

**STATE OF ALASKA RFP NUMBER 2007-0200-6813
AMENDMENT NUMBER 2**

RETURN THIS AMENDMENT TO THE ISSUING OFFICE AT:



Department of Administration
Division of General Services
7th Floor State Office Building
PO Box 110210
Juneau, AK 99811-0210

THIS IS NOT AN ORDER

DATE AMENDMENT ISSUED: January 18, 2007

RFP TITLE: Information Technology Professional Services

AMENDMENT 2

The following questions and answers are provided for informational purposes. Additional questions and answers will be added as appropriate.

Questions received and answered as of January 19, 2007:

1. Does the State plan to make spend data available that is broken down by ranking?

More detailed task order spend data has been posted to the Online Public Notice system as "Detailed Task Order Spend Data." When viewing the ranking worksheets, keep in mind that the originally proposed rates are shown. It is possible that some rates have changed due to CPI price adjustments.

2. Is the answer to Question #25 correct?

No. The answer should read, "Please see answer to #23 above."

3. To what category(ies) does the third bullet under the 6.03.01 "Expert" definition apply?

The bullet reads, in part, "For general mainframe systems programming support services," (emphasis added). General mainframe systems programming support services may only be provided under Category 1: IBM Host Systems Support.

Questions received and answered as of January 18, 2007:

1. RFP Section 1.04 indicates that there will be up to 3 contractors ranked for Category 1 and up to 2 contractors ranked for all other categories. Some of the other categories include a mix of very diverse technologies and products. Will the State perhaps be awarding a contract to more than 2 contractors should all technologies in a category not be supported by the initial 2 contractors ranked? For example, Category 3, Non-Windows Servers Systems Support requires support for technologies including Solaris, Linux, UNIX, Netware, Apache Web

STATE OF ALASKA RFP NUMBER 2007-0200-6813
AMENDMENT NUMBER 2

Server and others. If, in the evaluation, the top two ranked proposals did not include all the technologies listed, would the State rank an additional vendor to provide coverage for all the technologies in every category?

No, the State will only award to 3 vendors for Category 1 and to 2 vendors for all other Categories.

2. RFP Section 1.04. Will there be a set amount of funds available to the contractor ranked second in a category? If so, what process will be used to assign task orders among ranked contractors?

The not-to-exceed contract amounts per ranking are shown in Section 1.04. The task order assignment process is described in Section 5.

3. RFP Section 3.01 states that travel costs will not be allowed for work performed in Juneau or Anchorage. For clarification, does this mean if a consultant on a task order lives and works in Juneau but needs to work in Anchorage on a particular task order that any travel costs from Juneau to Anchorage to perform the work of the task order may NOT be charged to the task order?

Correct.

4. RFP Section 3.16 Contract Changes – Unanticipated Amendments. Does this paragraph refer to the overall contract between the State and the contractor or is this paragraph applicable for individual task orders? Please clarify.

The overall contract between the State and the Contractor.

5. RFP Section 5.01, Paragraph 9 states that contractors may not perform work in technologies and services of interest other than those that have been approved by the State in the Task Order. Does this mean that the listing of technologies and services of interest listed in the RFP are the definitive and final listing of all technologies covered by this contract?

The technologies and services of interest listed for each category are not the definitive and final listing of all technologies covered by the contract. Other work may be performed under a category provided it falls within the scope of the category and is approved by the State in the task order.

6. RFP Section 5.02 Category 2 Windows Servers Systems Support and Category 3 Non-Windows Servers Systems Support both list database administration as a service of interest. The listing for these categories seems limited. Should all current Alaska agency and state-licensed software be included in the listings for Categories 2 and 3?

See answer to #5 above.

STATE OF ALASKA RFP NUMBER 2007-0200-6813
AMENDMENT NUMBER 2

7. RFP Section 5.02 Category 8 lists IBM products in significant detail but only mentions SAS and Software AG products as a single line item. Does this mean that any product offered by SAS and Software AG that are associated with Mainframe Application Analysis, Design and Programming can be performed under this Category?

Yes.

8. RFP Section 5.02 Category 9 is a category that is confusing and difficult to quantify insofar as rates are concerned. Technologies and services of interest include a widely disparate listing of skill levels including data modeling, data architect services, data warehousing and web-application programming. Additionally, the listing of Technologies and Services of Interest includes both highly technical skills and documentation. This combination under a single category makes it difficult to effectively define and quote pricing using only the three levels required by the RFP. Should this category be split further?

