

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

# EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

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State House, Room 373  
Boston, MA



## Request for Response (RFR)

**Document Title: Social Innovation Financing for Homelessness  
– Service Providers**

**Document Number: RFR ANF SIF HSP**

**January 18, 2012**

Please Note: This is a single document associated with a complete Solicitation that can be found on Comm-PASS. All Bidders are responsible for reviewing and adhering to all information, forms and requirements found in all tabs and related forum records for the entire Solicitation. To locate the Solicitation associated with this document, go to [www.comm-pass.com](http://www.comm-pass.com), select the "Search for solicitations" link, enter the above Document Number in the "Document Number" field, and select the "Search" button. Bidders who need help regarding Comm-PASS navigation may refer to the Comm-PASS Resource Center at [www.mass.gov/osd](http://www.mass.gov/osd) for documents and guides. Bidders may also contact the Comm-PASS Helpdesk at [comm-pass@state.ma.us](mailto:comm-pass@state.ma.us) or the Comm-PASS Helpline at 1-888-MA-STATE. The Helpline is staffed from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday Eastern Standard or Daylight time, as applicable, except on federal, state and Suffolk county holidays.

## **SECTION 1. BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND PURPOSE**

### **A. OVERVIEW**

Through this Request for Responses (RFR), the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (EOAF) , in conjunction with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), seeks to partner with entrepreneurs from the provider community to execute a limited number of pay for success contracts targeted at providing stable housing for the chronically homeless.

The contracts would be designed to provide stable housing and other services for several hundred chronically homeless individuals with the goal of improving their well being and reducing Medicaid costs.

This RFR specifically seeks responses from **Service Providers** and is being issued in conjunction with a separate RFR targeted towards intermediaries. Responders may make note of partnerships that they have in place or are currently considering with intermediaries or other organizations. EOAF will not, however, consider joint applications from providers and intermediaries.

### **B. EOAF BACKGROUND**

The Executive Office for Administration and Finance is responsible for fiscal and administrative policies that serve to ensure the financial stability, efficiency, and effectiveness of state government and assist the Governor in developing and implementing cost-effective public policy initiatives to benefit the residents of the Commonwealth.

### **C. CONTEXT**

Last May, in keeping with the Patrick-Murray Administration's on-going commitment to change the way government does business and to find savings and efficiencies across state agencies, Massachusetts became the first state in the nation to take formal steps toward a comprehensive social innovation financing program. Social innovation financing, which includes pay for success contracts and social impact bonds, is a creative approach to supporting innovative service delivery programs.

Innovative social service programs often have difficulty securing government funding because:

- One year budget cycles make it difficult to finance long-term, preventative measures, particularly in social services;
- Tight budgets make state governments wary of putting taxpayer dollars at risk for new initiatives;

- Current funding is insufficiently focused on results and performance measurement, which allows less effective programs to persist, and reduces the state's capacity for innovation; and
- Preventative programs often don't get funded out of the budgets they help reduce.

Social innovation financing helps counteract these hurdles through the use of pay for success contracts. Pay for success contracts are contracts in which payments to service providers (or to intermediaries who raise private sector funds to finance the operations of service providers) are made largely or entirely on the basis of achieving specific performance targets. As such, the state pays only for actual, rather than promised, results.

The benefits of the pay for success structure include:

- Creating incentives for improved program performance and reduced costs;
- Allowing for more rapid learning about which programs work and which do not; and
- Accelerating the adoption of new, more effective solutions.

Given the length of time often required to accurately measure outcomes, pay for success contracts may be supported through the use of social impact bonds. In such an arrangement, third party investors/intermediaries supply service providers with operating capital and other expertise to support pay for success contracts with the government. This approach is currently being piloted by the UK Justice Ministry as a way to finance services aimed at reducing post-release reoffending by prisoners. In the U.S., the Obama Administration has recently proposed spending up to \$100 million to test this approach.

In order to determine how best to implement social innovation financing in Massachusetts, the Executive Office for Administration and Finance issued a Request for Information (RFI) under the title "Social Innovation Financing" on May 6, 2010.

Based on the information obtained from that RFI, as well as the Patrick-Murray Administration's commitment to providing stable housing for the homeless, EOAF now seeks to execute a limited number of social innovation financing contracts targeted at serving the chronically homeless.

