MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE
FIA/OHEP 14--003--S

ADMINISTRATION OF THE MARYLAND ENERGY ASSISTANCE (MEAP)
AND ELECTRIC UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAMS (EUSP)

311 W. Saratoga Street
First Floor Conference Room
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Tuesday, October 7, 2014

ATTENDANCE:

AGENCY:

Nneka Willis--Gray, Procurement Officer
Lindsay Robbins, Director, Home Energy Programs
Kenneth Jessup, Bureau of Work Force Development
Wayne Dixon, Procurement Division
Danika Montague, Procurement Division
Hemant Patel, Operation Manager, OHEP
Stacey Pollitt, Procurement Specialist, OHEP
ATTENDEES:

Kim Neely, Harford Community Action Agency, Inc.
Lisa Zimmerman, Harford Community Action Agency, Inc.
Paula C. Savini, Catholic Charities
Evelyn Blackman, Catholic Charities
Linda Green, Garrett County Community Action Committee
Carl E. Burke, Community Action Council
Tina M. Barse, Community Action Council
Beverly Davis, Human Services Programs
Paula Reynolds, Human Services Programs
Anne Brinker, Community Action Council of Howard County
Edie Manney, Community Action Council of Howard County
Deborah P. Austin, Department of Human Resources
Gretchen Clausell--Huntley, Community Action Partnership Commission
Delilah Balz, Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee
Marilyn M. Neal
Candeaner Robinson
Janet Cuffee
Janetta Hampton
Erica Matthews
Virginia Pilkerton
James Harding
Jean Herringer

Reported by: Carol O’Brocki, Notary Public
Hunt Reporting Company, Glen Burnie, Maryland
PROCEEDINGS

(10:05 a.m.)

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: Hello and good morning, everyone. It's my pleasure to welcome you to the Department of Human Resources. We're here to go over the request for proposals for the Maryland Energy Assistance Program and Electric Universal Service Program. My name is Nneka Willis--Gray and I am the Procurement Officer for this solicitation.

Hunt Reporting is recording this conference and a transcript will be made available on Department of Human Resources website and eMaryland Marketplace.

There will be questions and responses section at the end of the presentation, so please hold all of your questions until that time.

And now we will go through introductions.

I'll start with myself and we will move to the right. My name is Nneka Willis--Gray, Procurement Officer for the Department of Human Resources.

MS. ROBBINS: I'm Lindsay Robbins. I'm the Director of the Office of Home Energy Programs.
MR. PATEL: I’m Hemant Patel. I’m the Operation Manager for the OHEP.

MS. POLLITT: Good morning. Stacey Pollitt, Procurement Specialist for OHEP.

MS. SINGLETON: Good morning. Elsa Singleton. I’m with the Procurement Division.

MR. CHANG: Hubert Chang. I’m an Assistant Attorney General.

MS. MONTAGUE: Danika Montague. I’m with the Procurement Department.

MS. AUSTIN: Good morning. Deborah Austin. I’m with the Procurement Division.

MR. DIXON: Wayne Dixon, Procurement Division.

MR. JESSUP: Good morning. My name is Kenneth Jessup with the Bureau of Work Force Development. I’m actually here today representing the Hiring Agreements Unit.

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: And introductions from the front row, please? Starting at the front row.

MS. MANNEY: Hi. My name is Edie Manney. I’m with the Community Action Council of Howard County.
MS. BRINKER: Anne Brinker, Community Action Counsel of Howard County.

MS. SAVINI: Paula Savini with Catholic Charities Diocese of Wilmington.

MS. BLACKMAN: Evelyn Blackman, Catholic Charities Diocese of Wilmington.

MS. NEAL: Marilyn Neal, Executive Director of Talbot County, Maryland.

MS. ROBINSON: Cardeaneer Robinson, Neighborhood Service Center, Talbot County.

MS. CUFFEE: Tanet Cuffee, Neighborhood Service Center, also Talbot County.

