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Attachments

Q. On the Vendor Responsibility form, Section II regarding Affiliates, does that include or exclude affiliations with the state and national CASA associations?
A. The Office of the State Comptroller defines affiliate to mean, for a not-for-profit organization, "Any business entity (not for profit and for profit) which is entitled to exercise membership rights of participation in the election of board members, participation and service on the committees of the not-for-profit and approval of changes to a business entity's governing documents, and any company or other legal entity which controls, or is controlled by, or is under common control with the not-for-profit business entity."

Q. Are all forms to be hand written except for the narrative? Forms are created in a format in which we cannot write unless we change to a text file or work document.
A. Yes. Print, and then typewrite or write in ink the appropriate information for Attachments I, III and IV.

Q. On UCS 423, is the Contract # OCA/CPA RFP 334?
A. OCA/CPA RFP 334 is the bid number. Contract numbers will not be issued until awards are made. Thus, write "TBD" or "None" in any contract number fields.

Q. First page of the contract form (attachment V) is very confusing. Do we also hand write in program name and info here? Do we fill in Appendix D in Attachment V (contract)? Should the sample contract cover page be filled out and submitted?
A. Attachment V is for informational purposes **only** and is not a required submission. DO NOT submit any appendices within that Attachment, or the cover sheet within the Attachment.

Q. If using the VendRep system, do I need to submit a printed questionnaire with my proposal?
A. No. If using VendRep, indicate this in Attachment III. For more information about using the VendRep system, visit osc.state.ny.us/vendrep/vendor_index.htm

Q. In Attachment VII, Question #A6 refers to question B5. There is no question B5, is there?
A. No, there isn't. The reference should be to **B4** and not B5 and has been amended in Amendment #3. In addition, references on Rating Tool questions C2 and C3 have also been changed.
Document updated: www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/PDFs/AttachmentVII-RatingTool.pdf

*Q. In looking over the RFP materials, I noticed that **Attachment VIII**, entitled **"Estimated Funding Available by County",** lists award amounts of $25,000 and $20,000 for Albany County and Rensselaer County, respectively, for a total of $45,000. This is a funding reduction of 19% from the funding level of $55,292 of the current allocation. Is this accurate? Did I misinterpret any of this information? Is there a reason for the reduction? How firm are these estimates?*
A. The amounts listed in the RFP Attachment VIII are intentional and correct.
The amounts listed are the awards we hope to make in the initial 12 month period. Actual grant awards will be dependent upon state budget appropriations. The amounts allocated to each county are based on family court child welfare caseloads and historic use of CASA services in those counties. In subsequent contract years, successful bidders may request increases to their allocations with justification. Any and all awards are subject to appropriation.

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Q. Attachment II, Contractor Certification ST 220, is not found at the NYS OCA website. Is there another location for this form? Is this form needed?
A. Attachment II does NOT need to be submitted. Amendment #1 to the RFP removed this requirement to diffuse any further confusion. You do not need to submit this form.

Q. I'm looking over the Bid and I'm not quite understanding the recycling paper part of it.
Could you look at pages 5-7 of Attachment I and give me an idea on how to answer those questions. I would greatly appreciate it.
A. Per the bid specifications, only the Cover Sheet, Pages 3 of 10 (Non-Collusive Bidding Certification) and 4 of 10 (Acknowledgment Form) need be completed in Attachment I. Pages 5-7 DO NOT need to be completed and submitted with a proposal pursuant to this RFP.

Q. Required documents as detailed on p.6 includes a cover sheet under Attachment I. Could you just clarify for me – is the cover sheet p.1 of the RFP? Thanks for your help.
A. Yes, the cover sheet is page 1 of the RFP.