Through this RFR, EOAF is seeking innovative programming ideas from service providers who are interested in partnering with the Commonwealth to achieve the goals outlined below.

EOAF has issued a separate RFR seeking intermediaries to help develop program models and assemble service delivery teams, raise private sector capital to finance provider operating costs, monitor and track outcomes measures, and manage provider performance throughout the duration of a multiyear pay for success contract.

Depending on the structure of the project and related programs, contractors may need to enter into data privacy and security agreements with other state agencies.

#### **D. GOALS FOR CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS PROGRAMMING**

A “chronically homeless” person is defined as an “unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.” For purposes of this RFR, a person shall also be considered chronically homeless if the person has been identified by a shelter provider as a frequent user of shelter and medical and emergency services.

By definition, chronically homeless individuals have disabling conditions. Often times, these include co-occurring mental and physical conditions. Research has shown that the chronically homeless are high users of emergency medical services and are often hospitalized multiple times a year.

Research also suggests that providing stable housing for chronically homeless has the potential both to improve their quality of life and to reduce state expenditures in areas such as Medicaid, homeless shelters, psychiatric hospitals and corrections.

EAOF is therefore seeking programming ideas for serving this population. Specifically, EAOF seeks to accomplish the following goals:

- Establish permanent housing for the chronically homeless;
- Provide appropriate support for those individuals who are housed; and
- Promote positive health outcomes with those housed such that acute medical care usage is significantly decreased.

## **SECTION 2. PROCUREMENT DETAILS**

EOAF is issuing this RFR in accordance with 801 CMR 21.00, which governs the procurement of services by state agencies and requires a competitive procurement process, including the issuance of a RFR, for acquisitions of all commodities and services.

Words used in this RFR shall have the meanings defined in 801 CMR 21.00. Unless otherwise specified in this RFR, all communications, responses, and documentation must be in English, all measurements must be provided in feet, inches, and pounds and all cost proposals or figures in U.S. currency. All responses must be submitted in accordance with the specific terms of this RFR

The execution of any Contract will be contingent upon EOAF obtaining sufficient funding through appropriation and EOAF makes no guarantee that a Contract, or any obligation to purchase any commodities or services will result from this RFR.

EOAF reserves the right to amend this RFR at any time prior to the date the responses are due. Any such amendment will be posted to the Commonwealth's procurement web site, [www.Comm-PASS.com](http://www.Comm-PASS.com). Bidders are cautioned to check this site regularly, as this will be the sole method used for notification of changes.

All responses must be submitted in accordance with specifications in **Section 3**.

### **A. ACQUISITION METHOD**

Fee for service. Successful Respondents will receive a service contract that establishes a reimbursement schedule based on negotiated performance benchmarks and outcomes. This contract may be directly with the Commonwealth or it may be a subcontract administered through an intermediary organization.

### **B. SINGLE OR MULTIPLE CONTRACT(S)**

EOAF anticipates entering into a limited number of initial contracts in this open enrollment procurement process, which may be opened at any time by EOAF in order to allow new Bidders to submit responses after the initial selection period as deemed necessary by and at the discretion of EOAF. Responses received during the open enrollment period will be handled in the same manner as any other RFR response. EOAF reserves the right to enter into negotiations sequentially and gradually over the next year.

### **C. ADDITIONAL CONTRACT AND RESPONSE INFORMATION**

Accomplishing the goals of this RFR will likely require the coordinated efforts of several service providers, third party investors, and intermediaries. EOAF therefore reserves the right to bring multiple RFR Responders together for the negotiation of a single contract. Doing so will ensure that all necessary social innovation financing roles are filled. As

such, an important part of the credibility of proposals will be an ability to demonstrate willingness and capability to collaborate effectively with other service entities.

#### **D. USE OF PROCUREMENT BY SINGLE OR MULTIPLE AGENCIES**

This RFR is being issued as a Multiple Department Procurement/Limited Department User Contract.

#### **E. ANTICIPATED DURATION OF THE CONTRACT**

Multi-year contracts including a minimum of a three-year service delivery period, with sufficient time before the service delivery period to build to full scale and with sufficient time after the service period to allow for evaluation of outcomes.

#### **F. ANTICIPATED FUNDING, EXPENDITURES AND COMPENSATION STRUCTURE**

The contractor will be reimbursed through a pay for success reimbursement system determined in contract negotiation.