MS. GREEN: Linda Green, Garrett County.

MS. HAMPTON: Janetta Hampton, Allegany County, Outreaching Assistance.

MS. MASON: I’m Judy Mason, Executive Director, Harford Community Action Agency.


MS. MATTHEWS: Good morning. Erica Matthews, Anne Arundel County Community Action Agency.

MS. HUNTLEY: Gretchen Huntley, CEO with Anne Arundel County Community Action Agency.

MR. BURKE: Good morning. I’m Carl Burke with Washington County Community Action Council.


MS. DAVIS: Beverly Davis, Human Services Programs, Carroll County.

MS. REYNOLDS: Paula Reynolds, Human Services Programs, Carroll County.

MS. PILKERTON: Virginia Pilkerton, Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action.

MR. HARDING: Greg Harding, Southern Maryland Tri-County.

MS. BALZ: Delilah Balz, Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee.

MR. HOWARD: Good morning. Gregg Howard, Director of Procurement and Compliance for the Department of Human Resources.
MS. JORDAN: Jackie Jordan, DHR, Procurement Division.

MS. HENNINGSER: Jean Henningser, Seedco.

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: Thank you all. Very nice to meet you. Right now we’ll have opening remarks by Ms. Lindsay Robbins, Program Director for Office of Home Energy Programs.

MS. ROBBINS: Thank you, Nneka. So, good morning, everyone. I don’t have much to add to what Nneka said. She covered a little bit of what I was going to talk about, but I just wanted to say good morning. That it’s really glad to see such a great turnout here.

We’re very excited to have the opportunity to open up the chance to administer these programs across the State, and our goal here today is really just to give you a brief overview of the RFP. We have kind of experts on each of the different sections who are going to give an overview of the Request for Proposal.

But really what we’re here today is to answer all of your questions and clarify anything that you want.
to know about the program itself or the process for applying.

So, with that, I will turn it back over to Nneka to get started with the overview of the RFP.

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: Thank you, Ms. Robbins. Now we’re going to go over the highlights of the RFP.

General information regarding the request for proposals begins on page 7 of the RFP if you’re following along. The objective of this RFP is to provide outreach activities, application intake, certification of benefits, payment processing, notification of eligibility determinations, and appeals for benefits, amounts, or denial.

The Department of Human Resources, Family Investment Administration and Office of Home Energies Programs intends to acquire contractual services for the administration of the Maryland Energy Assistance Program, the Electrical Universal Service Program, and the recording of applications for the Utility Service Protection Plan.

Proposals are being requested for 14 of
Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions: Allegany, Anne Arundel, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Garrett, Harford, Howard, St. Mary’s, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. The remaining ten jurisdictions not covered in this RFP are served by the Maryland Department of Human Resources, local Department of Social Services, and Baltimore City government.

The anticipated duration of this contract is for a three-year period, beginning April 1, 2015 and ending on or about March 31, 2018. There is one two-year option period to be exercised at the sole discretion of the State.

The Department intends to make a single award for each of the 14 jurisdictions for which proposals are requested through this RFP. Offerors may submit proposals for one jurisdiction, more than one jurisdiction by submitting one proposal and identifying the jurisdictions the offeror desires to serve as required in Section 4.2.2 of the RFP. A separate financial proposal must be submitted for each jurisdiction as required in Section 4.2.2.
Offerors either directly or through their subcontractors must be able to provide all services and meet all the requirements requested in this solicitation. The successful offeror shall remain responsible for contract performance, regardless of subcontractor participation in the work.

Now we’re going to go to the hiring agreement, which will be provided to us by Mr. Kenneth Jessup.

MR. JESSUP: Good morning, all. Hopefully you all received the packet when you came in this morning.

It should say Informational Process of Hiring Agreements. And as you open your packet, on the left-hand side of your packet, is all statutory references regarding the hiring agreements. You can review that at your leisure.

