



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
PO Box 45811, Olympia WA 98504-5811

DATE: July, 12022

TO: RFQQ # 2213 – 811 Bidders

FROM: DVR Contracts Unit, Solicitation Coordinator
DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

SUBJECT: Amendment No. 01 – RFQQ 2213-811 Bidder's Q & A

DSHS amends the RFQQ # 2213-811 solicitation document to include:

- Bidder's Questions and Answers

Bidder's Questions and Answers
RFQQ# 2213-811

SERVICE DELIVERY QUESTIONS

Question #1:

Would this solicitation allow a vendor specializing in specific low incidence populations to serve the entire state even when the service area - county, district, or building - is already serviced by a contractor? Although our curriculum is accessible to many other PWD categories, we specialize in Pre-ETS instruction for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf/Blind.

A: The solicitation does allow for bidders to identify a service area, which may include "statewide service" responses. Please note, that even though a specific area is requested, it may not be guaranteed. Also, to be noted, the contract requires the use of DVR vetted curriculum for service delivery. Any other teaching materials must be reviewed and approved by the Pre-ETS Program Manager prior to the delivery of services.

Question #2:

Are the awarded vendors required to deliver services in all the Pre-ETS categories, including the Work-Based Learning Experiences and Work-Based Learning Activities?

*A: The bidder is required to meet a minimum threshold to be awarded a contract. Point values are assigned to each question. If a bidder does not plan to deliver services in **all** Pre-ETS contracted categories, including work-based learning experiences **and** work-based learning activities, then they would not receive full points for this question.*

Question #3:

Does this solicitation exclude virtual Pre-ETS instruction (live and/or self-paced)?

A: Guidance will be provided for virtual Work Readiness Training and Self Advocacy Training. Work-Based Learning Experiences and Activities are expected to be done in-person.

This contract is specifically for direct-delivered services and does not allow for self-paced activities.

Question #4:

Are the onsite WBLEs required to happen in the state of Washington?

A: Delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services may be considered in out-of-state counties that border Washington on a case-by-case basis.

Question #5:

Will there be any consideration of bidders who provide post-secondary educational certificates and career pathways for students with IEP or 504 plans who need special accommodations or additional instruction to be granted the additional hours beyond the allotted 40 so they may successfully complete and understand the curriculums provided?

A: *The Federal Regulations prohibits Pre-Employment Transition Services funding to be used for:*

- *Registered apprenticeships or pre-apprenticeships programs*
- *Post-secondary education credit or certificates*

Question #6

We are a current contractor. Can you tell us if our current student's year of services will renew upon receipt of a new contract if we are approved for a contract?

A: *Student service hours and participant numbers will be reset at the time of success award and execution of a new contract*

Question #7:

Can a Pre-ETS Contractor both have a state wide service as well as be a subcontractor?

A: *No*

Question #8

We have previously been asked to consider providing services in far off neighboring counties. Would DVR provide mileage reimbursement for the travel?

A: *The fee for service contracts incorporate all costs associated with service delivery. No cost reimbursements for travel or mileage are allowed.*

Question #9

If a contractor wishes to expand to a new area of service after their bid has been submitted, will they be allowed to if it was not previously mentioned in the contract?

A: *A Bidder who is awarded a contract may request a contract amendment to expand their area of service. DVR will approve or deny each request on a case-by-case basis.*

SOLICITATION QUESTIONS

Question #10:

Does this affect current Group Pre-ETS providers with existing contracts and set terms?

A: *All current Pre-ETS group contracts are due to end September 30, 2022. If you are a current provider who would like to continue delivering services past October 1, 2022, then you would be required to participate in this solicitation.*

Current contractor would be expected to follow the guidance provided for form completion, whether or not DVR may already have a copy on file.

Question #11:

Is 7/29/22 the end date for the year or is it possible to apply any time?

A: This solicitation will be continuously open, with period review periods. Responses are due by July 29, 2022 by 5 pm (PT) if you wish to be awarded a contract for a start date of October 1, 2022. No late responses will be accepted for this review period. Future review periods will be determined based on identified need.

Question #12:

Do current Pre-ETS group contractors have to complete forms that DVR may already have?

A: Current contractors would be expected to follow the guidance provided for form completion, whether or not DVR may already have a copy on file.

Question #13:

How should a bidder that is another state agency respond to this question: Please indicate whether you employ or contract with any current or former state employees?

A: Bidders who are a state agency should indicate as such in their answer – DSHS will consider that an acceptable answer.

Question #14: Is this solicitation only for GROUP Pre-ETS, and not individual Pre-ETS delivered through a CRP/ IL contract?

