA customer has been employed for 17 consecutive weeks.

FSE & T and ABAWD

The Contractor will be paid monthly on a fixed price basis at the rate of forty percent (40%) of the fixed unit price per customer per year for each customer who registers and attends the 24 hours workshop.

The Contractor will also be paid on a pay for performance basis for FSE & T and ABAWD customers based on the following specific goals and payout points.

- (i) 60% of the fixed unit price per customer per year when 90% of the FSE&T/ABAWD customers referred to the Contractor successfully complete the 24-hour training workshop or become employed.

NPEP

The Contractor will be paid monthly on a fixed price basis at the rate of forty percent (50%) of the fixed unit price per customer per year for each customer who registers and attend a 40 hour workshop.

The Contractor will also be paid on a pay for performance basis for NPEP customers based on the following specific goals and payout points.

- (i) 40% of the fixed unit price when 80% of the customers complete the 40 hour workshop or becomes employed.**
- (ii) 10% of the fixed unit price when 20% of the customers become employed for two consecutive weeks.**

Question 23: Payout number one is tracked, once a customer completes that is it a one- time payment?

Response: If a customer is re-referred the customer may go through the work shop a second time and be paid. This would occur if a customer became employed, TCA case closed, customer lost the job and reapplied for TCA again.

Question 24: What is currently working what is not working?

Response: The current vendor seems to be hitting the goals set for customers. No problem areas at this time.

Question 25: How do you define community Services?

Response: See glossary in section 1.10 for definition.

Question 26: Is the \$9.39 per hour based on the on-site staff of the vendor or all staff of the vendor?

Response: Any staff performing work on the contract must be paid the minimum of \$9.39 per hour.

Question 27: Is there any administrative support available on site?

Response: There are no administrative support personnel for the vendor. The Employment Resource Center is staffed to work with our customers. There is a receptionist in the Employment Resource Center as well as three Family Investment case managers, an employment assistance case manager and a data manager.

Question 28: How much funding is available?

Response: The projected budget is not available at this time.

Question 29: Can the vendor conduct business off- site?

Response: The work shop must be held on-site. If the vendor wished to have other trainings or activities for the customer to complete off-site it would be acceptable.

Question 30: The projected numbers for the customer referrals monthly is significantly higher than what has been experienced by the incumbent provider over the last several years, which occurred at the peak of a poor economy. As the economy improves and the unemployment rate continues to decrease, it would stand to reason that the referral numbers will also decrease during the next 18 months. How can we be confident bidding using the projected numbers that were given? If we are conservative and bid too high, assuming the numbers will be less, it would likely remove us from consideration.

Response: In 2011, 504 TCA customers were referred with 247 participating. 356 FSET customers were referred with 89 participating. 16 NPEP customers were referred with 12 participating.