On the right side -- I’m just going to give you a brief overview of what hiring agreements are. The hiring agreement is an agreement intimate to the Department of Human Resources or local Department of Social Services, and a contractor doing business with the State under which DHR under which local -- or the
local and the contractor agree to work cooperatively in
an effort to identify and hire current and former family
investment program recipients, their children, foster
youth, or and obligators to fill job openings of the
contractor as a result of the procurement contract.

Hiring agreements will remain in effect during
the duration of the contract. Right behind that it
gives a brief overview of the contractor’s role and the
process. Notifying DHR of all openings and existence as
a result of procurement contract, declare DHR the first
source for job openings, and give first preference to
DHR and local DSS candidates, allow DHR three working
days to refer candidates for the position, and provide
DHR and local DSS with feedback on hiring decisions of
candidates, and comply with the hiring agreements
throughout the life of the contract.

Lastly, there is a page that gives you
information about the hiring agreement and who you
should contact, with their email addresses. The Hiring
Manager, Mr. A.J. Andu (phonetic) was here today. He
wasn’t able to be here originally and I’m just stepping
in for him at this point. As you go further through the packet, you’ll see additional information. If you have any further questions, please email Mr. Andu and he’ll get back to you as quickly as possible. Thank you.

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: Thank you, Mr. Jessup. Mr. Wayne Dixon will review the Living Wage requirements.

MR. DIXON: Good morning. Maryland law requires a contractor as meeting certain conditions, pay a living wage to covered employees on State service contracts over $100,000.

The Commissioner of Labor and Industry at the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation requires that a contractor subject to the Living Wage law submit payroll records for covered employees and a signed statement indicating that they pay the living wage to covered employees, or receive a waiver from living wage reporting requirements.

If subject to the Living Wage law, the contractor agrees that it will abide by all Living Wage law requirements, including but not limited to reporting requirements in COMAR 21. The contractor understands
that failure of the contractor to provide such documents
is a material breach of the terms and conditions and may
result in contract termination, disqualification by the
State from participating in State contracts, and other
sanctions.

Additional information regarding the State’s
Living Wage requirement is contained in Attachment G.
Offerors must complete and submit the Maryland Living
Wage Requirements Affidavit of Agreement -- that’s
Attachment G1, with their proposal. If an offeror fails
to complete and submit the required documentation, the
State may require -- may determine an offeror to be not
responsible under State law.

Contractors and subcontractors subject to the
Living Wage law shall pay each covered employee at least
the minimum amount set by law for the applicable tier
area. The specific living wage rate is determined by
whether a majority of the services take place in a Tier
1 area -- that’s 1339, or Tier 2 area, 1006 of the
State.

The Tier 1 area includes Montgomery, Prince
George’s, Howard, Anne Arundel, and Baltimore counties, and Baltimore City. The Tier 2 area includes any county in the State not included in the Tier 1 area. In the event that the employees who perform the services are not located in the State, the head of the unit responsible for the State contract shall assign the Tier based upon where the recipients of the services are located.

The contract resulting from this solicitation will be determined to be a Tier 1 contract or a Tier 2 contract depending on the locations from which the contractor provided 50 percent or more of the services. The offeror must identify in its proposal the location or locations from which services will provided, including the location or locations from which 50 percent or more of the contract services will be provided.

If the contractor provides 50 percent or more of the services from a location or locations in Tier 1 jurisdictions, the contract will be a Tier 1 contract. If the contractor provides 50 percent or more of the services

HUNT REPORTING COMPANY
Court Reporting and Litigation Support
Serving Maryland, Washington, and Virginia
410-766-HUNT (4868)
1-800-950-DEPO (3376)
services from a location in a Tier 2 jurisdiction, the contract will be a Tier 2 contract. If the contractor provides more than 50 percent of the services from an out-of-State location, the State or agency determines the wage tier based on where the majority of the service recipients are located.

Information pertaining to reporting obligations may be found by going to the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation website. Please note, the living wage may change annually, however. The contract price may not be changed because of a living wage change. Thank you.