#### **G. BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS**

- a. A history of service delivery in Massachusetts or demonstrated potential to undertake successful operations in Massachusetts;
- b. Demonstrated capacity for completing program evaluations, tracking program participants and keeping accurate records; and
- c. Demonstrated capacity for managing services to meet performance targets.

## SECTION 3. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

### A. SCHEDULE

#### a. Deadline for Written Questions:

Final written questions regarding this RFR must be received by email to [social.innovation@state.ma.us](mailto:social.innovation@state.ma.us). No phone calls with verbal questions, please.

#### b. Procurement Calendar:

Description	Date
RFR Release	01/18/2012
Deadline with Receipt of Written Questions	01/25/2012
Response Due Date	03/09/2012

### B. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Please submit one original and five complete copies. Responses must be received by EOAF at the following address no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 9, 2012. Responses must be addressed to:

Social Innovation Financing RFR Response  
Executive Office for Administration & Finance  
State House, Room 373  
Boston, MA

Any responses received after the deadline will be rejected.

### C. RESPONSE CONTENT AND FORMAT

Proposal must contain the following components:

#### a. Cover Letter

A cover letter signed by an individual authorized to negotiate for and execute the Contract on behalf of the Bidder, and that includes all of the following information (failure to submit a cover letter including all components may result in disqualification from consideration):

1. A statement that the submission is a response to EOAF's RFR for Social Innovation Financing for Homelessness – Service Providers;
2. The name and principal address of the Bidder organization;
3. A description of the type of legal entity the Bidder is (e.g. not-for-profit corporation, limited partnership, trust);

4. The name, address, e-mail, fax and telephone number of the Bidder's contact person; and
5. A statement that the Bidder's response is effective through the date that the Bidder executes a contract with EOAF.

**b. Programmatic Response**

The Programmatic Response should describe the Bidder's model for service delivery, including which services would be delivered and where the services would be delivered. The response should also reflect the Bidder's understanding of social innovation financing as described in the overview of this RFR and should explain the Bidder's role in achieving the overall objective of using success-based contracting to increase the efficiency of government-funded service delivery, reduce costs to taxpayers, and accelerate innovation in ameliorating social problems for the target population. Responses should be as specific as possible in describing how and to whom the organization will provide services, what set of services would be provided, and how the proposed model would incorporate proven best practices.

The Programmatic Response should be written in a concise manner. EOAF will disregard material that is not directly relevant to the information requested below.

Responses must include the following information:

1. Organization Overview

- i. Describe Respondent's mission and programs;
- ii. Briefly describe Respondent's experience in providing this type of service and provide performance data relating to such experience;
- iii. Describe Respondent's organizational infrastructure as it relates to its capacity to deliver the Scope of Services listed below;
- iv. Describe prior experience in collaborating with public and/or private entities for service delivery; and
- v. Describe prior experience in measuring the performance and impact of Respondent's programs.

2. Scope of Services

- i. Describe the demographic population to be served as well as the geographic area to be served, and provide an estimate of the number of clients that could be served annually over the term of

the contract. In doing so, explain specific methods that could be used to identify the target population and to select and engage program participants;

- ii. Describe the approach to delivering program components including a clear and specific process for determining the type, level and duration of assistance for each program participant and the expected average benefits to be provided to eligible participants;
- iii. Describe the evidence base underlying the recommended program model as well as any proof of concept for the proposed programming;
- iv. Describe safeguards against harm for the target population;
- v. Describe ability to track and analyze data for performance measurement;
- vi. Recommend a governance structure for the pay for success contract that 1) ensures that service providers with expertise with the target population have a significant role in decision making; 2) ensures that the Commonwealth will have sufficient oversight and participation in decision making to allow it to protect the population being served from harm and to verify that the program delivery models are consistent with the intentions of this RFR; and 3) allows sufficient flexibility for the intermediary to produce the desired amount of learning, innovation and performance based management;
- vii. Identify any questions or concerns related to EOAF's program goals set forth in this RFR, and/or obstacles to achieving such goals, including Responder ability gaps. Successful execution of a social innovation financing arrangement will require systems to support performance management, as well as the ability to measure outcomes and secure funding. EOAF understands that fulfilling all these requirements will likely require the coordinated efforts of multiple entities. References to ability gaps will be used to ensure that all necessary roles and functions are provided by the partnership of organizations entering into a social innovation financing arrangement;
- viii. If applicable, identify other providers with which Respondent intends to collaborate in order to deliver the proposed program concept;

- ix. Identify the anticipated outcomes as well as the means and methods for documenting, measuring and evaluating outcomes; and
- x. Provide a work plan and implementation schedule.