Q. Does Attachment IV: UCS 423 termination clause have to be signed/submitted? The instructions on Attachment IV say that there are only two forms to submit: UCS 420 and 421. Then there is also UCS 423 in Attachment IV but not mentioned in the instructions.
A. All of Attachment IV is required, including UCS 423. Cover page, page 3, and page 4 are the only pages required in Attachment **I.**

Budgets

Q. Some existing CASA programs have one time Bridge Grants from National CASA. These are very clearly one year grants intended to ease some of the problems during the budget crisis and they will not be renewed. If we would like to incorporate the expenses covered in these 2009 one time grants into the UCS allocation (which has a different time from this RFP), how should this be done?
A. Non-UCS funds supporting the CASA program can be included or excluded at the proposer's discretion. The RFP asks that proposers show a 12 month budget based on the UCS funding provided in Attachment VIII. In subsequent contract years, successful bidders may request increases to their allocations with justification such as loss of other funding. Any and all awards are subject to appropriation approval by the legislature and governor.

Q. Section B3 is a budget section which requires a separate answer for each county proposed. We currently serve, and aim to continue serving two counties. We have one overall program budget- and our UCS funding and reconciliations are combined. Is there a way to reflect our current and anticipated program budgets for two counties as one, in order to accurately reflect our program?
A. Please see Attachment VIII, where each county's estimated 12 month UCS allocation is shown. For question B3, the RFP seeks the funding for each county from non-UCS sources. If funds are not awarded from non-UCS funders by county, show how the funds are allocated within the agency to each particular county.

Q. Current UCS grants run from April 1 through March 31st. The new RFP has program years beginning on October 1, 2009. How should that change in dates be handled within the context of the RFP? Will the old contracts continue through March 31 2010?

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A. The RFP defines the contract TERM as 1/1/10-12/31/14. Individual budget periods within this contract term will be:
1/1/10-3/31/10 (3 months)
4/1/10-3/31/11 (12 months)
4/1/11-3/31/12 (12 months)
4/1/12-3/31/13 (12 months)
4/1/13-3/31/14 (12 months)
4/1/14-12/31/14 (9 months)
The budget requested in the RFP should cover the 12 month period January 1, 2010-December 31, 2010. Existing CASA contracts expire 3/31/10. In the event that the contractor for a county prevails for the same county via the RFP process, the existing contract will be terminated effective 12/31/09.

Q. In Budget Section Question B3 the chart goes from 2008 to 2010 and 11. Are you looking for any information on 2009? And where in this chart for 2008 (or 2009) should we include the current UCS funding?
A. UCS funding should not be included as the question asks how UCS funding will be supplemented by other funding sources. No budget information from 2009 is requested in this RFP.

Q. In previous budgets it has been suggested that we exclude in-kind. Does that apply to the RFP?
A. The budget you submit should accurately reflect your organization's plan for the 12 month period commencing 1/1/10. If in-kind donations are part of that plan, they should be included. However, please note that Attachment IX states that volunteer hours should NOT be included as an in-kind contribution in this budget.

Q. What budget category do Dues and Fees go into?
A. Dues and Fees can be categorized under Miscellaneous Services.

Q. What budget category does interest income go into?
A. Interest income is private revenue if it derives from a non-government source.

Q. I was working on my Appendix C budget forms and the Excel file does not seem to be doing the math correctly.
A. Cells C6 and C17/18 on Tab 13 contained formula errors and were updated in Amendments #1 and #2.

Q. Appendix C: Budget Forms, Tab 12 is a budget summary by expenses among counties. This is not inclusive of all expenses in the program budget. For example, rent, postage, professional services and other categories are not represented.
A. All of the budget categories other than Salaries, Fringe Benefits, Supplies, Equipment and Travel should be wrapped into the larger Contractual Services category; Tab 12 should equal the budget submission summarized on Tab 13.

Q. We currently receive funds from UCS for a CASA program. Should those funds be included in the budget?
A. The **only** UCS revenue that should be included in the budget is the funding in Attachment VIII.

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Letters of Support

Q. Do you have a preference, for instance, do you prefer to see letters from DSS, or simply community agencies? Just trying to gauge where best to turn for support.
A. UCS cannot guide any proposers on which types of local letters of support to solicit, but again emphasizes that court personnel and Judges may not write letters of support for the Appendix E requirement of the RFP as they are part of the Unified Court System and therefore part of the RFP issuing entity.