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: Thank you, Mr. Dixon. And Ms. Danika Montague will now go over the minimum qualifications.

MS. MONTAGUE: Good morning. My name is Danika Montague and I’ll be reading Section 2, Minimum Qualifications.

The offeror must provide with its proposal the following minimum qualifications: the offeror shall possess a minimum of three years prior experience in
delivering Human Service programs to low income households. As proof of meeting this requirement, the offeror shall provide with the proposal three business references from the past five years able to attest to the offeror’s experience in providing human service programs to low income households.

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: Thank you, Ms. Montague. And Section 3, the Scope of Work, will be presented by the Office of Home Energy. The Section will begin on page 28. Ms. Robbins will go over the Scope of Work. Mr. Hemant Patel will go over the invoicing, and Ms. Stacy Pollitt will go through the deliverables.

MS. ROBBINS: Thank you. So hello again, everyone. I am assuming that everyone has read through this section of the RFP, so I’m going to try and just provide a relatively brief overview.

The first paragraph of the Statement of Work Requirements refers to the COMAR regulations that any potential contractor is going to have to comply with. We strongly encourage you to carefully review those COMAR requirements, which I believe are Attachment S,
and to ensure that your proposal showcases your ability
to comply with all of the procedures that are described
in COMAR.

After COMAR compliance, the first requirement
listed in the Statement of Work is that the contractor
maintain a facility within the jurisdiction that they’re
serving that will be open to the public and comply with
all of the requirements that are listed in the Statement
of Work, which include providing all of the necessary IT
equipment and software that the staff serving the
program are going to use to do their jobs, and making
sure that that equipment and software complies with all
of Maryland’s requirements.

Contractors are also required to provide
outreach for the program, and ensure that all of the
eligible program participants that are in the
jurisdiction that they’re serving are aware of and have
access to apply to the program. The contractor will
need to develop an outreach plan on an annual basis to
show how they will provide outreach to the eligible
population in their jurisdiction, including how they’re
going to develop successful partnerships with other groups within the community in order to conduct that type of outreach.

On to Application Intake. Contractors are required to accept applications throughout the program year and to meet the requirements stated in COMAR for accepting and processing applications. Some of the key deadlines to keep in mind are the seven-day deadline to determine whether or not an application is complete, and to send a request for additional information notice if that application is not complete; ensuring that the information required for the application is entered into the OHEP data manage system within 30 days of the receipt of the application; making an eligibility determination no later than 45 days after the receipt of the application; and generating eligibility notices within seven days after a determination is made for denials, and within ten days if a benefit is being provided.

Those are very important deadlines that we have to stick to and we want to make sure that any
contractor that takes on this contract has the capability of meeting those deadlines.

The next section in the requirements is payment processing, which will be covered by Hemant Patel in a moment. He’s going to be going over both of the fiscal sections including payment processing and fiscal reporting.

So on to requirements for handling the MEAP energy crisis situations. The MEAP energy crisis season runs from November 1 through March 31, and during that time contractors are required to required expedited services to customers that are facing a crisis situation. We define “crisis” as when a household has less than four days of heating fuel left; when a household has had their primary heat utility disconnected; or they have a disconnection notice that says it’s going to be shut off within four days; or when a household does not have an operational furnace.

Crisis applications must be reviewed and eligibility determinations must be made within 48 hours of receipt of an application, and that actually -- that
deadline increases to within 18 hours if it is for a vulnerable household. We define “vulnerable households” as households with a child under the age of two; a person over the age of 65; or someone who has a medical condition that will be affected by losing heat in the home. So contractors must submit an annual plan that showcases how they plan to deal in an expedited way with a crisis situation.