A: This solicitation is only for Group Pre-ETS and does not include services provide through a CRP/IL contract.

Question #15:

Can a contractor provide any services outside the territory it was previously assigned?

A: The bidder response form asks bidders to identify the schools in which they already have developed relationships with. The response to this question will be taken into consideration was assigning service areas. Once the contract is fully executed, the service area may not be changed without an amendment to the contract.

Question #16:

Is there more than one contractor allowed per area (assigned districts) if their services are different from the ones offered?

A: All successful bidders will receive a Pre-ETS contract to provide the same services.

DVR does not expect there to be overlap or duplication of services in the same geographic areas,

Question #17

Is this to be a sole provider of services for a specific region, county, or area?

A: It is DVR's desire to have sole providers assigned to each school building across the state. Based on need, some contractors may be awarded a contract to serve a region, a county, a school district, or specific schools. The bidder response form asks bidders to identify the schools in which they already have developed relationships with. The response to this question will be taken into consideration was assigning service areas.

Question #18:

Will this contract be for one year only? And will we go through this process each year?

A: Pre-ETS group contracts are for a 12 month term, with the ability to extend for another 12 months based on performance outcomes. If a contractor is effectively carrying out their contracted deliverables and utilizing funding, then this process would have to be completed every 2 years. If a contractor is not meeting performance standards, that may be asked to resubmit a new requests with an updated program proposal.

Question #19:

Are specific type of references required? Do they need to be from Washington and/or VR colleagues?

A: DVR would be looking for references that specifically speak to the bidder's positive relationships with schools and ability to deliver high-quality career readiness services to students with disabilities.

Question #20:

Is there a specific form the references need to fill out, or do bidders just provide contact information?

A: Please provide the contact information in the answer field provided. There is no particular form/format required.

Question #21:

Can you re-submit after this round if you do not make the 80% cut?

A: This solicitation will be continuously open, with period review periods. If a bidder does not meet the minimum qualifications, they may re-submit for a future review period.

Question #22:

On attachment D, question #1j, can you please provide an example? Human health and environmental sustainability can be pretty broad and I'm

not sure what policies or activities you would consider to fall under that category?

A: *The question is intended to be broad – please include anything that you believe may fit. This question is not scored and Bidders will not be penalized for being over-inclusive in their response.*

Question #23:

On attachment D, question #2d, can you provide an example of what would be considered a method for assuring services/deliverables are provided in accordance with high quality standards? Would hiring qualified staff with education and experience be considered a method? What about asking students what they want to learn and take in consideration their feedback? Is that a method?

A: *Bidders are encouraged to include all information that they believe may be relevant to quality assurance methods and ensuring provision of high quality services.*

Question #24:

On attachment D, question #3d, how comprehensive do you want the service delivery plan to be? Would providing self-advocacy every other week and workplace readiness training every other week for 1.5 hours at a time be considered comprehensive? How much details should we include?

A: *Bidder responses to this question should provide enough detail to demonstrate to the evaluator panel how many students are being served under each service category and how many hours each student has received in each service category.*

Question #25

**In Section 2 (C): Bidder Qualification
Who do you consider key personnel?**

A: *Key personnel would include the staff providing direct service delivery to Students and the staff responsible for managing the contract.*

Question #26:

**In Section 2 (E). Bidder Qualification
What do you mean by cost-effective manner?**

A: *By cost-effective, DSHS means the highest quality for the cost of the services.*

Question #27

**Section 4
Can you define, what are allocated costs?**

A: *Allocated Costs are costs that can be allocated to a specific item. Because this solicitation will be paying on a fixed fee schedule, please identify the proposed service delivery numbers that will be resulting in your total maximum consideration value.*

Question #28

Section 4

What is meant by “total charges bidder is willing to accept?” Does this mean, what would be our bottom line to run and sustain the program? We are reading that as you want us to come up with a budget of what it is going to cost us to execute this program? Is this to demonstrate sustainability of the program?

A: *In this question (4A), DSHS is asking the Bidder to calculate the total cost based on the fee schedule. DSHS does*

Question #29

What circumstances would require a request for change in solicitation requirements?

A: *Any deviation from the requirements described in the Solicitation document would require a request for change in solicitation requirements. If DVR approves such a request, the solicitation would be amended with the revised requirements.*

Question 30:

Can a change to the solicitation requirements be submitted after June 17th?

A: *No.*

Question #31

Bidder Response Question Number 4

Should the total maximum bid amount include just the cost for providing workplace readiness training, work based learning activities and self-advocacy lessons? Should the allocated cost detail include only the cost for providing each service type or do we also need to include the cost for staff salaries, mileage, supplies, etc.?