**c. Cost Response**

Respondents should submit a 5-year pro forma budget that identifies operating costs and the number of individuals to be served, with details about how the overall cost estimates were developed.

Potential Service Providers are also encouraged to sketch a budget for the overall project, including operating costs, the number of individuals to be served, and the sources and estimated total of cost savings to be realized by the Commonwealth. Some program details are still uncertain. Nonetheless, for the purpose of constructing a budget for the overall project, please assume that 1) the project will attempt to house 400 homeless individuals over a 3-year service delivery period (5 total years including planning and start-up at the beginning and service maintenance and measurement at the end); 2) the annual cost savings to the state per successfully-housed individual from reductions in health care and other spending will be roughly \$20,000; 3) costs associated with providing housing subsidies for housed individuals will need to persist indefinitely; and 4) the Commonwealth seeks to have the budgetary cost of the initiative be no greater than the savings produced.

If the recommended program delivery model would be substantially different if the reductions in other spending turned out to be twice as high per successfully-housed individual, please describe the alternate model as well.

**d. Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan**

Massachusetts Executive Order 524 established a policy to promote the award of State Contracts in a manner that develops and strengthens Minority and/or Women Business Enterprises (M/WBEs). As a result, M/WBEs are strongly encouraged to submit bid Responses to this RFR, either as prime vendors, joint venture partners or subcontractors. All Bidders, regardless of their certification status, are required to submit a completed SDP Plan Form as part of their Response for evaluation. It is required that Supplier Diversity Program participation accounts for no less than 10% of the total points in the evaluation.

The PMT requires Bidders to make a significant commitment to partner with certified Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses in order to be awarded a Contract. An SDO-certified (formerly SOMWBA-certified) Bidder may not list itself or an affiliate as being a Supplier Diversity Partner to its own company. In addition, a narrative statement can be included to supplement the SDP Plan Form

providing further details of the SDP commitments. The submission of this narrative statement does not replace the requirement of the SDP Plan Form. Bidders must submit one form for each M/WBE SDP Relationship. **Please note that no Bidder will be awarded a Contract unless and until they agree to commit to at least one (1) of following three (3) SDP Components selected by the PMT:**

**1. Subcontracting:**

If Bidder commits to Subcontracting in their SDP plan, then they must commit to subcontract a specific dollar amount, or a minimum percentage of dollars earned through an awarded Contract, with an SDO-certified company. Although this is only one of several options to meet the requirements for participation in the Supplier Diversity Program, Bidder's submission of subcontracting commitments may be weighted most heavily. The PMT will set timelines for progress reviews (either quarterly or semi-annually) for the purpose of compliance and tracking of submitted commitments. Please note that all subcontracting partnerships require inclusion of that contract between the Bidder and the M/WBE subcontractor in the Bidder's bid package.

**2. Ancillary Uses of Certified M/WBE Firm(s):**

If a Bidder commits to Ancillary Uses of certified M/WBE Firm(s) (or companies that have applied for certification) in their SDP plan, then they must include dollar or percentage expenditure commitments for use of these firm(s) with or without the use of written commitments between the Bidder and the M/WBE Firm(s). A description of the ancillary uses of certified M/WBEs, if any, must be included on the SDP Plan Form.

**3. Growth and Development:**

If a Bidder commits to Growth and Development in their SDP plan, then they must submit a plan for education, training, mentoring, resource sharing, joint activities, and assistance that would increase industry capacity and the pool of qualified SDO certified companies.

Once an SDP Plan is submitted, negotiated and approved, the PMT will then monitor the Contractor's performance.

Resources available to assist Prime Bidders in finding potential M/WBE partners can be found at: [SDP Procurement Resources and Guides](#) or [www.mass.gov/sdp](http://www.mass.gov/sdp).

**e. Forms**

Respondents should submit one executed copy of all forms that are listed on the Forms and Terms tab for this RFR on Comm-PASS.

