



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS # 34320-09824
AMENDMENT # 3
FOR TELEPHONE SURVEYS INTERVIEWERS**

DATE: May 14, 2024

RFP # 34320-09824 IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

1. This RFP Schedule of Events updates and confirms scheduled RFP dates. Any event, time, or date containing revised or new text is highlighted.

EVENT	TIME (central time zone)	DATE
1. RFP Issued		April 8, 2024
2. Disability Accommodation Request Deadline	2:00 p.m.	April 11, 2024
3. Pre-response Conference	2:00 p.m.	April 15, 2024
4. Notice of Intent to Respond Deadline	2:00 p.m.	April 16, 2024
5. Written "Questions & Comments" Deadline	2:00 p.m.	April 19, 2024
6. State Response to Written "Questions & Comments"		May 14, 2024
7. Response Deadline	2:00 p.m.	May 21, 2024
8. State Completion of Technical Response Evaluations		June 5, 2024
9. State Opening & Scoring of Cost Proposals	2:00 p.m.	June 7, 2024
10. Negotiations (Optional)	4:30 p.m.	June 7-11, 2024
11. State Notice of Intent to Award Released <u>and</u> RFP Files Opened for Public Inspection	2:00 p.m.	June 13, 2024
12. End of Open File Period		June 20, 2024

13. State sends contract to Contractor for signature		June 24, 2024
14. Contractor Signature Deadline	2:00 p.m.	June 27, 2024

2. State responses to questions and comments in the table below amend and clarify this RFP.

Any restatement of RFP text in the Question/Comment column shall NOT be construed as a change in the actual wording of the RFP document.

RFP Section	#	Question/Comment	State Response
	1	Who is the incumbent vendor?	Louisiana State University's Public Policy Research Lab
	2	Are you happy with your current vendor?	The State is not able to comment on this.
	3	Are there any performance improvements you would like to see made?	The State is seeking a Respondent that will meet the requirements listed in the RFP and Pro Forma Contract.
	4	What is your annual spend with the incumbent vendor?	BRFSS: \$30,000 per month PRAMS: \$2,400 per month
	5	What is your monthly and/or annual budget?	This will be determined by the maximum liability of the awarded contract.
	6	Can you provide any call arrival patterns (daily, weekly, monthly)?	Data collectors are supposed to follow the calling schedule provided in CDC's Data Collection Protocol document, and as stated in the RFP. This will be every day, including the weekends.
	7	Will you need additional language support beyond English?	PRAMS will need callers who are able to conduct surveys in Spanish.
	8	Do you have an estimated time requirement for training?	BRFSS: No training will be provided by the TN Department of Health, but should be provided by the contractor. There is no time requirement. PRAMS – 1 week. TN will provide training materials
	9	Would an offeror be disqualified for not meeting the references requirements exactly as stated in the RFP?	Respondents should follow the directions and rules contained in the RFP.
	10	Please describe the expectations regarding quotas, i.e. total completes per month.	BRFSS expects a minimum of 417 total monthly completes (5,004, annual); ~42 landline completes and ~375 cellphone completes. PRAMS expects at least 50% completes on each batch released into Phone Phase
	11	Are partial completes retained/submitted? If so, what percentage complete is required?	BRFSS includes partial completes in the count of "total completes"; approximately 10% of completes should be partial completes and the percentage should not exceed 15%.

			PRAMS includes partial phone – final as a complete
	12	Do you prioritize by demographic?	BRFSS does not. PRAMS oversamples mothers of underweight babies.
	13	Can you provide any historical data regarding average length of time to complete a survey call?	The average time to complete a BRFSS call is approximately 25-27 minutes. The average time to complete a PRAMS call is approximately 45 mins.
	14	In order to determine programming requirements can you please provide following related to survey scripts a. Number of open-ended questions? b. Do you require probing of negative responses? c. Number of true or false questions? d. Number of items in a series? e. Number of skip patterns? f. Number of alternative paths based on response?	This will vary quite a bit from year-to-year and depend on the survey's length of core section and any additional optional/state-added questions that are included. a) Number of open-ended questions: None b) Probing of negative responses depends on the question but occurs rarely. c) Number of true/false questions: BRFSS - None PRAMS - 50% of the questionnaire d) Number of items in a series average about 4 but can include many items. e) Number of skip patterns for BRFSS is approximately 30. For PRAMS it is 27. f) Number of alternative paths based on response follows any present skip patterns.
	15	What is the data output format?	DAT files that are compatible with the CDC's Ci3 WinCATI system.
	16	Breakoff's – do we record these? Or discard. Are they paid? If so, at what completion point.	Breakoffs are retained for BRFSS and PRAMS as partial completes if respondent answers the necessary questions to meet the definition of a partial complete; otherwise, breakoffs are discarded. All breakoffs are "paid" in that the vendor must get a final disposition code for all phone numbers sampled, which requires calling time.
	17	The RFP mentions mail modality of the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Management System (PRAMS) in several places. That said, the RFP does not appear to specifically request that the contract conduct the mail phase of the PRAMS project. It only asks for pricing for the phone phase, data entry or returned paper surveys, and other PRAMS activities. To clarify, is the RFP requesting that the contractor also conduct the mail phase of the PRAMS project? And if so, where would the cost for that be placed in the cost proposal?	No, the mail phase is performed in-house by staff of the Tennessee Department of Health.
RFP Attachment 6.4.	18	The Reference Questionnaire states the following requirements:	As per RFP attachment 6.4. References from at least three (3) different individuals are required to satisfy these requirements.

