

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE

RFP NUMBER SSA/MRSS-22-001-S

MOBILE RESPONSE STABILIZATION SERVICES

Via Google Meet

Thursday, April 14, 2022

1:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE:

AGENCY:

Edwina Whipple, Procurement Officer, DHS/SSC

Valerie Douglas, Executive Project Director,
DHS/SSC

Nicole Cameron, Project Director, Center for
Excellence in Foster Care & Development

Nneka Willis-Gray, Director, Procurement Division

Aretha Ector, Assistant Attorney General

Dapheny McCray

LaTanya Lowe

Chandra Miller

ATTENDEES:

Sarah Drennan, Frederick County Health Department

Jay Hessler, Frederick County Health Department

Latonia Laffitte, Bridges Wellness Group

Cedric Tucker, Building Communities Today for Tomorrow

ALSO ATTENDING:

Kenisha Reed, Procurement Department

Reported by: Carol O'Brocki, Notary Public
Hunt Reporting Company

P R O C E E D I N G S

(1:03 p.m.)

MS. WHIPPLE: Welcome to the Pre-Proposal Conference for Mobile Response Stabilization Services or MRSS, RFP Number SSA/MRSS-22-001-S, and I would like to welcome you to the Pre-Proposal Conference and also I'll start by introducing myself, Edwina Whipple. I'm the procurement officer for this solicitation.

And I'd like to introduce my director of Procurement -- of the Procurement Division, Nneka Willis-Gray, and also the Assistant Attorney General Aretha Ector, and all of the other State employees will introduce themselves as we proceed. Those on the agenda, they'll introduce themselves.

And I also need to let everyone know that the Pre-Proposal Conference is being recorded. So I will start by going through the -- oh, I'm sorry. I'll start -- actually the opening remarks will be read by Valerie Douglas.

MS. DOUGLAS: Thank you so much, Edwina. So, good afternoon. My name is Valerie Douglas and I am

1 the executive project director at the Department of
2 Human Services, Social Services Administration.

3 I'm one of the persons who are responsible
4 for overseeing all aspects of the Center for Excellence
5 in Foster Care and Development grant under which mobile
6 response stabilization services will be provided.

7 Nicole Cameron is the Center for Excellence
8 project director who is on the call as well today, also
9 joining us in this conversation and I'd like to have
10 Nicole introduce herself.

11 MS. CAMERON: Good afternoon everyone. Thank
12 you for your interest in being here. My name is Nicole
13 Cameron, project director for the Center for Excellence
14 and we're excited to have you guys part of this
15 important conversation.

16 MS. DOUGLAS: Yes. So, thank you, Nicole,
17 and yes, we are very, very happy that you are
18 interested in the MRSS and are here today to hear more
19 about this very transformative process.

20 It will support resource families, parents,
21 and children who are served in our child welfare

1 system. I'll share more information on this process as
2 we move into our agenda, but for now I just wanted to
3 say thank you so much for being here. We look forward
4 to sharing as much information as possible and gaining
5 your additional interest in the process.

6 Edwina, I'll turn it over to you.

7 MS. WHIPPLE: I will now be going over the
8 Key Information Summary Sheet and it is a part of your
9 Request for Proposal. If you did not receive one, you
10 can access eMMA by going to emma.maryland.gov, and you
11 can download it, or you can also email me at
12 edwina.whipple@maryland.gov and I can email you a copy
13 of the RFP.

14 So I have already identified that I am the
15 procurement officer and this is for Mobile Response
16 Stabilization Services. I've given you my email
17 address.

18 Questions -- the question due date and time
19 is April 25th, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. The proposal due
20 closing date is May 17th, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

21 The contract type is a fixed price with

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1 indefinite quantity. The contract duration is one year
2 -- is a one-year base period with a one-year renewal
3 option, and the primary place of performance will be
4 proposed or is as proposed by the offeror.

5 In Section 1 of the RFP, Minimum
6 Qualifications, there is no offeror minimum
7 qualification for this procurement, and I will be
8 followed by Valerie Douglas with the next section.

9 MS. DOUGLAS: Thank you, Edwina. So I'd like
10 to start by providing a little background information
11 on the Center for Excellence model for which the mobile
12 response stabilization services will be provided under.

13 So in September of 2019 the Federal
14 Children's Bureau awarded the Maryland Department of
15 Human Services Social Service Administration funding to
16 create a National Center for Excellence in Foster
17 Family Development. The only state, by the way, in the
18 country who has been awarded this grant.

19 And so the purpose of the CFE is to engage,
20 prepare, and support resource parents to support timely
21 unification, permanency, and family-based placements.