## **SECTION 4. EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

All responses will be reviewed by EOAF to determine compliance with the response submission instructions described in **Section 3** and the Minimum Evaluation Criteria below. For those responses that comply with the Response submission instructions and Minimum Evaluation Criteria, a Procurement Management Team (PMT) designated by EOAF will evaluate and score the Programmatic and Cost Responses according to the Comparative Evaluation Criteria listed below.

### **A. MINIMUM EVALUATION CRITERIA**

- a. The Proposal is complete.
- b. Neither the Respondent nor any proposed Contractor is currently subject to any state or federal debarment order or determination. A Respondent that was previously debarred, but is not presently debarred, may be disqualified if the PMT concludes that the circumstances of the debarment would render the Respondent inappropriate as a provider of the proposed services.

### **B. COMPARATIVE EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The PMT will evaluate the Bidder's response according to the following criteria:

- a. Likelihood that the organization and program model will deliver its stated outcomes, as well as the magnitude of such outcomes;
- b. The strength of the existing evidence base for assessing likely program impact;
- c. The cost effectiveness of the proposed delivery model in achieving the RFR objectives;
- d. Ability to monitor success and measure outcomes, including counterfactuals;
- e. Extent to which the program establishes safeguards against harm for the target population;
- f. Demonstrated willingness and capability to collaborate effectively with state government organizations and other entities; and
- g. Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan: A demonstrated commitment to partner with a Certified Women- and/or Minority-owned Business as evidenced in a completed Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan as described in Section 3.

## **C. NON-QUALIFYING PROPOSALS**

EOAF reserves the right to reject a Bidder's response at any time during the evaluation process if the Bidder:

- a. Fails to demonstrate to the PMT's satisfaction that it meets all RFR requirements;
- b. Fails to submit all required information or otherwise satisfy all Response requirements in **Section 3**;
- c. Has any interest that may, in the PMT's sole determination, conflict with performance of services for the Commonwealth or be anti-competitive; or
- d. Rejects or qualifies its agreement to any of the mandatory provisions of the RFR or the Commonwealth's Standard Contract Form or Commonwealth Terms and Conditions.

The PMT may determine non-compliance with an RFR requirement is insubstantial. In such cases, the PMT may seek clarification, allow the Bidder to make minor corrections, apply appropriate penalties in evaluating the Response, or apply a combination of all three remedies.

## **D. CLARIFICATIONS**

The PMT may determine some element of a Bidder's response requires clarification to verify its responsiveness to the RFR or facilitate a fair comparison with competing proposals. In such cases, the Committee may seek clarification from the Bidder. All Bidders will be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for clarification.

## **E. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SELECTION**

After the PMT has completed the evaluation of all responses, the PMT shall make recommendations for negotiating partners to the Secretary of Administration and Finance who shall make decisions about negotiating partners and subsequently about contract awards. The Secretary's decision will be based on the PMT's recommendation and on the best interests of the Commonwealth. All awards are contingent upon successful negotiation of the Contract terms.

## **F. CONTRACT SPECIFICATIONS**

At any time during the contract period, EOAF reserves the right to negotiate changes to the original contract, performance specifications and performance outcomes/measures, consistent with the terms of this RFR, upon reasonable notice to the Contractor.

## SECTION 5. GENERAL PROCUREMENT INFORMATION

The terms of *801 CMR 21.00: Procurement of Commodities and Services* (and *808 CMR 1.00: Compliance, Reporting and Auditing for Human and Social Services*, if applicable) are incorporated by reference into this RFR. Words used in this RFR shall have the meanings defined in 801 CMR 21.00 (and 808 CMR 1.00, if applicable). Additional definitions may also be identified in this RFR. Unless otherwise specified in this RFR, all communications, responses, and documentation must be in English, all measurements must be provided in feet, inches, and pounds and all cost proposals or figures in U.S. currency. All responses must be submitted in accordance with the specific terms of this RFR.

Items with the text, "*☞ Required for POS Only*" specify a requirement for Purchase of Service (POS) human and social services procured under *801 CMR 21.00, Procurement of Commodities or Services, Including Human and Social Services* and *808 CMR 1.00, Compliance, Reporting and Auditing for Human and Social Service*.