		<p>two (2) contracts Respondent currently services that are similar in size and scope to the services required by this RFP;</p> <p>and three (3) completed contracts that are similar in size and scope to the services required by this RFP.</p> <p>If the contractor has multiple years of providing PRAMS services to a client can they use these clients to fulfill the requirements of two current contracts and also use these clients to fulfill the requirements of three completed contracts due to the provision of services in previous years on previous contracts?</p>	
Pro Forma Section D.32. & D.19.	19	<p>There are two areas of the RFP where our Legal department would send a letter of exception to change the language. Based on the RFP, sending anything not specifically requested in the RFP could be grounds for being considered non-responsive. Below, you will find the two areas our legal department has issues with, as well as our exception response. It is our hope that these questions might be answered now. If that is not possible, would our exceptions be something we submit and discuss with the state during the contract negotiation phase if we are chosen for award? Or can we include an exception letter without fear of being deemed non-responsive?</p> <p>a. Insurance - We would take exception and let TN know we are self-insured and ask for language stating self-insurance was acceptable.</p> <p>b. Hold Harmless - We would ask that any indemnification provided be to the extent permitted by law applicable to the Contractor and without waiving sovereign immunity.</p>	<p>Respondents should not submit redlines as part of their Technical Response as per RFP section 3.3. Per section 5.3. the State can entertain limited negotiations provided that that the changes do not materially affect the competitive nature of the RFP.</p>
	20	<p>Who is the current contractor for the project?</p>	<p>Please see answer to question 1 above.</p>

Pro Forma Section A.4.a.xi.	21	Our organization conducts criminal background checks (CBC) on all employees and all staff from staffing agencies. Is this sufficient to meet the CBC requirements contained in the RFP, or would an additional CBC be required?	That is sufficient.
	22	We are a unit contained within a state university. There are multiple places on the RFP that ask for information about the respondent. For example, B5, B15, and B16. Should we answer these questions at the unit level or university level?	This is dependent on which legal entity is responding to this RFP.
RFP Section 1.1.2. & RFP Attachment 6.3.	23	Section 1.1.2 references 5,000 annual surveys. The cost proposal on page 25 states 7,000 but indicates that quantity is for evaluation scoring. Can the state confirm that we are to price for 7,000 annual completes using an 80% cell and 20% landline split?	I don't believe 7,000 completes is currently financially feasible; if it becomes feasible, we would like the vendor to have the capacity to obtain those 7,000 completes. Please price for 5,000 completes with cell-to-landline split of 90% cell and 10% landline.
RFP Section 2.1. & Pro Forma Section B.1.	24	Please clarify the period of performance for the contract. Page 5 indicates the contractor signature deadline is June 13, 2024. Is the contract start date July 1, 2024, or another date? And what is the full contract term?	The effective date of the resulting contract will be determined at a later date.
RFP Section 4.8.	25	Will bidders be allowed to submit a redaction copy of their proposals for post award inspection, and if so, where should it be placed within the proposal submission?	No, see please RFP Release # 2 for an update to RFP section 4.8. the full response contents and associated document will be open to public inspection.
RFP Attachment 6.3.	26	Per attachment 6.3, the RFP states that the cost proposal must be completed exactly as required. Please clarify where pricing assumptions should be provided in the response to the solicitation.	Respondents shall provide their pricing on a copy of attachment 6.3.
RFP Attachment 6.3. & Pro Forma Section C	27	Is it anticipated that the price proposal costs will remain valid for the entire duration of the contract, or will they be renewed annually based on the requested scope of work?	The prices bid during this RFP process will be the prices paid for the duration of the contract.
Pro Forma Section C	28	Can the state clarify the type of contract they are expecting to award (e.g., Fixed Firm Price, time, and materials)?	Please see answer to question 27 above, and refer to section A of the Pro Forma contract.