The State does not plan to split Category 9 at this time.

9. RFP Section 5.02 Category 12 requires Project Manager certification as an additional Staff Qualification. For those task orders that include limited project management incorporated into the task order, will Project Manager certification be a requirement? Or is it only a requirement when the task order is performed under Category 12?

It is a requirement of task orders issued under Category 12.

10. Regarding the following statement on page 25:
“An Offeror must have received award for the Category which encompasses the primary portion of the work performed under a given TO in order to be prime for that TO. However, if a particular TO requires services from more than one Category, the Offeror may augment its staff with internal employees or subcontractors (previously qualified under the conditions stated above) qualified to do the work, even though the Offeror did not receive award for that Category. However, the extra-Category work must be a minority portion of the work to be performed for the TO.”

If, for example, a contractor is awarded a task order in Category 2 (for which they received award) and wishes to use staff from Category 3 (for which they did not receive award) what rates would be used for the staff qualified in the Category 3 while working on a Category 2 TO?

In this scenario, all work would be done at the Category 2 rate(s).

STATE OF ALASKA RFP NUMBER 2007-0200-6813
AMENDMENT NUMBER 2

11. Regarding Category 12, page 34: Would the State consider adding a provision to substitute equivalent experience in IT-related Project Management for the PMP certification?

The "Additional Staff Qualifications" for Category 12 state, "Certified Project Managers with a level of certification – comparable to the Project Management Institute PMP certification," thus a PMP certification is not a requirement. However, there is no provision allowing for equivalent experience.

12. Clause 6.02.02 Offeror's Qualification for the Category, last paragraph, last sentence, on page 42, states:

“References that result in negative information, are contrary to the information provided in the proposals, **or that cannot be contacted using the contact information provided will result in reduction in point scores.**” (emphasis added)

In the event that either or both references can't be contacted in two tries by the State, the Offeror stands to lose substantial points for that failing. The problem is that this even if a reference has agreed to be contacted, and is agreeable to patiently waiting for days for someone to call, any number of things could happen to keep the reference from answering two attempted contacts. The reference could be in business meetings, or on vacation, or sick, or be dealing with a personal emergency, etc. All these things, obviously, are beyond the control of the Offeror.

Could the language in the RFP be modified to allow additional opportunities for contact to be established with uncontacted references?

The current language will stay as-is.

13. In Section 1.04, can you explain how these budgets were determined? Are there any circumstances that the State might see these budgets changing in the future?

The not to exceed amounts were determined based on past annual spend with an increase based on estimated future usage. Once awarded, the not to exceed amounts can only be increased via an unanticipated contract amendment per 2 AAC 12.485.

14. Section 1.04 outlines budget awards for each category. In the event that the budgeted amounts have been reached, will any additional work automatically be sent to the second or third ranked contractor at that time?

Probably not. In such a situation, an unanticipated amendment under 2 AAC 12.485 may be used to increase the first ranked contractor's contract amount. Also, keep in mind that only Category 1 will have three ranked contractors, all other Categories will have only two.

STATE OF ALASKA RFP NUMBER 2007-0200-6813
AMENDMENT NUMBER 2

15. Under "qualified resources", is it permissible to include resumes of qualified resources even if the individuals did not support one of the specific projects mentioned/ referenced? Or do we need to identify and describe a project for each individual that we wish to propose?

Per 6.02.03(1) and (2), for each technology and services of interest offered, at least one project must be described and resumes submitted that confirm the individuals who worked on the project meet the journeyman and expert minimum qualifications and any additional staff qualifications noted below each Category. Resumes for individuals that did not work on one of those projects will not be evaluated.

16. May we utilize the same reference for both the category and technology of interest?

The same engagements required under 6.02.02 may be submitted under 6.02.03 provided that under 6.02.02 sufficient documentation is provided to support items 1 - 6 and under 6.02.03 documentation is provided to support items 1 - 3. Please keep in mind that customer reference information is required for the three engagements submitted under 6.02.02, but customer references are not required under 6.02.03. Also, resumes are required under 6.02.03, but not under 6.02.02.

17. May we include all candidate resumes in a separate section at the end of the proposal? Or would you prefer them be attached in each section where the candidate is indicated?