Supplier Diversity Program (SDP). Massachusetts Executive Order 524 established a policy to promote the award of state contracts in a manner that develops and strengthens Minority and Women Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) that resulted in the Supplier Diversity Program in Public Contracting. M/WBEs are strongly encouraged to submit responses to this RFR, either as prime vendors, joint venture partners or other type of business partnerships. All Bidders must follow the requirements set forth in the SDP section of the RFR, which will detail the specific requirements relating to the prime vendor's inclusion of M/WBEs. Bidders are required to develop creative initiatives to help foster new business relationships with M/WBEs within the primary industries affected by this RFR. In order to satisfy the compliance of this section and encourage Bidder's participation of SDP objectives, the Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan for large procurements greater than \$150,000 will be evaluated at 10% or more of the total evaluation. Once an SDP Plan is submitted, negotiated and approved, the agency will then monitor the contractor's performance, and use actual expenditures with SDO certified contractors to fulfill their own SDP expenditure benchmarks. M/WBE participation must be incorporated into and monitored for all types of procurements regardless of size; however, submission of an SDP Plan is mandated only for large procurements over \$150,000.

This RFR will contain some or all of the following components as part of the Supplier Diversity Program Plan submitted by Bidders:

- Sub-contracting with certified M/WBE firms as defined within the scope of the RFR;
- Ancillary use of certified M/WBE firms;
- Growth and Development activities to increase M/WBE capacity.

A Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Woman Business Enterprise (WBE), M/Non-Profit, or W/Non-Profit, is defined as such by the Supplier Diversity Office (SDO). All

certified businesses that are included in the Bidder's SDP proposal are required to submit an up to date copy of their SDO certification letter. The purpose for this certification is to participate in the Commonwealth's Supplier Diversity Program for public contracting. Minority- and Women-Owned firms that are not currently certified but would like to be considered as an M/WBE for the purpose of this RFR should submit their application at least two weeks prior to the RFR closing date and submit proof of documentation of application for consideration with their bid proposal. For further information on SDO certification, contact their office at 1-617-502-8851 or via the Internet at [mass.gov/SDO](http://mass.gov/SDO).

Supplier Diversity Program Subcontracting Policies. Prior approval of the agency is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Agencies may define required deliverables including, but not limited to, documentation necessary to verify subcontractor commitments and expenditures with Minority- or Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) for the purpose of monitoring and enforcing compliance of subcontracting commitments made in a Bidder's Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors.

Best Value Selection and Negotiation. The Procurement Management Team (PMT) may select the response(s) which demonstrates the best value overall, including proposed alternatives that will achieve the procurement goals of the department. The PMT and a selected Bidder, or a contractor, may negotiate a change in any element of contract performance or cost identified in the original RFR or the selected Bidder's or contractor's response which results in lower costs or a more cost effective or better value than was presented in the selected Bidder's or contractor's original response.

Bidder Communication. Bidders are prohibited from communicating directly with any employee of the procuring department or any member of the PMT regarding this RFR except as specified in this RFR, and no other individual Commonwealth employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any question or inquiry concerning this RFR. Bidders may contact the contact person for this RFR in the event this RFR is incomplete or the Bidder is having trouble obtaining any required attachments electronically through Comm-PASS.

Comm-PASS. Comm-PASS is the official system of record for all procurement information which is publicly accessible at no charge at [www.comm-pass.com](http://www.comm-pass.com). Information contained in this document and in each tab of the Solicitation, including file attachments, and information contained in the related Bidders' Forum(s), are all components of the Solicitation.

Bidders are solely responsible for obtaining all information distributed for this Solicitation via Comm-PASS, by using the free Browse and Search tools offered on each record-related tab on the main navigation bar (Solicitations and Forums). Forums support Bidder submission of written questions associated with a Solicitation and publication of official answers. All records on Comm-PASS are comprised of multiple tabs, or pages. For example, Solicitation records contain Summary, Rules, Issuer(s),

Intent or Forms & Terms and Specifications, and Other Information tabs. Each tab contains data and/or file attachments provided by the Procurement Management Team. All are incorporated into the Solicitation.

It is each Bidder's responsibility to check Comm-PASS for:

- Any addenda or modifications to this Solicitation, by monitoring the "Last Change" field on the Solicitation's Summary tab, and
- Any Bidders' Forum records related to this Solicitation (see Locating an Online Bidders' Forum for information on locating these records).

The Commonwealth accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Bidders who submit a Response based on an out-of-date Solicitation or on information received from a source other than Comm-PASS.