RFP Attachment 6.3.	29	The cost proposal asks bidders to provide hourly costs for three items and provides an evaluation factor to be used to calculate an evaluation cost for each item. However, it seems possible that the evaluation factor on the hourly items may not be the actual number of hours to complete said work (this could also be true for the volumes of 7,000 and 1,000 BRFSS and Asthma completes, respectively). This would create an inconsistency between total cost and evaluation cost. Can the state clarify how bidders should address this issue so that the evaluation cost to conduct the survey accurately reflects the true cost? Or is it expected that the evaluation cost may not equal the total cost? If so, should bidders provide the actual total cost somewhere within the cost proposal?	Please note that the evaluation factors are not necessarily synonymous with expected quantities.
Pro Forma Section A.4.a.xii.	30	Section xii in the contract references calling times. To clarify, the state is requiring that the data collection vendor adhere to an acceptable CDC data collection protocol as stated on page 38 within section L subsection i?	Yes, correct.
Pro Forma Section A.4.a.xiv.	31	Section XIV references providing weekly reports on hours worked by each job classification. To clarify, is the state looking to know how many hours interviewers worked on the study each month?	Yes, this is correct. We want to know the number of hours worked by interviewers, managers, and supervisors.
Pro Forma Section A.5.l.i.	32	Section A5 references "The only time there should be fewer than fifteen (15) calls ... is when a call results in a terminating outcome". Please confirm CDC protocol of 6-8 call attempts can be followed.	Protocol of 6-8 call attempts can be followed for TN BRFSS. PRAMS protocol states 15 calls per phone number. Training materials will be provided to vendor
Pro Forma Section A.5.m.	33	Section M references supervisory staff being on-site. Since many call centers shifted to virtual call centers during the pandemic and have maintained this infrastructure, we assume this requirement can be fulfilled by having an online supervisory monitoring interviewers any time	Yes, this is correct.

		there are active interviewers dialing the study. Please confirm.	
Pro Forma Section A.5.b. & RFP Attachment 6.3.	34	Section B within Attachment 6.6 states minimum of 600 ACBS completes a year. However, the cost proposal indicates 1,000 but states this is just for evaluation purposes. Please confirm that contractors should provide pricing for 600 ACBS completes.	The ACBS will be discontinued by CDC in 2025; there is no stipulation that states can't add those questions as a part of their state-added section, but I don't see this being feasible for TN BRFSS>
	35	Who was the prior data collector used by the state?	Please see answer to question 1 above.
	36	What was the prior data collection contract value?	\$1,638,700.00 for 5 years of data collection.
Pro Forma Section A.5.a.i.	37	Section A.5. BRFSS Deliverables indicates the average survey length is 20 – 25 minutes. Can the state confirm which interview length should be used to determine pricing?	Please use 25-27 minutes.
	38	What is the average percent of completed Spanish interviews per year?	PRAMS – there is no set % of completes for Spanish interviewee
	39	Is there an incumbent and how long have they been servicing project?	Louisiana State University's Public Policy Research Lab, since 2014.
	40	Can this be a remote call center, distributed WFH resources.	See answer to question 33 above.
Pro Forma Section A.5.m.	41	Virtual monitoring of telephone interviews by the State's Project Coordinator will occur on a monthly basis, is this Real-time or also recording?	Real-time
	42	Could you provide more detailed expectations for the call center services in terms of daily or weekly call volume and handling capacities?	<p>For BRFSS, Volume will depend on the monthly sample size.</p> <p>The BRFSS Data Collection Protocol notes for call scheduling:</p> <p>Data collection follows a suggested BRFSS interviewing schedule; all calls for a given survey month should be completed in the same sample month if possible. In some cases, samples begun in one month may be completed in the first 7-10 days of the next month. Up to 6 calling attempts may be made for each landline and cell phone number in the sample, depending on state regulations for calling and outcomes of previous calling attempts. Although states have some flexibility in distribution of calling times, in general, surveys are conducted using the following calling occasions:</p> <p>Landline calling hours:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct 40% of landline calling attempts on weekdays (before 5:00 PM) • Conduct 40% of landline calling attempts on weeknights (after 5:00 PM) and weekends • Conduct 20% of landline calling attempts on the weekend. <p>Cellphone calling hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct cell phone calling attempts during all three calling occasions (weekday, weeknight, and weekend), with approximately 30% on weekend calling occasions. • Change schedules to accommodate holidays and special events. • Make weeknight calls after 5:00 PM. • Adhere to respondents' requests for specific callback/appointment times whenever possible. Weekends have been shown to be good times for callback scheduling. <p>For PRAMS, a total of ~100 mom's are in a monthly sample size.</p>
	43	Budget Breakdown: Is it possible to get a more detailed breakdown of the budget, including any caps on specific expense categories like personnel training or technology infrastructure?	There are no caps on expense categories if contractor stays within overall budget.
	44	Scoring Weightage Clarification: Can you provide more insight into how the evaluation criteria weightings were determined, particularly the emphasis on technical qualifications versus cost?	Refer RFP section 6.2 & 6.3
	45	Additional Success Criteria: Beyond the stated evaluation criteria, are there other success factors or priorities that respondents should consider in their proposals?	All criteria used to evaluate the technical response are found in RFP attachment 6.2.
RFP Section 3.	46	Format Specifics: Are there any additional formatting or submission guidelines that respondents should follow, especially regarding the organization of technical versus cost information?	Please refer to RFP section 3.1.
RFP Section 4.8.	47	Confidentiality Concerns: How will confidential or proprietary information included in proposals be protected throughout the evaluation process?	Please see response to question 25 above.
RFP Section 4.4.	48	Subcontractor Approval Process: Can you elaborate on the	The contractor will discuss in writing with the Department of Health at the time of need and