A: *It should just include the cost for providing the services based on the fixed fee schedule. Bidders do not need to include line item costs for salaries, etc. in your response.*

Question #32

Is there a preferred writing format for the submitted answers and can we send attachments for any answers?

A: *Please write your responses in the provided Bidder Response Form. Bidders may include additional attachments for their answers; however, the*

Bidder must reference the appropriate attachment in the answer field for that particular question. The Evaluator panel is not obligated to search through attachments that are not directly referenced in an answer.

Question #33

Attachment D Question 1a:

The question asks if the bidder employs or contracts with any current or former state employees. Is the question asking about all employees in the organization, or just the employees who would be working on, or responding to the contract?

A: The question is asking about all employees in the organization. However, if the list of such employees would be burdensome to complete, please indicate as such in your response, and DSHS may follow up with the Bidder for additional information as necessary.

Question #34

Attachment D, question i pertains to subcontractors. Are language translators/interpreters considered subcontractors within that context?

A: No.

CONTRACT TEMPLATE QUESTIONS

Question #35:

The sample contract states that for Work Based Learning Experiences you can only bill for a minimum of 40 hours so what happens if a student quits before that?

A: In the event that a student does not complete a minimum of 40 hours of their Work-based Learning Experience, the contractor may bill DVR for the student wages of actual work completed, but may not bill DVR for the Contractor Fee

Question #36:

Will potential contractors know the \$ rates for each service (Work Readiness Training, Work-Based Learning Activities, Work-Based Learning Experiences)?

A: The Fee Schedule is included as Exhibit D of the Pre-ETS Group contract and available to view on the DSHS website.

Question #37:

Is there a penalty if a contractor is unable to fulfill the contracted deliverables?

A: *There is not monetary penalty for not fulfilling contract deliverable. However, performance outcomes will be reviewed when considering future contract awards or extensions.*

Question #38:

From my understanding we must meet 20 billable hours for each student in WBL and SA hours. What will happen if students are unable to reach 20 hours; is that flexible as students may be out of school or on vacation?

A: *The contract specifies that students shall receive 20 hours of service in the designated category per 12 month (1 year) period. This is a deliverable of the contract and is not flexible. Failure to meet that requirement would reflect on the contractor's performance outcomes.*

Question #39:

Is the 10 hours of paid WBL a week flexible for students during the school year?

A: *The contract specifies that students shall participate in a minimum of 10 hours of paid Work-based Learning per week. This is a deliverable of the contract and is not flexible. Failure to meet that requirement would reflect on the contractor's performance outcomes.*

Question #40:

Can you provide an example of a 10-hour work week? Is the student's school schedule altered so that they can obtain this requirement?

A: *Students may participate in paid work-based learning after school, on weekends, during Winter and Spring breaks: One example may include:*

- *Monday 3 hours (3-6pm)*
- *Wednesday 3 hours (3-6pm)*
- *Saturday 4 hours (8 am- noon)*

Question #41:

Will Contractors be allowed to see any 504 or IEP plans or documented diagnosis for enrolled students so we can give equitable access to instruction for our students, may they need additional instruction or accommodations?

A: *The expectation is that general information regarding student accommodation needs are be acquired through verbal conversations with educators and families.*

Question #42:

Will Contractors be allowed to see any 504 or IEP plans or documented diagnosis for enrolled students to ensure their programs and instruction align with High School and Beyond Plans and their IEP employment goals?

A: *The DVR Regional Transition Consultant or designee is responsible for ensuring services are coordinated with the school based on student need and*

interest. There should not be a need for contractors to view student High School and Beyond Plans or IEPs.

Question #43:

Do contractors need to add coverage of students to general and professional liability for any Workplace Readiness Training and/or Work-Based Learning?

A: Liability coverage should meet the requirements as written in the special terms and conditions of Attachment A, Sample Contract.

Question #44:

Can contractors provide a release of liability for students to sign?

A: The contract will require contractors to accept liability for the students. Contractors may not waive that liability.

Question #45:

Can a bidder request additional hours of instruction exceeding the 40 hours if they are awarded a contract and do not/cannot provide services in other areas? For example, 60 hours in Workplace Readiness, 60 hours in Self Advocacy, 40 hours in Unpaid Work Based Learning, 0 hours Individual Work Based Learning?

A: There will be no adjustment considerations made to service category hours. Remember.

Question #46:

Where can we find the “Work Readiness Service Outcome report”? Will this be provided upon signing of a contract?

