DATE: January 29, 2024

TO: All Potential Vendors

FROM: Michael Callahan, RFQQ Coordinator

SUBJECT: Amendment #1 to 24-RFQQ-003 – *User Experience Consulting Services*

**Summary:**

This document is prepared by the Washington State Consolidated Technology Services (CTS) and shall serve as the sole official reply to Vendor Questions submitted in response to RFP 24-RFQQ-003.

Questions and responses are numbered for ease of reference only and are in no order or priority. Questions and comments have generally been stated as they were received except that some questions have been modified to maintain vendor confidentiality or to reduce redundancies. The answers may only explain or clarify some aspects that are already addressed in the RFQQ. Some of the answers may also supplement or change what was previously stated in the RFQQ or in an appendix. It is important that Vendors review all questions and answers. Vendors are advised to obtain and thoroughly review the complete, formal RFQQ located at: <http://watech.wa.gov/procurement-announcements>. In the revised RFQQ deleted text appears ~~struck through in black font~~, while added text appears underlined in red font.

**V****endor Questions and Official Answers**

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| # | **QUESTION** | **CTS RESPONSE** |
| 1 | Section 3.4.1 Response Contents: This section mentions that the Response must contain “. . . completed client references” – but a later section lists references as optional. By “completed” does CTS mean a completed Vendor Client Reference Form – OR – will a list of three client references within Volume 1 suffice since section 4.15.2 mentions a list and calls the references optional? | Section 3.4.1 has been revised to clarify that only the reference information is required. Please see the revised RFQQ released with this amendment. |
| 2 | Section 6.7 Cost Model: The RFQQ sets the same hourly rate cap for Entry, Junior, and Senior Experience Level staff as the previous solicitation in 2018. To ensure availability of qualified staff, would CTS please consider a reasonable increase to this cap considering the significant wage escalation that has occurred since 2018 and that this contract will be locking rates for 3 years moving forward? A typical 3% escalation from 2018 to today takes the $150 an hourly rate to $173.89 in 2023, this aligns with both inflation and the increasing costs to retain qualified personnel. | Section 6.7 has been revised. Please see the revised RFQQ released with this amendment. |
| 3 | Section 6.7 Cost Model: The RFQQ sets the same hourly rate cap for Entry, Junior, and Senior Experience Level staff as the previous solicitation in 2018. Given that pricing is factored into the scoring model at 25%, would CTS consider removing hourly rate caps for all labor categories so that vendors can propose best value rates and pricing can be evaluated by the existing scoring model? | Section 6.7 has been revised. Please see the revised RFQQ released with this amendment. |
| 4 | Section 4.14 says the mandatory requirements must be highlighted and cross-referenced in the Candidate Resumes. Should responses to the mandatory requirements described in Section 5.1 only be addressed in the Candidate Resumes, or should there be a separate narrative addressing the company’s overall experience providing these services? | Each item in section 5.1 requires a response describing your experience providing these services. |
| 5 | Can CTS please clarify which requirements should be highlighted and cross-referenced in the Candidate Resumes? 5.1 only (5.1.1 through 5.1.10) or 5.1 through 5.9? | All requirements in Section 5.1 – i.e. 5.1.1 through 5.1.10 – should be included. |
| 6 | Will CTS provide a standard resume template, or can contractors use their own format so long as Mandatory requirements are highlighted and cross-referenced? | You may use your own format for the resumes. |
| 7 | I own a thriving UX design, research and strategy company and saw the recent posting for subcontracting services under RFQQ-003. We’re actively bidding on projects for the state of Washington, and have talent in PST, however we are incorporated in MA and HQ’d here. Are we at a disadvantage in competing here? These take a lot of time to put together, and although I’m positive we’d be a fantastic skillset fit - I’d like to validate we aren’t disadvantaged due to location. Can you validate? | There is no disadvantage in the evaluation of response to being an out-of-state vendor.  However, please pay attention to RFQQ section 4.11(M) *Onsite Availability*. |
| 8 | What is your server’s size limit for eMail attachments? | The email attachment limit is 30Mb. |
| 9 | Who is/are the incumbent/s on this contract? | Anthro-Tech is the vendor with who CTS most recently had a contract. The contract expired in December 2023. |