		process and criteria for subcontractor approval post-award?	the State will determine the subcontractor's ability to perform work in the State of Tennessee and will provide a ruling in writing.
	49	Contract Amendments: How frequently does the State anticipate contract amendments, and under what circumstances?	This will depend on the need as it arises.
RFP Attachment 6.2. Section A.4. and Pro Forma Contract Section A.4.a.iii.	50	How many bilingual interviewers are required, and are there specific language competencies aside from Spanish that are necessary?	For PRAMS – 1 interviewer is required who speaks Spanish. Please see Pro Forma section A.4.a.iii.
	51	What are the specific roles and responsibilities of the State's project management team in relation to the contractor's team?	The program project managers/coordinators are to ensure the contractor is adhering to all contractual obligations, to collaborate with the CDC to develop a sampling plan and provide that plan and the annual questionnaire to the contractor in sufficient time to ensure data collection begins on time. They are also to share any training/protocol documentation or other technical assistance provided by the CDC. The coordinators are also to provide the contractor with a template for the monthly monitoring report submitted to the state.
	52	Previous Contractors: Is it possible to share insights or feedback from previous contracts related to this RFP's scope of work, without violating confidentiality agreements?	No.
	53	Historical Challenges: Have there been any significant challenges or limitations in past survey projects that respondents should be aware of and address in their proposals?	Currently we are aiming to reach a 50% response rate with PRAMS but are currently much lower. Would really like to see this improve. Also, Staffing/continuity, providing timely contract deliverables--such as monthly data collection reports--without prompt from the state, respecting the contract budget.
	54	Technological Specifications: Are there any specific technological platforms or software tools that the State prefers for data entry, survey administration, and data analysis?	Ci3 WinCATI for BRFS.
	55	Quality Control Metrics: Could you specify the quality control metrics or benchmarks that will be used to evaluate the survey data's accuracy and reliability?	PRAMS - At least ten percent (10%) of mail in surveys will be monitored for data entry accuracy. Supervisory staff shall be on-site with the interviewers anytime interviewing is taking place. Interviewers that are found not compliant following the interview protocol or script, acting in a non-professional manner or at least ninety-five percent (95%) accurate in data entry may be removed from the project. BRFSS uses the percent of partial completes to monitor potential for data falsification. Other metrics for QC include: disposition code reports

			and adherence to data collection protocol guidelines.
	56	Milestone Details: Can more details be provided regarding key project milestones, especially concerning survey cycles and data reporting frequencies?	TN BRFSS develops the annual survey every fall, works with the contractor to program and test the survey, and launches the new survey (ideally) in January after receiving OMB approval. Data is collected as monthly samples and uploaded to the CDC following guidelines found in the Data Collection Protocol. PRAMS survey cycles are called Phases. New phases are implemented every 3-5 years. The state can launch a supplement survey typically at the beginning of a data collection year in May.

3. **Delete RFP # 34320-09824, in its entirety, and replace it with RFP # 34320-09824, Release # 2, attached to this amendment.** Revisions of the original RFP document are emphasized within the new release. **Any sentence or paragraph containing revised or new text is highlighted.**

4. **RFP Amendment Effective Date.** The revisions set forth herein shall be effective upon release. All other terms and conditions of this RFP not expressly amended herein shall remain in full force and effect.