Comm-PASS SmartBid Subscription. Bidders may elect to obtain a free, optional SmartBid subscription which provides value-added features, including automated email notification associated with postings and modifications to Comm-PASS records. When properly configured and managed, SmartBid provides a subscriber with:

- A secure desktop within Comm-PASS for efficient record management;
- A customizable profile reflecting the subscriber's product/service areas of interest;
- A customizable listing in the publicly accessible Business Directory, an online "yellow-pages" advertisement;
- Full-cycle, automated email alert whenever any record of interest is posted or updated;
- Access to Online Response Submission, when allowed by the Issuer, to support:
  - paperless bid drafting and submission to an encrypted lock-box prior to close date;
  - electronic signature of OSD forms and terms; agreement to defer wet-ink signature until Contract award, if any;
  - withdrawal of submitted bids prior to close date; and
  - online storage of submitted bids.

Every public purchasing entity within the borders of Massachusetts may post records on Comm-PASS at no charge. Comm-PASS has the potential to become the sole site for all public entities in Massachusetts.

Contract Expansion. If additional funds become available during the contract duration period, the department reserves the right to increase the maximum obligation to some or all contracts executed as a result of this RFR or to execute contracts with contractors not funded in the initial selection process, subject to available funding, satisfactory contract performance and service or commodity need.

Costs. Costs which are not specifically identified in the Bidder's response, and accepted by a department as part of a contract, will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this RFR. The Commonwealth will not be responsible for any costs

or expenses incurred by Bidders responding to this RFR.

Debriefing. *Required for POS Only. This is an optional specification for non-POS RFRs.* Non-successful Bidders may request a debriefing from the department. Department debriefing procedures may be found in the RFR. Non-successful POS Bidders aggrieved by the decision of a department must participate in a debriefing as a prerequisite to an administrative appeal.

Electronic Communication/Update of Bidder's/Contractor's Contact Information. It is the responsibility of the prospective Bidder and awarded contractor to keep current the email address of the Bidder's contact person and prospective contract manager, if awarded a contract, and to monitor that email inbox for communications from the PMT, including requests for clarification. The PMT and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if a prospective Bidder's/awarded contractor's designated email address is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the prospective Bidder's/awarded contractor's computer, network or internet service provider (ISP) cause email communications sent to/from the prospective Bidder/awarded contractor and the PMT to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). All Bidders must agree to participate in the Commonwealth Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) program for receiving payments, unless the Bidder can provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. A link to the EFT application can be found on the OSD Forms page ([www.mass.gov/osd](http://www.mass.gov/osd)). Additional information about EFT is available on the Comptroller's VendorWeb site located at: <https://massfinance.state.ma.us/VendorWeb/vendor.asp>. The requirement to use EFT may be waived by the PMT on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the Bidder. If a Bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in its Response. The PMT will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis and communicate the findings with the Bidder.

Upon notification of award, Contractors are required to enroll in EFT by completing and submitting the "Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form" to the PMT for review, approval and forwarding to the Office of the Comptroller, unless already enrolled in EFT. A link to the EFT application can be found on the Comptroller's VendorWeb site (see above link). This form, and all information contained on this form, shall not be considered a public record and shall not be subject to public disclosure through a public records request.

Environmental Response Submission Compliance. In an effort to promote greater use of recycled and environmentally preferable products and minimize waste, all responses submitted should comply with the following guidelines:

- All copies should be printed double sided.
- All submittals and copies should be printed on recycled paper with a minimum post-consumer content of 30% or on tree-free paper (i.e. paper made from raw materials

other than trees, such as kenaf). To document the use of such paper, a photocopy of the ream cover/wrapper should be included with the response.

- Unless absolutely necessary, all responses and copies should minimize or eliminate use of non-recyclable or non re-usable materials such as plastic report covers, plastic dividers, vinyl sleeves and GBC binding. Three ringed binders, glued materials, paper clips and staples are acceptable.
- Bidders should submit materials in a format which allows for easy removal and recycling of paper materials.
- Bidders are encouraged to use other products which contain recycled content in their response documents. Such products may include, but are not limited to, folders, binders, paper clips, diskettes, envelopes, boxes, etc. Where appropriate, Bidders should note which products in their responses are made with recycled materials.
- Unnecessary samples, attachments or documents not specifically asked for should not be submitted.