Q. Can law guardians (also called attorneys for the child) write letters of support for the RFP?
A. Yes, law guardians or attorneys for the child may write letters of support for the Appendix E Letters of Support requirement.

Q. For Letters of Support of our CASA Program, to whom do we address the letter?
A. Letters can be addressed to the Unified Court System or the UCS CASA Assistance Program, or to the program for which they are written to support. Letters of support should NOT be sent separately from the proposal, but included as Appendix E within the submitted proposal.

Q. When it says that Appendix E is two letters of support from county based entities in each county for which a proposal is submitted, can those letters be from a judge in that county?
A. No, judges (or any court personnel) may not write letters of support for the Appendix E requirement of the RFP as they are part of the Unified Court System and therefore part of the RFP issuing entity.

Q. When it says that Appendix E is two letters of support from county based entities in each county for which a proposal is submitted, can those letters be from attorneys, including public defenders?
A. Yes, non-UCS attorneys may write letters of support for the Appendix E requirement of the RFP.

Appendices

Q. Appendix D asks for the qualifications for positions in the CASA program. Is this different from providing a resume?
A. We ask for qualifications that the job requires, not the qualifications the person holding the job has, so a resume would only be appropriate if it included only those qualifications necessary for the job and no others. The job description and qualifications may be combined in one document that clearly identifies both the necessary qualifications and the job duties and responsibilities.

Q. Am I correct that the RFP is not asking for a 990 form or audit of the proposing entity?
A. Yes. Neither a 990 or an audit is a required submission. Appendix D does include a requirement that the proposer submit a copy of IRS correspondence showing 501c3 tax exempt status and charities registration number issued by the Office of the Attorney General.

Q. When Appendix D asks for staff job descriptions and qualifications do you want CASA and administration only or do you want CASA, Administration and all other jobs in the umbrella agency?
A. CASA and administration only. Staff for other programs are not relevant to the question.

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Narrative Content

Q. When we identify which question we are answering, is the question number enough, or do we need words? A. To avoid confusion, please include the full text of the question to which you are providing an answer. The Word document available at www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/pdfs/ProposalNarrativeQuestions.doc includes the full text of each question so that proposers need not retype the text.

Q. If I want to submit a proposal for more than one county, do I need to submit two complete proposals?
A. No. To submit a multi-county proposal, a potential bidder simply needs to respond to all questions marked with a ⌬ once for each county, clearly indicating which county the answer corresponds to, and fill out Tab 12 on Appendix C.

Q. If we are applying for a CASA in a second county, should that be a different application? If not, how should we distinguish our programs and budgets for the two CASA programs? Will being turned down for a new county in any way jeopardize the CASA application for our current program?
A. Multi county applications need not be separate submissions, but a multi-county application must include answers for EACH COUNTY for all questions marked with a ⌬, with the exception of the five boroughs of New York City which will be treated as a single entity. Each county application will be evaluated individually and awards shall be made to the responsible proposer who receives the highest qualifying point value **by county** until funding is exhausted as indicated in Award Criteria. Decisions are made by county and a decision made for one county will not determine the decision for another from the same proposer.

Q. There are asterisks on questions 12 and 13 in the charts. Are they supposed to be there?
A. No. The asterisks next to "Children Served" in question 12 and "60" in question 13 are misprints. These misprint asterisks (*) should not be confused with the indicator (⌬) that designates a question as one to be answered once per county. The asterisks have been removed in Amendment #3. Documents updated:
www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/PDFs/CASA-RFP.pdf

Q. Are any of the questions optional?
A. Question 16 is not required ONLY if the proposer is not proposing to follow the National CASA model and is proposing an alternate plan in Question 17. Accordingly, Question 17 is not required if the proposer is proposing to follow the National CASA model in question 16. Appendix C, Tab 12, is only required for multi-county proposals.

