

Allegheny County
Department of Human Services
Request for Qualifications Q&A
RFQ for Design, Content and Digital Strategy

March 31, 2021

1. For this RFQ do we need to be able to provide each area of service to submit or are we able to submit for just our strong areas of expertise?

Applicants do not need to be able to provide each category of work in order to submit an Application. Applicants should apply to only the categories of work in which they have strong expertise. Applicants can apply to one category of work or any combination of multiple categories of work.

April 14, 2021

2. Do you have smaller contracts for UX/UI/design research that are under the dollar threshold to require a formal RFP? I am interested in bidding but have found the amount of work required for the small possibility of getting government work is just not sustainable or profitable for a one person company. This work also does not make sense to subcontract on.

In some cases, we are able to award contracts or projects without a formal solicitation process. However, for the categories of work described in this RFQ, we anticipate primarily drawing on the pool of Qualified Applicants identified through the RFQ for specific projects. We've tried to make this RFQ easy to respond to, to give as many Applicants as possible a chance to be Qualified.

For very small projects, the Qualified Applicant may not need to complete the full Allegheny County contracting process.

3. If we are applying for all six categories, can you please confirm only three total references are required as part of the Response Form?

Yes, only three references are required regardless of the number of categories you are applying to.

4. Given that this is an RFQ, do the MBE, WBE and VOSB participation goals apply for each category we apply for or across all proposed categories? Additionally, how are the MWDBE goals of 13% MBE, 2% WBE and 5% VOSB being evaluated in relation to the budget and scope?

Thank you for drawing our attention to this. Considering that Applicants will be qualified through this RFQ and no contracts will be awarded, we will remove the MWDBE and VOSB documentation requirements from the application process. We have amended the RFQ to reflect

this change, see below. Once you are selected for a specific project, you may have to make a “good faith effort” in assisting the County in meeting the MWDBE and VOSB goals and then complete the documentation, depending on the amount of the contract award.

5. Since this is an RFQ and a budget is not being developed, please confirm that we are to leave “quote received” and “the amount committed” fields in the MWDBE Form blank? Not knowing further details on quantity of deliverables in the potential scope, how do we fill out the “% of total DHS contract/proposal” without a proposed budget?

See question four above and the amendment below.

6. Could you let us know what the annual budget would be for work of this nature?

We rely on multiple funding sources as a human services organization. We are unable to provide Applicants with a specific annual budget as it varies from year to year. Our decision to outsource specific projects also is dependent on staff capacity throughout the year.

7. Based on the submission criteria, there doesn't seem to be a pricing/financial submission required at this stage. Is this correct?

Correct. We will ask for pricing on a project-specific basis. We understand that there are many considerations an entity takes into account when providing a price quote. We thought it would be more accurate to ask for pricing by project, instead of requiring an upfront, overall price quote through the RFQ process.

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8. Are you open to a Canadian agency to do this work for you as we have for other clients in the US or do you have a location preference?

Agencies do not need to be based in the United States in order to submit an Application to this RFQ or to be selected for future projects. However, the contracting process is somewhat more burdensome for an organization outside the US. If you are not located in Allegheny County, please describe your approach to remotely managing projects and timelines, including how you would expect to work remotely with DHS.

We received the following questions during the Information Session on Wednesday, April 14.

9. Regarding the requirement for three years of financial reports, for freelancers who don't have a separate EIN from their Social Security number, is the requirement the same or what would you recommend?

If you are applying as an individual, you do not need to provide financial documentation. However, if you are applying as an LLC or other type of organization or if you have separate accounting records from your personal account, you will need to provide financial

documentation as a requirement of contracting through Allegheny County. If you are applying as an organization and do not have audited financial reports for the last three years, you may submit other financial documentation that attest to your financial health. Tax returns (e.g., 990 forms) are the preferred alternative, but we will accept other documentation that you have available.

10. There is no requirement for MWBE and SDOVB documentation. Does that mean that vendors don't have to meet the minimum participation requirements any longer?

No. Once you are selected for a specific project, you may have to make a “good faith effort” in assisting the County in meeting the MWDBE and VOSB goals and then complete the documentation, depending on the amount of the contract award. You may request a participation waiver if you are unable to meet the MWDBE and VOSB goals.