On to fraud. Fraud is a definitely an important and difficult issue in the OHEP programs and it’s the contractor’s responsibility to identify potential fraud and misrepresentation. It could be committed by applicants, energy suppliers, or staff in your own offices. Every contractor must put procedures in place to identify potential issues and to obtain verification of suspected fraud through additional documentation or when appropriate through contacting relevant sources that may have informed you the fraud was taking place. And the contractor must contact OHEP if you obtain evidence that supports suspected fraudulent activities so the State can take the
appropriate steps to resolve it.

On to monitoring and performance assessments.

All contractors are required to cooperate with all OHEP monitoring and/or audits, and any audits that may be conducted by other Federal or State agencies. Notice will always be provided within at least one business day of an on-site visit. Contractors must make any program or fiscal documents required available to the personnel that are conducting the site visit.

OHEP conducts its own monitoring of all of the local agencies on an annual basis, and the contractor should be prepared to receive at least one on-site visit from OHEP monitoring staff each year, and based on that visit and documentation review, OHEP will prepare a monitoring report that’s given back to each of the local agencies.

One of the new things that some of you who have been in the program before may have noted in this RFP, beginning in Fiscal Yea 2016, all contractors are going to be evaluated based on a set of performance measures which are outlined in detail in the RFP.
That’s going to happen on an annual basis and contractors will receive an annual score that marks their performance on a scale of 0 to 100. Contractors that score less than an 85 are going to be required to develop and implement a corrective action plan, and those scores are something that we are going to taken into consideration when we decide whether or not to exercise the optional renewal for the last two years of the contract. So that’s definitely something important to keep in mind.

And finally, the contractor is required to designate a project manager that will make themselves available to our office to discuss and report on day-to-day operations, and attend any other meetings as needed. And if selected, the contractor should be prepared to attend a post-award orientation conference which will take place no later than two weeks after the contracts are approved, and will cover service delivery, invoice processing, monitoring, and other contract terms and conditions.

And with that, I will turn over the podium to
Hemant Patel to go over payment processing and fiscal reporting.

MR. PATEL: All right. My name is Hemant Patel. I’m the Fiscal Operational Manager here. Under the RFP on page 32, you have a payment processing Section 3.3.5, and it tells you to -- the COMAR 7, Subtitle 3, Chapter 21 and 22.

On the fiscal accounting record must be under OHEP accounting practice and has to be maintained according to the Federal and the State’s standards. And monthly reports should be dated and signed for the monthly financial report, and benefit funds. The benefit funds are 100 percent now Federal live funds, so the OMB 133 applies for that. So on the record must be submitted every month to Stacey Pollitt or her current compliance officer, and must be on the record on the file.

And you make sure that under OHEP management system that all the EDS has to be in the same status, and any later than 55 days after the date of the initial application was received. In the OHEP benefits system,
the EDS must be certified and EDS status on a weekly basis, and specified by the Section 3.3.5.

The MEAP benefit who I’ll say is for the payment for the (indiscernible) fuel supplier, the payments are issued by the landlord and application is done every year, submitted by the contract’s own fiscal system. On the part where the State project manager or he has exhausted either funds or for (indiscernible) or ESP, the contractor must suspend or cancel all payments as directed by the State Project Manager. The contractor selects only household benefit bodies meeting OHEP management system no later ten days after the payment is made for the energy supplier.

And Section 3.3.5, which is the most important for the application report through the OHEP management system for the first business day of each week. And any other identified under OHEP completed application report must be dissolved no more than seven days.

Invoice processing -- hold on for a second.

Invoicing -- that’s on page 43, and that’s Section 3.7, that all invoices originally set by the contractor and
submitted to the State Project Manager, and all invoices should include the following information -- contractor name, address, Federal ID number, invoice period, and before that, page 177, you have an invoice form there. It should be submitted every quarter for the payment processing, or the invoicing for refund.

And the payment bidding in terms is on page 44, and it should be submitted to Stacey Pollitt our Procurement Specialist and it’s an OHEP quarterly invoice and it’s Attachment 8A. And it should be submitted by the 15th day of the first month of the quarter. An invoice should be one-fourth of each annual contract amount, using the OHEP quarterly invoice.