Q. Please distinguish between the program narrative and organizational capacity. Is the program narrative different from the questions?
A. The program narrative encompasses the Organizational Capacity and Budget sections. The narrative is comprised of the answers to these questions. Each question must be answered individually as the rating tool references individual responses to questions.

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Narrative Length

Q. If our proposal is longer than 15 pages because it includes the RFP narrative questions, will it be disqualified or not read?
A. No. We have issued Amendment #3 and changed the RFP document and Word document containing the Proposal Narrative Questions to include **suggested** (not restrictive) character counts rather than page lengths, and removed the maximum page count. The maximum page was suggestive, not restrictive, and was per county, but has been removed because of the confusion this suggestion caused.
Documents updated:
www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/pdfs/ProposalNarrativeQuestions.doc
www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/PDFs/CASA-RFP.pdf

Q. For the Narrative Proposal it states that it has to be at least 15 pages. I have answered all of the required questions and only have a total of 9 pages. Can I answer some of the other questions in the proposal to bring the number of pages up to 15, or do I just put in information that I feel is relevant?
A. The Program Narrative was previously suggested to be a MAXIMUM of 15 single-sided, double-spaced pages for each county, but this has been revised as stated above.
Documents updated:
www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/pdfs/ProposalNarrativeQuestions.doc
www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/PDFs/CASA-RFP.pdf

Q. In reference to page length guidelines, is it possible to give us an approximate word count instead of full page or half page guidelines? If not, please clarify half page. As the narrative question needs to be included with our responses, does the question text count towards the half page guideline? How does one measure a 'half page' of double spaced text?
A. The question does not count toward the page guideline. Please bear in mind that the page guidelines were just that, and not restrictive minimums or maximums. The page length is premised upon standard fonts (Calibri, Times New Roman, Arial, etc.) in 12 pt., double-spaced, for an **approximate** character count per half page of 2125 characters. Double spaced is interpreted to mean spaces between lines, but each space need not equal one line as long as the text is easily legible (that is, 1/2 line or ¼ line spaces are fine, too). To diffuse confusion on this point, Amendment #3 has replaced the page length suggestions with suggested numbers of characters per question, and removed the maximum page length for the total proposal.
Documents updated:
www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/pdfs/ProposalNarrativeQuestions.doc
www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/PDFs/CASA-RFP.pdf

Award Decisions

Q. If no acceptable proposals are received for a county, will that mean that decisions cannot be announced for the other counties?
A. No. The decision not to fund a provider in a given county (for example, because no proposals met the minimum score of 40 points) is itself a decision and would not prevent our office from announcing decisions for the remaining counties.

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UCS Current Solicitations Website

Q. When will the Q&A be posted to the www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/currentsolicitations.shtml website?
A. As soon as possible, but definitely by close of business Friday, August 28, 2009.

Q. When will information about what entities submitted letters of intent be posted to the www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/currentsolicitations.shtml website?
A. A document showing what entities wrote to express intent to submit proposals and for what county will be published to the website by Friday, August 28, 2009. For clarification, proposals from entities that did not submit a letter of intent will be accepted; a letter of intent is not a prerequisite for submitting a proposal.

Q. I can't seem to open the RFP or attachments. Has anyone else had this problem?
A. Simply click on the RFP, appendix, attachment or other document and then choose "save" when asked if you want to Save or Open. Then you will be able to access the attachments from wherever you have saved them on your computer.

Q. Is there a way I can get a version of this that I can actually fill in or is there something I can to do this file to make it workable? We don't have the software here to change a pdf to a Word file…once it's in Word I can change it back though.
A. With the RFP questions themselves, you may reproduce the question EXACTLY in a word processing program to type your answers. In addition, Proposal Narrative Questions have been posted to http://www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/pdfs/ProposalNarrativeQuestions.doc as a Word Document so that you do not need to reproduce the questions.