1 So the CFE aims to improve the well being of
2 children and families impacted by child welfare system
3 by reducing lengths of stay in foster care and in
4 congregate care placements, decrease in the rate of
5 reentry into foster care, and increasing unification
6 and exits to permanency.

7 There are five jurisdictions who were
8 selected to implement and pilot this model. The five
9 jurisdictions include Baltimore County, Carroll County,
10 Frederick County, Montgomery County, and Prince
11 George's County.

12 So as a part of the model there are three
13 main supports that make up the CFE model. Two of those
14 models are evidence-based practices that supports and
15 provides pure training and build skills for the
16 resource parents and that's considered the key for
17 keeping resource parents and kinship parents training
18 and supported, and the acronym for that is KEEP
19 (phonetic) and then PTCR, which is the Parent Training
20 for Resources and Unification which is a support
21 program for our bio-families.

1 And the whole premise of the Center for
2 Excellence is really to have the resource parents and
3 birth parents co-parent and work on on behalf of our
4 youth who in care.

5 The MRSS is another main component of our
6 model and its component really is very critical in
7 normalizing the challenging behaviors and experiences
8 of both the child and the resource parent. It is
9 mainly upon initial placement and here about the MRSS
10 is slightly different from the mental health
11 stabilization process.

12 Mobile response stabilization is a process
13 that is built on -- ensures stability at the point of
14 placement, at the point that a child is placed in a
15 resource home. There's a response time of within an
16 hour and it has basic components that is also a model
17 that is considered to be evidence-based, as well.

18 So the MRS includes two primary components.
19 The first component is mobile crisis response services.
20 These services are provided in person and delivered in
21 home or in a community setting. The contractor who is

1 offered the bid will deploy a team of two persons
2 within one hour of services and within a 72-hour time
3 period provide those crisis management services.

4 The second component is really built on
5 stability. So the first part is about responding in a
6 crisis or crisis-like situation, and we consider a
7 child who has been removed from their home one who has
8 experienced trauma. So based on the fact that a child
9 has been removed, we're offering through the MRSS
10 support services for that youth and that resource
11 parent.

12 The stabilization services is the second
13 component and it's a component that is provided up to
14 eight weeks, and the determination of how long those
15 stabilization services are in play is really built on
16 that first three -- that three-day time period within
17 that crisis period, the first component of the MRSS.

18 And those services are provided just to
19 support the resource parent and the child during that
20 time period, and as I mentioned earlier it could be
21 eight weeks but it could be shorter depending on what

1 the assessment period has determined and that
2 assessment is done by the MRSS team.

3 So that section -- the Scope of Work section
4 of the RFP as you will see or have seen is very
5 lengthy. So I don't want to go through all of the
6 details of the Scope of Work but I do want to bring
7 your attention to a section that is really critical and
8 that is the Staffing section of the RFP.

9 There are credential expectations based on
10 the team who will need to provide the services, the
11 amount of staff needed because this would be a 24/7
12 operation and, you know, the availability of staff
13 based on that time period.

14 The credentialing, there would need to be at
15 least one LICSW or LCPAC who is available and part of
16 that team at the time.

17 I'm going to stop there and see if Nicole,
18 you want to chime in and maybe pull out of other
19 critical parts of the Scope of Work?

20 MS. CAMERON: Not a critical part, I just
21 want to make sure for those on the call that resource

1 parents were formally known as foster parents, just in
2 the event that someone may not have known that. So I
3 just wanted to point that out.

4 MS. WHIPPLE: That's correct. So the Center
5 for Excellence it was -- is a grant. The application
6 was for a resource -- it was for foster families but in
7 the State of Maryland we consider foster parents -- we
8 consider them as resource parents because we also
9 include kin parents in that definition of resource
10 parents. So thank you for that clarification.

11 MS. CAMERON: No problem. I just wanted to
12 make sure I shared that. Thank you Valerie.

13 MS. DOUGLAS: You're welcome. So, Edwina,
14 I'll hand it back over to you.

15 MS. WHIPPLE: The next section will be --
16 Dapheny will be discussing. Okay. Dapheny? Okay. Is
17 she muted or --

18 MS. MCCRAY: I'm sorry, Edwina. If we could
19 move to Section 4 and then I will come back -- we can
20 come back to Section 3. I'm on the line with the court
21 reporter now.

1 MS. WHIPPLE: Okay. All right. Section 3,
2 Procurement Instruction. So in the RFP if you will
3 just review that particular section and it will give
4 you more information about procurement instructions.