| 10 | The Schedule table shows the State’s final written answers to the Vendor questions is 1/29/24, and the response due date is 5 business days later on 2/5/24. Our proposed project plan is dependent on answers to our questions and the duration between answered questions and the proposal due date is not sufficient to fully integrate answers into our proposal. We respectfully request a 1-week extension to the due date. | Due to the urgent need to contract for these services CTS cannot extend the schedule. |
| 11 | Section 4.14 identifies the need for three professional resumes. For the Section 5.1 User Experience Consultant Services (Items 5.1.1-5.1.10), can these 10 services be met collectively with the three professionals or does each professional need to meet the 10 services? | They may be met collectively within the three resumes, each resume does not have to cover all skills. |
| 12 | Does CTS want the Vendor or the User Experience (UX) professional(s) to answer Items 5.2.1 and 5.2.2? | Vendor must answer all Mandatory items and must be submitted in your response. |
| 13 | Section 5 intro paragraph states, “Vendors must respond to the following requirements per the instructions set forth in section 3” and is followed by Subsections 5.1 – 5.9. Subsection 5.1 is for the UX professionals. Are Subsections 5.2 – 5.9 to be addressed by the Vendor or the UX professionals? | Vendor must answer all Mandatory items and must be submitted in your response. |
| 14 | Although 4.11 states the work performed may be completed remotely, is it the State’s intent to conduct interviews in-person in Olympia, WA?  Would the state consider online interviews? | If optioned, CTS will conduct the interviews online. |
| 15 | Would the State consider allowing three different hourly rates for the three different experience levels?  Would the State be willing to increase the rate by at least 20% for each of the higher experience levels (e.g., $150 - $180 - $216)? | Yes, different rates can be provided based on experience levels as is in the Appendix E *Cost Model.* Vendors may not alter the Cost Model. |
| 16 | Can the Vendor supply a client’s recent rated reference form in lieu of Appendix G? | No, Vendor may not supply a client’s recent rated reference form. Please see Section 4.15 – Vendor shall provide as references the names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and contact person for three (3) representative customers – i.e. do not have references complete Appendix G to include with your Response. |
| 17 | It appears that Appendix G needs to be sent to the Client reference and returned with the Vendor’s response. With the release date of the RFQQ on 1/17, time for our company to evaluate and make a Bid/No-Bid decision, and then sending our client’s the required reference form by 1/19, only allows the client to rate and return the form within 3 weeks’ time. Many State government agencies require 30 days’ advance notice for rated references. We respectfully request a 2-week extension to the due date. | Please see answer to Question #16 and Question #10. |
| 18 | Can you please share any reference links or sites for a better understanding? | CTS does not have any links or reference sites to share. |
| 19 | What is the estimated budget for this requirement? | This is an optional use contract which Washington government organizations can utilize for their projects. Given this, there is no estimated budget or revenue stream, it is dependent on agency needs. |
| 20 | Is it mandatory to provide the Signed Client references forms? Or is it enough if we just provide client contact information as part of references? | Please see answer to Question #16. |
| 21 | Are you seeking User experience services only for Website or mobile application as well? If it is for mobile application, are you looking for both android and IOs. | User Experience services may be offered for websites, web applications, mobile applications, forms, documents and printed materials. |
| 22 | “(MS 100) Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting: Collect and synthesize qualitative and quantitative data from various activities.  Based on data collected and analysis done, provide formal written reports and presentations of findings and recommendations”. In this, what are the data sources to be collected? What type of formal written reports are you expecting? | Please respond with your methods for collecting analyzing and reporting on data related to the services outlined in the RFQQ. |
| 23 | Number of UX pages to be developed? Please provide the count of static pages, dynamic pages (If any)? | Please see answer to Question #19. |
| 24 | Any specific technology stack to be used for this requirement? | Please see answer to Question #19 and Question #21. |
| 25 | Is there any data migration to be performed? | No. |
| 26 | Hosting needs to be performed in Cloud or on-premises? | N/A |
| 27 | What is the estimated budget for this requirement? | Please see answer to Question #19. |
| 28 | Any page limit for candidate resumes? | There is no page limit to resumes. |