There is no format requirement as to where resumes must be placed in the proposal.

18. Based upon section 6.02.02, we understand that vendors are requested to provide a maximum of three references per category (please reference the "three (AND ONLY 3) previous engagements" clause from this section). Yet, in section Section 6.02.03 Offeror's Qualification for the Service, it appears that in addition to the maximum of three previous engagement references for each category, that we need to also reference an additional project for each Technologies and Services of Interest listed under that particularly category.

Can you please clarify this? Do you want a maximum of 3 project references per category, or do you want three category references in addition to references for each "Technology and Service of Interest" under each category?

The requirements for each section, 6.02.02 and 6.02.03, are separate and must each be met. This would include describing three engagements as required under 6.02.02 and providing each of the three numbered items described under 6.02.03 for each "Technology and Services of Interest" offered.

STATE OF ALASKA RFP NUMBER 2007-0200-6813
AMENDMENT NUMBER 2

19. Section 1.14 – Subcontractors: Can vendor A submit a proposal as a prime with a subcontractor B in Category (9 for example) and at the same time can vendor B submit a proposal as a prime with vendor A as a subcontractor but in a different Category (6 for example)?

Yes.

20. Section 1.17 – Conflict of Interest: Is the Vendor allowed to include resource(s) and experience of those individuals with an Agency in their proposal while those resources were State employee(s) of the Agency immediately preceding this RFP and are now employed by the Vendor?

Yes, provided the former State employee has complied with AS 39.90 “Alaska Executive Branch Ethics Act.”

21. Section 1.04 Budget states a maximum number of contractors that will be ranked for each category (3 for Category 1 and 2 for all other Categories). It is not clear if the Intent of the RFP is to award contracts to only ranked vendors in each category or multiple contractors other than the ranked vendors may also qualify and be awarded a contract. Please clarify for example - Does the State anticipate a maximum of two contracts for Category 9 or more than two?

Refer to RFP Section 5.01 Task Orders, third paragraph, “Offerors will be... ranked for purposes of award.” In Category 1, up to 3 contractors will be ranked, in all other Categories, up to two contractors will be ranked.

22. We would like to request that the feedback to this RFP from the potential bidders (such as this document) and the feedback from the Agencies be made available to the general public.

Material changes to the RFP and relevant clarifications are being made public via this amendment. Questions and answers will be added to this amendment as necessary.

23. We are concerned that a mini-proposal that opens up the Task Order to only two ranked contractors is not conducive to a competitive environment and is not in the best interest of the State as it provides the agencies with a very limited choice. We are highly concerned that by limiting competition, this contract is doing a big disservice to the State.

Under past Task Order contracts, a vast majority of spend went to the first-ranked contractor, a much smaller amount to the second-ranked, and spend amongst contractors ranked third and higher was minimal. Thus, the new Task Order RFP is aimed at those areas where spend was concentrated. State agencies are free to conduct their own procurements outside of the Task Order system if they feel that more competition is necessary.

STATE OF ALASKA RFP NUMBER 2007-0200-6813
AMENDMENT NUMBER 2

24. By only ranking two contractors, is the State discouraging small businesses to bid on this RFP?

No.

25. It is our understanding that the current (2003) contract was a major shift from the prior contract in terms of number of vendors and it seems the State's intent with this RFP is to go back to a very limited number of vendors. Could you explain why there is a change in the fundamental strategy? Do you not consider the current (2003) a success in terms of achieving ETS goals?

See answer to #24 above.

26. Would the State consider not ranking the Contractors? Alternatively, would the State consider ranking a minimum of three and preferably five contractors to make the mini-proposal process more competitive?

No.

27. Section 1.04 Budget states estimated not to exceed dollar amounts for each contract term by ranked vendor. Is there an estimated budget for the mini-proposals? Or is it the Intent of the State to assign majority of the Task Orders to the top ranked contractor as in the previous contract (s)?

There is no estimated budget for the mini-proposals. However, a Task Order awarded as a result of a mini-proposal process may not exceed the not-to-exceed amount of the winning vendor's contract.

As witnessed with spend data for previous contracts, a vast majority of task orders and related spend goes to the first-ranked contractor.

28. Would qualified contractors other than the ranked contractors have a maximum not to exceed amount for each contract term in the contract?

Not applicable – unranked contractors will not receive a contract.