5 Two of the sections that I really want to
6 point out and give special emphasis to -- 4.2 regarding
7 eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (eMMA), which is the
8 electronic commerce system that we use for the State of
9 Maryland. This section will give you more information
10 about what you need to do to become -- to actually sign
11 up on eMMA regarding contract award and being
12 registered in eMMA.

13 So just give that special attention as well
14 as Section 4.3 which regards questions -- information
15 about questions. And I will now be followed by Chandra
16 or LaTanya regarding the SBR goal.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you, Edwina.
18 Just to speak on the Small Business Reserve portion of
19 the scope of work, that basically just entails that
20 vendors who -- the procurement itself is a Small
21 Business Reserve designated procurement which means

1 that only awards can go to vendors who are Small
2 Business Reserve certified. So it's not a goal; it's a
3 designation, and that's basically the summary of it.

4 So for vendors to bid on the award they don't
5 necessarily have to be SBR certified but by the time of
6 award they have to be deemed eligible and already
7 certified before that award can happen.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And if you need
9 information on how to be SBR certified please do feel
10 free to go to eMMA and make sure that you are
11 registered there, and within eMMA there are a series of
12 questions that you can answer in order to be self-
13 certified (indiscernible).

14 Edwina, that's it.

15 MS. WHIPPLE: Okay. All right. Thank you.
16 Section 6 is Evaluation and Selection Process. That is
17 the section in your RFP that basically gives you
18 information about how --

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm sorry, Edwina.
20 Before you go on to that, if we're finished with the
21 Scope of Work let me see if we have any questions

1 regarding the Scope of Work section -- Section 2.

2 MS. WHIPPLE: Questions -- so we want to take
3 questions now or --

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, for the Scope of
5 Work portion. Then you can go into how proposals are
6 submitted and the deadlines and things like that.

7 MS. WHIPPLE: Okay. All right. Do if we
8 have anyone who has questions? And if you do, please
9 state your name and the company that you're with before
10 you ask your question.

11 (No response.)

12 MS. WHIPPLE: No questions? Okay.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: If I could add
14 something, Aretha, if that's okay. We mentioned about
15 the license credentialing and I want to make sure we
16 also add the importance of being knowledgeable or
17 certified in trauma informed care. So I know that's in
18 the Scope in Section 2, so I just didn't want to miss
19 an opportunity to make sure that the importance of that
20 -- that need. Thank you.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And for the record

1 since this is just being recorded, if there are
2 potential vendors on the line can you please identify
3 yourselves and the name of your company so we can make
4 sure that you are certainly included in any transcript
5 that may be produced from this. I don't know if our
6 court reporter is available.

7 But any other information, then you would
8 certainly have access to that information.

9 MS. LAFFITTE: My name is Latonia Laffitte.
10 I'm with the Bridges Wellness Group.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you. And if you
12 can maybe just drop that in the comments --

13 MS. LAFFITTE: Sure.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- for us that would be
15 helpful and put down your email address.

16 MS. WHIPPLE: Well, if we don't have anyone
17 else I can just go back and -- for Section 4.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, I see an
19 individual, Hessler (phonetic). Is that individual
20 with the Department?

21 MR. HESSLER: Yes, I'm sorry. My name's Jay

1 Hessler. I'm with the Frederick County Health
2 Department, local (indiscernible).

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Again, if you
4 could just drop that in the comments. Sarah Drennan?

5 MS. DRENNAN: Hi. I'm with Jay. I'll put my
6 info there, too.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you.

8 MS. DRENNAN: Thank you.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Cedric Tucker?

10 MR. TUCKER: Good afternoon. Cedric Tucker,
11 Building Communities Today for Tomorrow.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right. If you
13 would just drop that information in the comments. And
14 I see another phone number ending with 58. I'm not
15 sure who that is.

16 MS. REED: Kinesha Reed (phonetic). Hello.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good afternoon.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And if you can
19 identify the company that you're with and drop that in
20 the comments for us that would be helpful.

21 MS. REED: Give me one second. I'm working

1 from my phone. I'm not at a laptop. I'm with the
2 Procurement Department.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. That's
4 perfectly fine. And then the young lady who just
5 joined, Carol? If you would identify yourself and your
6 company, please? And you're on mute.

7 THE REPORTER: I am muted? Oh, yes. I'm
8 sorry. I'm Carol from Hunt Reporting Company. I was
9 just told to get on here so here I am. Could you tell
10 me which State agency this is? I didn't receive any
11 information.

12 MS. WHIPPLE: Department of Human Services.

13 THE REPORTER: Okay. Thank you.

14 MS. WHIPPLE: And, Aretha, should I stop
15 recording now, or continue?

16 MS. ECTOR: Continue.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you. And
18 -- okay so you can go on, Edwina. If there are no
19 other questions from anybody at this point?