| 29 | Is it mandatory or is there any additional preference for sub-contracting MWBE Firms? | CTS encourages MWBE, veterans and small business to submit response. Please see RFQQ Section 3.20. |
| 30 | Can we provide the sample resumes of the proposed candidates? | Please see RFQQ Section 4.14 (M) *Candidate Résumés.* |
| 31 | It is mentioned to submit three resumes of the candidates. But in the price sheet, you are seeking for four candidate’s hourly rate. Can you please tell us clearly how many resources are required? | Please see answer to Question #19. This is not a single project. There will be multiple projects, of multiple sizes, requiring varying levels of resources on a project by project basis. |
| 32 | Could you provide more details on the expected scale and complexity of projects for which User Experience Consulting services will be required? | Please see answer to Question #19 and Question #21. |
| 33 | Can you elaborate on the expected level of involvement in each of the listed User Experience consulting services (e.g., User Research, Content Strategy, etc.)? | The Vendor is expected to lead all activities outlined in this RFQQ. |
| 34 | What are the primary goals or outcomes that CTS aims to achieve through the User Experience consulting services, particularly in terms of operational intent? | Creating usable products for the Residents of Washington State. |
| 35 | Could you provide more insights into the expected volume of projects and the nature of FTE resource supplementation required? | Please see answer to Question #19 and Question #21. |
| 36 | [Vendor] requests an amendment extending the proposal's due date by two weeks. We have implemented a new company process for all RFX, which requires legal review (5 days) and General Manager approval (2- 3 days). | Please see answer to Question #10. |
| 37 | Email Attachment Size [section 3.6.1]: Given that submissions are via email, could you specify any limitations on document size? If there's a restriction (e.g., less than 10MB), is a two-email submission acceptable? | Please see the answer to Question #8. |
| 38 | Consultant Availability [section 4.11]: Assuming our U.S.-based staff can work onsite in Washington as and when required, is there any restriction on locations from where our global team works remotely? | There are no limitations per se, but there may be depending on the customer agency. |
| 39 | Candidate Resumes [section 4.14]: Is there flexibility in the number of resumes submitted, specifically can we submit more than 3? | CTS will only consider the first three resumes. |
| 40 | Sample Examples [section 5.1]: Is there a limit to the number of sample examples that can be submitted in the response for each technical requirement? | No, but examples must be demonstrative of the requirement. |
| 41 | User Research Recruiting & Incentives [section 6.4]: How should costs related to user participant recruitment and incentivization (finding and paying participants for their time during user research) be handled from a vendor perspective? Would that be handled directly by CTS? | Vendor will manage recruitment and honoraria for all projects. |
| 42 | Could you state who the previous incumbent was from the previous contract? | Please see the answer to Question #9. |
| 43 | Section 4.1.4 states the vendor must certify they've been providing user experience consulting services for five or more years, and then in 4.2.3, there is a request to list the total number of years the legal entity has been in business and under the present name. Is there a particular reason why there is a request for both the number of years providing consulting services and the number of years an entity has been doing business under the present name? Why would the latter be a requirement, if the former question is answered? | As a state entity and a steward of public funds, CTS must conduct due diligence regarding the Vendors it contracts with. |
| 44 | Should the pricing be submitted be project cost based, personnel based or both.  E.g. For ‘Survey Development’ we could provide the cost of a 300 participant survey all up that includes participant recruiting, incentives, survey coding programming, analysis and reporting as line items. Alternately we could provide an hourly rate for the roles involved e.g. UX Researcher Level 2 @ $x for x hours. | Please provide an hourly rate for each experience levels requested in Appendix E *Cost Model –* also see Section 6.7 (MS400) *Cost Model*. |
| 45 | Given that research scope varies widely by project (Number of participants interviewed, type analysis required, complexity of subject matter, length of interviews) our assumption is that any costs provided for a project has some room for adjustment based on these factors.  How would you prefer we outline these in the proposal. | Please see answer to Question #44. |
| 46 | Is there any possibility of extending the submission deadline for responses to this RFQ? | Due to the urgent need to contract for these services CTS cannot extend the schedule. |