

***Maryland’s Human Services Agency***

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

Family Investment Administration/Office of Home Energy Programs

**SMALL PROCUREMENT SOLICITATION FOR**

Process Evaluation Research and Cost-Benefit Analysis

**DHS AGENCY CONTROL NUMBER**: FIA/OHEP-19-006-S

1. **SUMMARY STATEMENT**

The Department of Human Services, Family Investment Administration (FIA) intends to acquire consulting services for the purpose of completing process evaluation research and cost-benefit analysis related to the administration of its Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP). The research should include a review of administration of energy assistance in other states.  The cost benefit analysis will focus on potential changes to the administration of energy assistance benefits in Maryland resulting from the fiscal year 2021 launch of a new enrollment and eligibility IT system within the Department of Human Services. This process evaluation research and cost benefit analysis is being done to enrich the Department’s decision making and allow for informed strategic budgeting. The work will be the basis for building future capacity and improving customer service for energy assistance applicants.

The anticipated duration of services to be provided under this Contract is four (4) months with a final report and report presentation due prior to the expiration of the Contract. Bidders must be able to provide all services directly and meet all of the requirements requested in this solicitation and the successful Bidder (the Contractor) shall remain responsible for the Contract.

1. **BACKGROUND**

The Office of Home Energy Programs administers energy assistance benefits through a network of local Departments of Social Services, Community Action Agencies, and local municipalities throughout Maryland. These entities are responsible for providing all eligibility and enrollment services, as well as certain fiscal functions. While OHEP operates within FIA, its policies, processes, and administrative functions are distinct and independent from other programs operated by FIA, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program.

OHEP is well-positioned to leverage the deployment of Maryland’s Total Human-services Information Network (MD THINK) platforms to set aggressive goals for reducing administrative costs, enhancing program performance, and improving customer service. MD THINK is a cloud-based data repository that will break down traditional silos and data barriers between state agencies and provide integrated access to programs. The new integrated Enrollment and Eligibility portal developed through MD THINK offers an unprecedented and unique opportunity to fully integrate energy assistance with other benefit programs within FIA.

1. **SCOPE OF THE PROJECT**

FIA aims to leverage the MD THINK Eligibility and Enrollment system developments to modify the administrative approach of OHEP in order to:

* Simplify energy access for applicants, including categorical eligibility, integrated applications, and complementary benefits;
* Eliminate duplicative eligibility and enrollment costs through centralized processing;
* Reduce overall administrative costs; and
* Reduce risk and ensure compliance.

In order to effectively leverage MD THINK Eligibility and Enrollment system developments and remain aligned with all program requirements and performance standards, the Department is acquiring consulting services for the purpose of completing process evaluation research and cost benefit analysis of specific possible administrative changes. The results will be presented in a comprehensive report of findings and a presentation to key stakeholders.

1. **BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS**

Bidders should provide specific information in this section concerning the firm's experience in the services specified in this Solicitation. Bidders should also include:

1. Resume(s) detailing consultant(s) professional qualifications.

2. Specific information concerning the organization's experience creating a cost-benefit model to enhance government decision making.

3. Three examples of process evaluation research and a cost-benefit analysis performed for local or state government.

4. An example of your approach to engaging key stakeholders (funders, community-based organizations, government officials) in the creation of a cost-benefit analysis.

5. Three references for work done with process evaluation research and/or cost benefit analysis, preferably from government entities.

1. **CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS**

The process evaluation research and cost benefit analysis shall include:

1. A review of the twenty (20) states and one (1) territory that implemented the Low Income Home Energy Program categorical eligibility option in 2018 and provide an assessment of the program impacts on benefit recipients, administrative costs, and overall program performance.
2. A review and summary of the administrative operations of all fifty (50) states and the District of Columbia, with a primary focus on the cost-effectiveness of in-sourcing and outsourcing of eligibility and enrollment work.
3. A review of the current OHEP administrative model and the Enrollment and Eligibility software solution.
4. Detailed interviews with Department staff to document details of current operations, possible changes to operations, possible program policy changes applicable to MD THINK developments, and other pertinent topics.
5. A cost-benefit evaluation of possible changes to OHEP administrative operations based on proposed MD THINK developments.
6. A written report summarizing all findings with suggestions for areas to improve cost-effectiveness, clarity, impact, and/or feasibility of recommended actions. The report should provide information required to inform decisions regarding full deployment of possible changes to administrative operations, identify items for further internal analysis, and provide detailed documentation of all assumptions used in the analysis.
7. An in-person presentation to key stakeholders in the Department to review the report and other findings.

In order to incorporate the recommendations into the Fiscal Year 2021 State of Maryland budgeting process for the Department, the report and presentation must be completed by October 3, 2019.

1. **CONTRACT TERM AND DELIVERABLES**

The Contract resulting from this solicitation will be for a four (4) month period beginning June 3, 2019 and ending October 3, 2019.

A preliminary report is due August 30, 2019. The final report and presentation shall be delivered prior to October 3, 2019.