Are there any questions for the payments processing?

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: I think we’re going to hold questions until the end.

MR. PATEL: Okay. Thanks.

MS. POLLITT: Good morning. Okay. So I’m going to speak on the deliverables, which of course, Hemant has already hit some of it with the
administrative report and the benefit funds report.

On page 44 of the RFP it pretty much is self-explanatory as what is required from the contractors to meet each deadline of each report each month. One of the first reports again is the Administrative and the Benefit Fund report, which is due the 15th of each month. The annual Outreach Plan, which is due August the 15th of each year. The annual Energy Crisis Plan, which is due September the 30th of each year. The Close-Out Report or the Close-Out Record, which is due to OHEP office May the 30th, and then there’s a second part that’s due on July the 3rd of each program year. The Independent Annual Financial Audit Report, which I believe Lindsay already spoke on as well, is the first Monday in May of each year.

Your Fuel Consumption Survey is due the third Wednesday in June of each year, and then the Monthly Outreach Log, which is due the first Friday of the following month.

With the Outreach Plan, she wasn’t able to make it today. You will be notified as your contact
person for your outreach, where your paperwork should be
sent or emailed to each month, with that person which is
Blessing -- Blessing Gunden (phonetic), and I believe
that is going to be it for the deliverables that are
required.

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: Thank you all. Now we’re
going to go over Section 4, Proposal Format. Before we
begin this section, I just want to make a reminder that
proposals are due at the specified date and time listed
in the RFP. Please keep in mind, any late proposals
will not be accepted. That time will be November 5 at
2:00 p.m. Okay?

The proposal is a two-part submission. If
you’re following along, this can be found on page 50 of
the RFP. The offeror shall submit proposals in two
separate volumes. Volume One includes the Technical
Proposal; Volume Two includes the Financial Proposal.
It is preferred that the name, email address, phone
number of the offeror be included on the outside of the
package of each volume. Each volume shall contain one
original and five identified copies.
It is preferred that the two sealed volumes are submitted together in a single package with the label that has the RFP title and number, jurisdiction, or jurisdictions relevant to the proposal, name and address of the offeror, and closing date and time for receipt of -- for proposals. And the proposal’s due date and time -- November 5, no later than 2:00 p.m. to the address listed in Section 1.5 of the RFP.

The RFP can be submitted in person or by mail. The Department recommends if you choose to send it by mail, send Express, Priority, or Certified Mail. These are the only forms in which the date and time of the receipt can be verified by the Department. Any proposals received after the closing date and time will not be accepted.

The Technical Proposal is found in Section 4.4 on page 51, provides detailed information about the submission and format of Volume One. No pricing information is to be included in the Technical Proposal. Inside a sealed package as described in Section 4.2 should be one original and five copies, with an
electronic version. An offeror submitting proposals for more than one jurisdiction shall produce one Technical Proposal, regardless of the number of jurisdictions proposed to serve. If there are any variations in service delivery based on jurisdiction nuances, those variations shall be described in detail on a separate page for each jurisdiction so affected, and appended to the Technical Proposal.

Section 4.4.2 describes the order of the sections provided in the Technical Proposal. Tab A, title page and table of contents; Tab A1, claim of confidentiality; Tab B, transmittal letter; Tab C, Executive Summary; Tab D, minimum qualifications documentation; Tab E, offer of technical response to RFP and proposed work plan; Tab F, experience and qualifications of proposed staff; Tab G, offeror qualification and capabilities; Tab H, references; Tab I, list of current or prior State contracts; Tab J, financial capability; Tab K, certificate of insurance; Tab L, subcontractors; Tab M, legal action summary; Tab N, economic benefit factors; and Tab O, additional
1 required technical submissions.
2 The Technical Proposal should also reference
3 the organization and numbering of the sections of the
4 RFP.
5
6 The Financial Proposal should be in a sealed,
7 cover, separate from the Technical Proposal, and clearly
8 identified in the format identified in Section 4.2.
9
10 The offeror shall submit an original with five
11 copies, and electronic version. The Financial Proposal
12 shall contain all price information in the format
13 specified in Attachment F. The offeror shall complete
14 the Financial Proposal only as provided in the Financial
15 Proposal instructions and a Financial Proposal form
16 itself. The price quoted in the Financial Proposal form
17 may not increase by more than three percent over the
18 prior year for each year of the contract term following
19 the first contract year, as well as for each year for
20 the option period if it is exercised.
21
22 An offeror submitting proposals for more than
23 one jurisdiction shall produce a separate Financial
24 Proposal for each jurisdiction, and it should be
provided in a separate sealed envelope and labeled with the jurisdiction.