HIPAA: Business Associate Contractual Obligations. Bidders are notified that any department meeting the definition of a Covered Entity under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) will include in the RFR and resulting contract sufficient language establishing the successful Bidder's contractual obligations, if any, that the department will require in order for the department to comply with HIPAA and the privacy and security regulations promulgated thereunder (45 CFR Parts 160, 162, and 164) (the Privacy and Security Rules). For example, if the department determines that the successful Bidder is a business associate performing functions or activities involving protected health information, as such terms are used in the Privacy and Security Rules, then the department will include in the RFR and resulting contract a sufficient description of business associate's contractual obligations regarding the privacy and security of the protected health information, as listed in 45 CFR 164.314 and 164.504 (e), including, but not limited to, the Bidder's obligation to: implement administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that reasonably and appropriately protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the protected health information (in whatever form it is maintained or used, including verbal communications); provide individuals access to their records; and strictly limit use and disclosure of the protected health information for only those purposes approved by the department. Further, the department reserves the right to add any requirement during the course of the contract that it determines it must include in the contract in order for the department to comply with the Privacy and Security Rules. Depending on the structure of the project and related programs, a contractor may need to enter into data privacy and security agreements with other state agencies. Please see other sections of the RFR for any further HIPAA details, if applicable.

Minimum Bid Duration. Bidders responses/bids made in response to this RFR must remain in effect for at least 90 days from the date of bid submission.

Pricing: Federal Government Services Administration (GSA) or Veteran's Administration Supply. The Commonwealth reserves the right to request from the successful Bidder(s) initial pricing schedules and periodic updates available under their

GSA or other federal pricing contracts. In the absence of proprietary information being part of such contracts, compliance for submission of requested pricing information is expected within 30 days of any request. If the contractor receives a GSA or Veteran's Administration Supply contract at any time during this contract period, it must notify the Commonwealth contract manager.

Pricing: Price Limitation. The Bidder must agree that no other state or public entity customer within the United States of similar size and with similar terms and conditions shall receive a lower price for the same commodity and service during the contract period, unless this same lower price is immediately effective for the Commonwealth. If the Commonwealth believes that it is not receiving this lower price as required by this language, the Bidder must agree to provide current or historical pricing offered or negotiated with other state or public entities at any time during the contract period in the absence of proprietary information being part of such contracts.

Prompt Payment Discounts (PPD). All Bidders responding to this procurement must agree to offer discounts through participation in the Commonwealth Prompt Payment Discount (PPD) initiative for receiving early and/or on-time payments, unless the Bidder can provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. PPD benefits both contractors and the Commonwealth. Contractors benefit by increased, usable cash flow as a result of fast and efficient payments for commodities or services rendered. Participation in the Electronic Funds Transfer initiative further maximizes the benefits with payments directed to designated accounts, thus eliminating the impact of check clearance policies and traditional mail lead time or delays. The Commonwealth benefits because contractors reduce the cost of products and services through the applied discount. Payments that are processed electronically can be tracked and verified through the Comptroller's Vendor Web system. The PPD form can be found under the Forms and Terms tab of this solicitation.

Bidders must submit agreeable terms for Prompt Payment Discount using the PPD form within their proposal, unless otherwise specified by the PMT. The PMT will review, negotiate or reject the offering as deemed in the best interest of the Commonwealth.

The requirement to use PPD offerings may be waived by the PMT on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the Bidder. If a Bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in or attached to the PPD form.

Public Records. All responses and information submitted in response to this RFR are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L., c. 66, s. 10, and to c. 4, s. 7, ss. 26. Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes shall be disregarded.

Reasonable Accommodation. Bidders with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of RFR information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the contact person. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case by case basis. A Bidder requesting

accommodation must submit a written statement which describes the Bidder's disability and the requested accommodation to the contact person for the RFR. The PMT reserves the right to reject unreasonable requests.

Restriction on the Use of the Commonwealth Seal. Bidders and contractors are not allowed to display the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Seal in their bid package or subsequent marketing materials if they are awarded a contract because use of the coat of arms and the Great Seal of the Commonwealth for advertising or commercial purposes is prohibited by law.

Subcontracting Policies. Prior approval of the department is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Human and social service subcontractors are also required to meet the same state and federal financial and program reporting requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as contractors.