20 MS. WHIPPLE: Anyone else have questions?

21 (No response.)

1 MS. WHIPPLE: Okay. I will go back and
2 address Section 4. Section 4 is in -- again in the
3 RFP. It is the Procurement Instructions and if you
4 will just make sure that you review that and I will
5 move on to Section 6 then, the Evaluation and Selection
6 Process. You will also want to review that section of
7 the RFP.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think somebody needs
9 to mute, Edwina.

10 MS. WHIPPLE: Can someone mute? I think
11 we're hearing some noise in the background. Thank you.

12 And again we will ask if anyone has any
13 questions. I just want to state that again you need to
14 provide your name and the name of your company when
15 you're asking questions. And I'll also let you know
16 that questions will be answered.

17 You have a question and answer deadline that
18 I provided. It is April 25th. So you have to make
19 sure that -- well, you definitely will have an answer.
20 So get all questions in before April 25th, 2022 at 9:00
21 a.m. So, questions?

1 (No response.)

2 MS. WHIPPLE: If there are no questions then
3 I can open the floor up for any closing comments that
4 anyone has, and just have to remind everyone that
5 proposals are due by May 17th, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

6 Any closing comments, anyone?

7 MS. MCRAE: Yes, Edwina.

8 MS. WHIPPLE: Yes?

9 MS. MCRAE: Yes. Hi. I did want to cover
10 the Section 3, Contractor Requirements General. I
11 think that's something that we need to convey that
12 information during the Pre-Proposal Conference. Before
13 I do that, though, I would like to also add --
14 piggyback off of Edwina's comments about the due date
15 of the proposals and the time.

16 Please understand that late proposals will
17 not be accepted. And just to follow on based on the
18 contract requirements of the Scope of Work which
19 Valerie just conveyed earlier, then I'll move on to the
20 Contractor Requirements General just to highlight some
21 areas that we like the vendors to, you know,

1 (indiscernible) and one of those sections is Contractor
2 Initiation Requirements regarding the kickoff meeting
3 that will be within ten days of the notice to proceed
4 date.

5 Another section is the End of Contract
6 Transition, Disaster Recovery Data, Invoicing,
7 Insurance Requirements, Security Requirements, Problem
8 Escalation Procedure, and Experience and Personnel.

9 So those are some of the key areas in
10 addition to the entire solicitation that we're asking
11 that the vendors do pay close attention to.

12 That's all I have, Edwina.

13 MS. WHIPPLE: Okay. Thank you, Dapheny.

14 MS. MCCRAY: Uh-huh. Are there any questions
15 for me from any of the attendees?

16 (No response.)

17 MS. MCCRAY: Okay. If not, I'll turn it over
18 to you, Edwina.

19 MS. WHIPPLE: Okay. I opened it up for
20 closing comments and I don't think anyone had any, so
21 if everybody's good we can adjourn.

1 MS. DOUGLAS: So before we adjourn I just
2 want to say again we appreciate those of you that have
3 come to hear about MRSS today. This is a model program
4 for the State of Maryland. We are very excited about
5 it and are looking forward to the model that is one --
6 piloted in the State of Maryland but eventually used
7 across the country.

8 And so this is the beginning part of this
9 process and we're really looking forward to
10 implementing this process in a way that it changes how
11 we do business in the State of Maryland and also in the
12 country.

13 So I wanted to share that information about
14 the MRSS which is a part of our model (indiscernible).
15 So, thank you.

16 MS. MCCRAY: Oh, and one other point, too, I
17 would like to mention that we do have Carol who's our
18 transcriber. The court reporting company did apologize
19 for the confusion. So in addition to the recording she
20 will transcribe what's been recording in addition to
21 what she's transcribed already. That will be returned

1 back out for review. That's all I had, for real this
2 time.

3 MS. WHIPPLE: Well, if that is all, we can
4 adjourn.

5 MS. MCCRAY: All right. Thank you, Carol.
6 Thank you, everyone.

7 (At 1:28 p.m. the conference concluded.)

8 - - -

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY

I, Carol O'Brocki, Notary Public, before whom the foregoing testimony was taken, do hereby certify that the witness was duly sworn by me; that said testimony is a true record of the testimony given by said witness; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action; and that the testimony was reduced to typewriting by me or under my direction.

This certification is expressly withdrawn upon the disassembly or photocopying of the foregoing transcript, including exhibits, unless disassembly or photocopying is done under the auspices of Hunt Reporting Company, and the signature and original seal is attached thereto.

Carol D. O'Brocki

CAROL O'BROCKI, Notary Public
in and for the State of
Maryland

My Commission Expires: January 15, 2023

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