11. Once we get to the task order level, will we have to meet the goals?

Participation in the MWDBE program will be at the task order level, and it is dependent on the amount of the contract award. The Allegheny County Department of Equity and Inclusion manages the County’s MWDBE program. They help organizations that contract with DHS understand the MWDBE program and complete its paperwork. If you have specific questions related to the MWDBE program, please contact the Department of Equity and Inclusion: <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/equity-inclusion/index.aspx>.

12. If you are partnering with another vendor, and you and your partner will do different categories of work, should you apply together or separately?

When you submit an Application under a partnership with one or more organizations, only one organization will hold the contract with Allegheny County. If you would prefer that each partner have their own contract with Allegheny County, then we recommend that you each submit an Application and do not partner under one Application.

13. Based on DHS’s own internal work and workflow, are there any natural correlations between some of these categories of work? Are there any pieces that you would love to keep together?

Based on the way we work, Content Writing and Strategy work in tandem with Design. They aren’t ever isolated and we always work together on those pieces. Conversely, if you want to know what can be separated, potentially User Research and Usability Testing. Those are the two we need the most help with at this time, as well as Analytics work.

14. Can you give a few project examples for the work?

The following are representative of some of the more recent collaborations the Office of Equity and Engagement (OEE) has had with external partners:

- Social management and analytics
- Media planning (lifestyle/affinity targeting, search, paid social, website remarketing, geofencing)

- Focus groups and participatory design sessions
- <https://neighborland.com/allegHENYcounty>
- Hellobabypgh.org

15. Who is the project manager? Is the County's internal team the project manager or are you expecting the contractor to provide project management services? Or some other arrangement?

We understand some smaller organizations or businesses do not have dedicated project managers and that's ok. We would expect a consistent and responsive contact throughout the lifecycle of whatever project we'll be working on with you. While you'll likely be working on content for one or more DHS program offices, your liaison to DHS will be the team in OEE.

16. Are you looking for us to put a quote on the work? Or are you most interested in how we will support the projects?

This is an exercise in determining capabilities. We would like to know what you are capable of at this time. You do not have to provide pricing at this stage. See also question seven.

17. Once you are through this process, do you have a sense of when the first contracts will be put out to bid?

We do not have a specific timeframe for contracts being put out to bid.

18. If we are able to provide 2 years of tax returns for our organization is that enough? Or should we submit personals as well?

Please submit as many years of tax returns for your organization as you can. See also question nine.

19. You had mentioned websites – what platforms are those on?

Most of the websites we build are in WordPress.

20. Does your procurement office help to facilitate networking between prime and subprime contractors on large projects? Or could you offer suggestions for freelancers to connect with larger primes who are bidding on the larger contracts?

At this time, we aren't able to help facilitate connections between prime and subcontractors. However, the scope of the task orders will be varied and there will be opportunities for freelancers, as well as small and large organizations.

21. Our company is relatively young, but we have a team with years of previous experience win in their areas of expertise. Can we include or reference work samples that our team members have done in previous positions?

Relevant experience is relevant experience regardless of where you completed the work. Please include work that you feel best represents your individual and collective capabilities.

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22. If we choose to provide links to our graphics and work products, can you please clarify whether or not those linked examples will be counted toward the 5 page limit for each category?

The links will not be counted towards the page limit.

23. Regarding the three samples per category, if I add a link to the response form to a document on the internet, is there a page limit for the sample? Could I point to pages within a larger pdf?

The example links will not be counted towards the page limit, so there is no page limit for the linked sample. In your response, you are welcome to point to pages within a larger linked PDF.

Amendments

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

We removed the MWDBE and VOSB documentation requirements from the application process (see question four). Applicants are no longer required to submit MWDBE and VOSB documentation as part of their Application.

- In RFQ section 4.1c on page 10, we remove the second bullet from the attachments list that said, “Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDBE) and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) documents (see sections 7.1 and 7.2)”
- In RFQ section 7.1 on page 14, we removed bullets “a” through “c” that described the MWDBE documentation requirements and instructions. We replaced the bullets with, “If selected for a specific project, Qualified Applicants may need to complete MWDBE documentation, depending on the amount of the Agreement.”
- In RFQ section 7.2 on page 14, we removed bullets “a” through “c” that described the VOSB documentation requirements and instructions. We replaced the bullets with, “If selected for a specific project, Qualified Applicants may need to complete VOSB documentation, depending on the amount of the Agreement.”
- In the Response Form in the Attachments list, we removed the first bullet that said, “Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDBE) and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) documents (see sections 7.1 and 7.2)”