Q. Can changes to RFP documents be posted to the http://www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/currentsolicitations.shtml page with the date that the changes were made?
A. Yes. Links to all documents that have been changed will now include an update date.

Specifications

Q. Can you notify us that you have received our proposal when it arrives?
A. Yes. As long as the package is clearly marked with a return address, Amelia Hershberger will contact the proposing entity to confirm receipt. Please note that no proposal packages will be opened prior to 2pm September 10, 2009. Confirmation of receipt of proposal should in no way be construed to mean that the proposal has met qualifications.

Q. May we submit our proposals prior to the due date? What if there is an amendment after that early submission?
A. Yes. If an amendment is issued after your proposal is submitted, you may request in writing that the prior submission be withdrawn and replaced **before the bid due date of 9/10/09 at 2pm.**

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Q. May we email a PDF document of our proposal instead of mailing?
A. **NO.** We can ONLY accept proposals that meet the requirements set out in the RFP itself, which requires one (1) complete, original blue-ink signature proposal with all required appendices AND five (5) complete copies of same. This original proposal and copies MUST be mailed as hard copies, not electronic submissions.

Q. When will we be notified of decisions made?
A. We anticipate making decisions as to which proposals will be funded by early November 2009. However, please note that no decisions can be made public until all decisions have been made.

Q. Will each county awarded have its own contract?
A. If one entity prevails in more than one county, we will enter into a multi-county contract with that entity.

Q. Agency certification: does "original copies of this signature page" mean all blue original signatures?
A. No, only on the signed original. Photocopies of the rest will not be in blue ink.

Q. Is there any benefit to being there in person versus online for the August 26th Pre-Bid Conference?
A. No, attending in person or online will yield the same access to information. The conference is optional.

Q. I have no idea what I am supposed to do with the bid. I do not know if I write the answers to the questions on the site you sent or what.
A. All of the information you need, including bid instructions, is contained within the documents posted at http://www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/currentsolicitations.shtml. Be sure to download all documents in the box labeled "Court Appointed Special Advocates Services" by clicking on the blue links and choosing to Save these when prompted. No other websites will have this information, only http://www.nycourts.gov/admin/bids/currentsolicitations.shtml has updates to the RFP. You are encouraged to check the website regularly to see if Amendments have been posted.

Q. If there is no contract number, do we leave this part blank?
A. Yes, or you may write TBD / To Be Determined.

Q. We would like to write a generic letter of intent for any or all the counties in the RFP. We are prepared to become the umbrella organization for any current office that is without a bid. We do not wish to lose any further offices, so we would become the umbrella for a short period of time until the organization could get back to being self sufficient. That would more then likely be before this grant was over, under five years.
A. Letters of intent are just that - intentions, not commitments. Therefore, a letter of intent does not commit the writer to submit a bid. The letter, however, must define which counties the writer intends to apply for.

All bids/proposals shall remain binding on bidders until such time as the Office of Court Administration provides written notification of its intent to award the contract to a specific bidder or until the bidder withdraws its bid/proposal in writing, whichever occurs first.

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Contracts will be awarded to the applying organization with the highest qualifying score in a given county for the term of 1/1/10-12/31/14, and any change in contractor within that term will also be pursuant to competitive process; that is, the successful proposer may NOT transfer its awarded contract to another entity.

Q. Are letters of intent required?
A. No. For clarification, proposals from entities that did not submit a letter of intent will be accepted; a letter of intent is not a prerequisite for submitting a proposal.

Q. Is the contract period 1/1/2010-12/31/2015 or is it 1/1/2010 - 12/31/2010?
A. The contract term is 1/1/10-12/31/1**4**. The contract will be broken into budget periods within that term of
1/1/10-3/31/10 (3 months)
4/1/10-3/31/11 (12 months)
4/1/11-3/31/12 (12 months)
4/1/12-3/31/13 (12 months)
4/1/13-3/31/14 (12 months)
4/1/14-12/31/14 (9 months)
For a total term of 60 month (5 years).