1. **STATE PROJECT MANAGER**

The State Project Manager for this Contract is:

Bill Freeman

Director, Office of Home Energy Programs

311 W. Saratoga Street

Baltimore, MD 21201

(410) 767-5324

Bill.Freeman@Maryland.gov

After Contract award(s), this person will serve as the primary point of contact for the Contractor(s) in regards to the Contract(s) resulting from this Solicitation. However, for certain contract related actions the Procurement Officer may communicate with the Contractor(s).

1. **SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

The original, to be so identified, and six (6)copies of each Bid must be received by the Procurement Officer by 5:00PM on ~~Tuesday, May 14, 2019~~ **Friday, May 17, 2019** in order to be considered. Written questions from prospective Bidders will be accepted by the Procurement Officer via email five days prior to the bid closing time and date. Requests for extension of this date or time shall not be granted. Vendors mailing Bids should allow sufficient mail delivery time to insure timely receipt by the Procurement Officer. Bids or unsolicited modifications to Bids arriving after the closing time and date will not be considered, except under the conditions identified in COMAR 21.05.02.10 B and 21.05.03.02 F.

Bids/Proposals are to be delivered to:

Deborah Austin

Procurement Division

Department of Human Services

311 W. Saratoga Street, Room 940-O

Baltimore, MD 21201

E-mail: Deborah.austin@maryland.gov

(410) 767-7239

Inquiries must be directed to the Department at the above telephone number and address.

Bid Submission shall include:

* A Transmittal Letter, printed on the vendor’s letterhead. The purpose of this letter is to transmit the Proposal; therefore, it should be brief. The letter shall contain the title of the solicitation and include the Offeror’s name, federal tax identification or social security number, eMaryland Marketplace number (if registered), and complete address. An individual, who is authorized to bind the firm to all statements, including services and prices, contained in the Proposal must sign the letter. The letter must also acknowledge receipt of any amendments issued against the solicitation. Failure to acknowledge receipt of amendments does not relieve the Offeror from complying with all terms of any such amendment.
* Bid Form (**Attachment B**)

**RECEIPT, OPENING, AND RECORDING OF BIDS**:

Receipt: Upon receipt, each Bid and any timely modification(s) to a Bid shall be stored in a secure place until the time and date set for bid opening. Before Bid opening, the State may not disclose the identity of any Bidder.

The Bid Opening shall be on ~~Monday, June 3, 2019~~ **Monday, May 20, 2019** at 2:00 pm at 311 W. Saratoga Street Baltimore, MD 21201.

Opening and Recording: Bids and timely modifications to Bids shall be opened publicly, at the time, date and place designated in the Solicitation. The name of each Bidder, the total Bid price, and such other information as is deemed appropriate shall be read aloud or otherwise made available.

**9. BASIS FOR AWARD**

The Contract will be awarded to the responsible Bidder whose submits a responsive Bid that meets the specifications set forth in the Small Procurement Solicitation, and provides the Most Advantageous Offer to the State. In the event of tie bids, the provisions of COMAR 21.05.02.14 shall determine the successful bidder.

**10. DEPARTMENT CONTRACT**

The successful Bidder will be expected to sign a contract with the Department, sample enclosed as **ATTACHMENT A**.

**11. CANCELLATION OF BIDS**

The State may cancel this Solicitation, in whole or in part, whenever this action is determined to be fiscally advantageous to the State or otherwise in the State’s best interest. If the Solicitation is canceled, a notice of cancellation will be provided to all prospective Bidders who were sent this Solicitation or otherwise are known by the Procurement Officer to have obtained this Solicitation.

**12. ACCEPTANCE OF BIDS**

The State reserves the right to accept or reject any and all Bids, in whole or in part, received in response to this Solicitation, or to waive or permit cure of minor irregularities to serve the best interests of the State of Maryland.

**13. TIME OF BID ACCEPTANCE**

The content of this Solicitation and the Bid of the successful Bidder or Bidders will be included by reference in any resulting Contract. All prices, terms and conditions in the Bid are irrevocable for 90 days after the closing date for receipt of Bids or Best and Final Offers, if requested (Note: Best and Final Offers **CANNOT** be requested for Bids). This period may be extended by written mutual agreement between the Bidder and the requesting State organization.

**14. PAYMENT**

The successful vendor shall bill the Department for 50% of the total Contract amount upon execution of the Contract with the balance to be invoiced upon satisfactory completion of the report and presentation.

Invoices must be addressed to:

Bill Freeman

Director, Office of Home Energy Programs

Department of Human Services

311 W. Saratoga Street

Baltimore, MD 21201

All invoices must (at a minimum) be signed and dated in addition to including the Contractor’s mailing address, the Contractor’s Social Security number or Federal Tax ID number, the State’s assigned Contract control number, the goods/services provided, the time period covered by the invoice, and the amount of requested payment.

**15. PROCUREMENT METHOD**

This award will be made in accordance with Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 21.05.07, Small Procurement Regulations. Small procurement is defined as the use of procedures to obtain items reasonably expected by the Procurement Officer to cost $50,000 or less.

**Minority Business Enterprises are strongly encouraged to respond to this solicitation.**