REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) NUMBER: DOIT 2023-002

FOR

*INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR DIGITAL EQUITY
PROGRAM SERVICES – ARPA*

Questions and Answers Session

Monday April 24ᵗʰ, 2023 at 2 pm

"i. This section shall provide the qualifications and experience of potential __individuals __that will work on a scope of service. Emphasize the specific qualifications and experience from projects aligned with requested services. Key assigned resources are expected to be committed for the duration of the specific scope of service. Replacement of assigned resources will not be permitted without prior consultation with and approval of the County"

Question #1: We can provide the qualifications and experience of existing staff members who would contribute to the project as a portion of their time. However, if our proposal is selected, we would also hire additional staff who are based in Solano County to fill the key roles of Connected Solano Coalition Manager, Digital Navigator Coordinator, and Digital Navigators, who will be identified and hired after the scope of work is confirmed. As such we can only provide descriptions of the qualifications and experience necessary for these roles, not information about the actual individuals who will fill them. **Is this sufficient?**

Answer: Yes

Question #1. *ii. The Proposer shall provide the (3) references of government agencies and or firms for whom they have provided similar services during the last three (3) years.*

We understand this to mean that we should provide names, contact info, and short background about the services provided, as part of the narrative response, as opposed to full Letters of Reference from each. **Is this correct?**

Answer: Yes

Question #3. Our third question regards the amount of funding available and the budget. As we understand it, the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) has been allocated $1,800,000 in ARPA funding for digital equity programs, as follows:

- $900,000 for consultant services (the consultant's/ our proposal budget limit)
- $150,000 for Digital Resource Awareness Campaign marketing costs
- $250,000 for re-granting to local nonprofits
- $500,000 to Solano County Library to purchase wi-fi hotspots and laptops
- Total: $1,800,000

Is this correct?

Answer: Yes

Question #4. Our fourth question is a follow-up to the previous:
Has the Solano County Library already purchased these hotspots and laptops?

Answer: Solano County has signed a two-year contract with T-Mobile. There is an expectation that the Digital Equity Team will track and report on the allocation of the equipment. There is no involvement with library, they have their own team. The expectation is for reporting purposes and to keep track of people who are borrowing this equipment; that community may match other projects.

Question #5: we understand that the total amount of the 2-year proposal budget is $900,000. We typically includes a 15% indirect cost allocation, which in this case would be $135,000. **Are indirect costs allowed, and if so, is there a cap?**

Answer: Yes, this would be allowed and No, there is not a cap.

For all:

It is the County's intention with 900K budget is to acquire Program Manager, Navigator and part-time staff as can be had. Two full time should be paid strong salary to attract and retain very qualified people. Non-profits may not typically pay 6-figure salaries but the priority is to attract talent and retention for the full two year effort.

Question #6: Is there a plan for how this effort would be sustained past the two year period of the funding?

Answer: There is the belief that there will be further grant funding available in time. However sustaining effort past the second year will require grant writing to sustain positions and organizational efforts. The ongoing sustainability of the program is a task for the team that will be chosen.

Question #7: In regard to funds available for marketing efforts, how will they be distributed?

Answer: There is a $150,000.00 marketing budget that is not part of the RFP but the team selected would be coming up with ideas for spending that money. Some of the money will go towards an updated website presence and some may go towards brochures, billboards, and similar in targeted areas that have high-percentage of eligibility in its population. GIS would be used to advise what areas should be used for marketing.

Question #8: In regards to staffing for the marketing effort, would the team selected have to hire an outside agency for the materials?

Answer: It could be internal team or it could be a hired 3rd party, there is no restriction to the usage of the funds for marketing purposes. The team that is brought on will be tasked with generating ideas and plans to execute those funds.

Question #9: The language of the RFP makes mention of a workforce agency, is it a requirement when outreaching to local non-profits and service providers to work through the Solano Workforce?

Answer: There were some conversations with Solano Workforce Board with whether they would handle RFP. The alternative is to have a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) through Solano County's ARPA page. The Digital Equity Team would draft the RFPs and then local agencies and organizations would apply; the digital equity team would manage and oversee the process including progress reports from grantees.

Note that the intention is to fund over a two year period a number of small grants. In the second year the most successful organizations from the first round of grants would be awarded additional funding to enhance their success.

Question #10: Is Solano County open to having the management portion of the grant disbursement be managed by outside consultant so that Digital Navigation Team can keep the focus on ACP?

Answer: No. The expectation is that the Team will manage this. The anticipated total demand of creating the NOFA or RFP and managing it across the two year period is deemed within the purview of the Program Manager.

Question #11: Has Solano County looked into whether the Solano Community Foundation would be available to help with the grant disbursements?

Answer: The Solano Community Foundation will not be involved as they don't have the bandwidth to participate.

Question #12: Is it the preference for the Workforce Board to issue the RFP, acknowledging that the Team would review the grants but the contracts would be reviewed by the Board?

Answer: That has not yet been determined and would be subject to input from the team.

Question #13: Is it mandatory to initiate an RFP process with the Team as the dedicated contract reviewer or are there mechanisms to bypass the RFP process?

Answer: It has to go through RFP. It is intended to be a straightforward process that is accessible to small and local non-profits.

Question #14: The RFP Deadline is May 3rd, is there an indication for when the decision would be made and what the start date would be?

Answer: The intention is for the vendor to be selected and notified on Wednesday May 10th and immediately start contract review with a goal to set a start date of July 1st, 2023. Please pay attention to terms and conditions in RFP as they are the standards provided by the County. Any concerns or questions should be addressed in RFP response.

It is understood and acceptable that not all staff may be in place on July 1st, 2023. The contract has the flexibility to stretch beyond the two year timeframe to allow for that. And it is suspected that the Program Manager would be the key hire to build the team around. It is important to note that while typical non-profit salaries may differ, the hope is to see a significant budget allocation for staff such that the quality of the candidates and their retention possibilities are as high as possible.

Question #15: As work is performed, is it meant to invoiced immediately or is any amount dispersible to increase staff?

Answer: You will invoice for hours spent.

Question #16: What is invoicing timeline as far as invoice submission and payment?

Answer: Monthly invoicing should allow for processing and payment within 30 days.

Question #17: Will that be managed through a vendor portal?

Answer: Payment management will be determined after a vendor is selected.

Question #17: Will the proposal winners be allowed to request an upfront budget based on a percentage of the whole grant as a start-up support?

Answer: That is an option. If that is the way you would choose to execute a plan, it should be outlined clearly in the narrative and in the budget proposal when the RFP is submitted. It is up to the individual agency to submit their proposal and clarify their intentions.