A: The Outcome Report will be uploaded to the same website as the other forms as soon as it is finalized for publishing.

Question #47:

What is considered an “artifact for Student Portfolio”?

A: Examples of artifacts can be found under the Student Portfolio definition in the Special Terms and Conditions of the contract template, Section 1(t):

“Student Portfolio” means a compilation of relevant material produced by the Student that may be presented to prospective employers to document the individual’s accomplishments while participating in Workplace Readiness Training, Work-Based Learning Activities, and Paid Work-Based Learning Experiences, including but not limited to:

- (1) Training topics and/or Work-Based Learning Experiences completed by the Student;*
- (2) Skill acquisition achieved by the Student;*
- (3) Sample resume, employment application, and employment-related references; and*

- (4) *Other items selected by a Student that showcase their accomplishments.*

Question #48:

Can a contractor provide their own completion evaluation/survey or do contractors need to use the one on the DVR website?

A: *Contractor can create and use their own evaluation surveys once reviewed and approved by the Pre-ETS Program Manager, as per Special Terms and Conditions of the contract, Section 5 (b)- Outreach, Recruitment, and Coordination.*

Question #49:

Will there be any writing and verbiage for rules/regulations regarding “Unpaid Work-Based Learning”?

A: *Unpaid Work-based Learning is defined in Section 1 under the Special Terms and Conditions of the contract template. Additional information is provided in the statement of work, section 4 of the Special Terms and Conditions of the contract template.
DVR will provide contractor training to successful bidders prior to the start date of the contract.*

Question #50:

How do contractors who work specifically with Juvenile Rehabilitation facilities provide work-based learning experiences if students are not allowed to leave the facility?

A: *All Work-based Learning Experiences for students in Juvenile Rehabilitation facilities would need to be coordinated and collaborated between DVR and JR staff to determine if this service is reasonable and appropriate.*

Question #51:

How do JR contractors ensure their enrolled students have not already participated in any other trainings provided by other Pre-ETS contractors?

A: *All Pre-ETS services must be collaborated and coordinated with DVR and JR staff. Regular check-ins will be able to identify students who are being served by other providers.*

Question #52:

Are JR contractors required to utilize and deliver the Pre-ETS Outreach Report form and coordinate delivery of contracted services if we do not have a DVR Regional Transition Consultant or designated DVR liaison at the facilities?

A: *Yes, the Outreach Report is a requirement for all Pre-ETS group service providers. All fully executed contracts will identify your DVR point-of-contact.*

Question #53:

How do JR contractors determine they are providing equitable access and outreach to serve a diverse student base if we are not able to market or promote our programs and not able to choose our students?

A: *All Pre-ETS services must be collaborated and coordinated with DVR and JR staff. Regular check-ins will be able to ensure that all students have access to the services they need.*

Question #54:

How are JR contractors/bidders supposed to provide a summary that provides an overview of outreach and recruitment activities during the month and copies of service outcome reports if we do not have control over or are given any ability to perform these duties?

A: *As a successful bidder, you will be required to participate in regularly scheduled meetings with your DVR point-of contact. These meetings are documents on the Outreach Report.*

Contractors will complete Service Delivery Outcome Reports which provide a summary of services and activities received by each student participant.

Question #55:

Will there be training on the DVR WAVES case management system for submitting billing invoices?

A: *All successful bidders will receive training provided by the DVR Training Team on the WAVES case management system.*

Question #56

Is there specific peer mentoring training curriculum provided by DVR? If not, does that mean we must find or create our own?

A: *Peer mentoring curriculum will be included in the DVR vetted curricula provided as an exhibit to the contract awarded to successful bidders*

Question #57

How many hours of self-advocacy aka peer mentoring training must mentors receive before they can be a mentor? If it is the minimum of 20 can those hours be completed via an online curriculum or individual work assignments or a combination of both?

A: *Peer mentors would be required to complete 20 hours of training, billed under Self-advocacy*

Question #58

Can peer mentoring training be done virtually after school as students are transported to various locations throughout the city/county in which they attend High School?

A: *All Pre-ETS services are required to be direct-delivered. If they are being provided "virtually" by a live instructor, then this would be allowed.*

Question #59

Page 21: 5(a) of the Contract Template states that contractors must use the outreach form to document collaboration with the regional DVR team. Will this form be included in the contract as attachments? May we use the monthly summary as a substitution of discussions our collaborations?

A: The Outreach Form will be included as an exhibit to the contract awarded to successful bidders. This form may not take the place of monthly conversations/discussions with the DVR contract liaison.

All other terms and conditions in this Solicitation remain the same.