Section 5 begins on page 60. This goes over the Evaluation Committee, the evaluation criteria, and selection procedure. Evaluation of proposals will be performed in accordance with COMAR 21.05.03, by a committee established for the purpose of and based on the criteria set forth in Section 5.2, Technical Proposal Evaluation Criteria, and 5.3, Financial Proposal Evaluation Criteria of the RFP.

The Technical and Financial Proposal evaluation criteria is listed in Section 5.2. The criteria for the Technical Proposal will be evaluated in the following order -- offeror’s technical response to RFP requirements and work claim, experience and qualification of proposed staff, offeror qualifications and capabilities, included proposed subcontractors, and economic benefit to the State. Each criterion has equal weight.

All qualified offerors will be ranked from lowest, most advantageous, to highest, least
advantageous price based on the total proposed price
within the State guidelines set forth in the RFP, and as
submitted on Attachment F of the Financial Proposal
form.

The contract will be awarded in accordance
with the competitive sealed proposals method. The State
may conduct discussions with offerors that have
submitted proposals that are determined to be reasonably
acceptable of being selected for contract award or
potentially so. However, the State reserves the right
to make an award without discussions.

In either case, the State may determine the
offeror to be responsible and/or offeror proposal not to
be responsible of being selected for award without
discussions. If it is found at that time that you are
not susceptible for award, the Financial Proposal will
be returned if it is unopened.

Award determination is determined once -- upon
completion of the Technical Proposal and Financial
Proposal evaluations and ranking. Each offeror will
receive an overall ranking. The Procurement Officer
will recommend award of the contract to the responsible offeror that submitted the proposal determined to be the most advantageous for the State. Both the proposal technical factors and financial factors carry equal weight.

This concludes the review of the RFP. We are ready to take questions. Before we actually start, I just wanted to make aware that prior to the RFP coming out there was a change made to the living wage. The wages have increased, so there will be an amendment three made to the RFP which will be posted to eMaryland Marketplace and DHR’s website.

When asking questions, we’d just ask that you identify yourself and your company for the record, and again, a transcript of the conference will be made available on eMaryland Marketplace and DHR website.

Does anyone have any questions?

MS. BENHAM: Hi. I’m Ann Benham with Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission. The contract year it says is starting April 1st. We’re currently in a seven month extension. What I need to
know is is that seven months rolling into the new --
like when this thing starts, are we rolling this into
this, or is this the seven months stand alone and we’re
just starting at the April 1st with the whole -- the
year would basically be changing?

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: Your program year would be
changing.

MS. BENHAM: Okay. So this seven month
extension that we’re in is its own thing?

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: It’s its own. It’s a
separate --

MS. BENHAM: Thank you.

MS. BARSE: Just a quick question. Tina
Barse, Washington County Community Action Council. I
have a couple of questions. The first question I have
is in the RFP it talks about the State business hours
are 8:30 to 5:00, if I remember correctly, and our
agency is open 8:30 to 4:30. Do we need to extend our
hours to accommodate the State working hours?

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: The RFP does state that
should be available during normal State business hours.
MS. BARSE: The next question I have, in Section 2 it talks about references -- business references. Those business references, I understand that Section, but then we go to Section 4, it talks about client references are -- it talks a little bit about this reference can’t be the same. I’m trying to understand what the client references -- how they differ from the business references.

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: What we can do is we can take down your question and we’ll follow-up with you on eMaryland Marketplace and DHR website.

MS. BARSE: All right. I have one last question. I’m sorry. We have State supplied equipment. Now I understand that if you don’t receive the RFP award, that equipment will be gone. But if we do receive that award, does that equipment stay with us? Are we able to keep that equipment and maintain that equipment, or do we have to purchase new equipment? If so, then I’m sure over time it’s going to be placed, but, you know, as a start-up?

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: In regards to the current
equipment, you would want to defer to the State Project Manager for the current contracts. What we can do is follow-up with you in regards to at the end of the contract what would happen with that equipment.

Are there any other questions? Well thank you everyone for coming out today. As a reminder, please submit your proposals by the due date and time, and because if it is late it will not be accepted. If you have not already done so, please sign in at the front so that we can record your attendance, and this now concludes the Pre-Proposal Conference for the Administration of the Maryland Energy Assistance and Electric Universal Service Programs. Enjoy the rest of your day.

Oh, I’m sorry. I think we have one more question.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is there going to be a handout available? We didn’t receive a handout when we arrived.

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: We can make an additional copy for you.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS. HUNTLEY: On page 15 -- I'm Gretchen Huntley with Anne Arundel County Community Action -- 1.14, Public Information Act Notice. For confidential -- how specific does that need to be?

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: Any information that you deem as confidential would need to be included on that under Tab A1. It needs to be as specific as you want it to be.

MS. HUNTLEY: Okay. Thank you.

MS. BALZ: Another question. If you are applying for more than one jurisdiction, would you need more than three references or would two references do for the --

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: The number of references will remain the same. If you’re applying for more than one jurisdiction, you’re using the same proposal, but any different information needs to be included in the addendum.

MR. BURKE: I’m sorry to delay the questions further --
MS. WILLIS-GRAY: That’s okay. I’m sorry --

MR. BURKE: Carl Burke with Washington County Community Action Council. The references, are they typically to take the form of letters of support, or are they simply references with contact information?

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: It could be either -- or let me get back to you on that in regards to that question.

MR. CHANG: And you can -- I’m Hubert Chang, Assistant Attorney General. I just wanted to clarify that on the confidential information question that it does -- there is a requirement that it is identified by page and section number, and that you identify your confidential and proprietary information on the page after the -- of your proposal.

MS. WILLIS-GRAY: Are there any additional questions or any clarifications that are needed? Also, just wanted to make a reminder that in order to receive a contract award, a vendor must be registered on eMaryland Marketplace. Our guidelines can be found on eMaryland Marketplace, so please if you plan to bid, or if you plan to put in for a proposal, please register
And that concludes our Pre-Proposal Conference. Everybody have a wonderful day.

(At 10:55 a.m. the meeting concluded.)
CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY

I, CAROL O’BROCKI, the officer before whom the foregoing testimony was taken, do hereby certify that the witness whose testimony appears in the foregoing transcript was duly sworn by me; that the testimony of said witness was taken by me by stenomask means and thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or under my direction; that said testimony is a true record of the testimony given by said witness; that I am neither counsel for, related to, or employed by any of the parties to the action in which this testimony is taken; and further, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

This certification is expressly withdrawn and denied upon the disassembly or photocopying of the foregoing transcript of the proceedings or any part thereof, including exhibits, unless said disassembly or photocopying is done by the undersigned court reporter and/or under the auspices of Hunt Reporting Company.

____________________________
CAROL O’BROCKI
Notary Public in and for the State of Maryland

My Commission Expires:

-----------------------------

HUNT REPORTING COMPANY
Court Reporting and Litigation Support
Serving Maryland, Washington, and Virginia
410-766-HUNT (4868)
1-800-950-DEPO (3376)