29. We appreciate that ETS has listened to the vendor community and brought down the suggested amount for a mini-proposal from \$150,000 to \$50,000. We strongly believe this step will provide the agencies with more options and make the process more competitive. Would the State consider taking one more step in this direction and require the Agency to provide a justification if a mini-proposal is not considered for a task order that is expected to exceed \$50,000?

Not at this time.

30. Page 4 states – “These not to exceed annual contract amounts are estimates. In many cases the amounts could be substantially less. No minimum contract amounts are implied not guaranteed”

STATE OF ALASKA RFP NUMBER 2007-0200-6813
AMENDMENT NUMBER 2

From the above statement and based on our experience with previous contract(s), we feel that the not to exceed amounts are misleading. If the contract requires a not to exceed amount, we recommend it should be a fixed amount for every contract irrespective of the contractor ranking.

Please refer to answers for #24 and #28.

31. Section 6.03.01 has clearly listed the qualifications for journeyman and experts. In instances that vendors have high level staff with programming experience in certain technologies for 8-10+ years, but have not utilized the technology over the past three years, it appears they would be non-qualified for these categories. It would seem that these staff should still qualify at least as a journeyman. Would the State consider adding a requirement to allow what was previously an expert in a category (someone with at minimum 5 years of experience) to qualify as at least a Journeyman even if work in that category has not been done in over 3 years?

The qualifications will stay as they are.

32. Under Section 5.02, Domain Migration and Configuration (MS Active Directory) is currently listed as a technology/service of interest under both Category 2 and Category 3 under non-Windows Server Systems Support. Is the State looking for configuration for non-Microsoft systems to work with Active Directory domains or is the State referring to domains other than Active Directory?

The State is looking for configuration of non-Microsoft systems to work with Active Directory domains.

33. Under Section 6.02.02, the State requests that for each engagement described we must state the work beginning date and the date completed. May we provide estimated dates of completion (such as May 2005) , or do we need the actual specific date (such as May 15, 2005)?

Estimated dates, e.g. mm/yyyy, are acceptable.

34. Can we confirm that the state does not want actual copies of BS degrees and certifications as was required on the last Task Order/Professional Service bid?

Section 6.03.01 requires, in part, "evidence of extensive training or relevant BS degrees obtained within the last 5 years..."

STATE OF ALASKA RFP NUMBER 2007-0200-6813
AMENDMENT NUMBER 2

35. Section 5.01.01 – If an agency wants to negotiate lower hourly rates with the first ranked vendor on multiple task orders and that vendor consistently refuses causing the work to go to the second ranked vendor, is there a process that allows the upward adjustment of that vendor’s maximum not to exceed contract value so that more work can be done by that second ranked vendor? Does this process not call into question the establishment of contract rates?

Please refer to the answer for #13 regarding unanticipated amendments.

36. Section 5.01.03 - What is the point of a “mini-proposal” if there are only two qualified vendors and the second ranked has only a minimal number of dollars it may be assigned? For example, If a mini-proposal is for a category where the second ranked vendor only has the contractual authorization for \$20K, for example, and the project is expected to cost \$30K, is the vendor barred from contracting the work even if their response for the mini-proposal less than the first ranked vendor?

In such an instance, an unanticipated amendment under 12.485 may be considered.

37. Section 7.02 - Resumes are requested in section 7.02.03 where the offeror is responding to each technology with in a category. A) Are resumes to be submitted for each technology or for the whole category? B) If the latter, how is the experience in each technology to be called out on the resume? C) How will this be scored? D) Is scope and experience considered for a category or a technology, if both, how are they balanced? E) Since the minimum requirements are given for a resume, how is this scored in the context of the minimum called for in 7.02.03 (b) for each technology?

A) Per 6.02.03(2), “For each ‘Technology and Services of Interest’ offered ... submit resumes...”

B) There is no specific format for resumes.

C) Resumes will be included in subjective evaluation as part of 7.02.03.

D) Please refer to Sections 7.02.02 “Offeror’s Qualifications for the Category” and 7.02.03 “Offeror’s Qualifications for the Service.”

E) Section 7.02.03(b) is an evaluation criterion, not a minimum qualification.

STATE OF ALASKA RFP NUMBER 2007-0200-6813
AMENDMENT NUMBER 2

38. Section 5.02 – Security – A CCIE certification is required. However, the CCIE certification is very limited to providing network security. There are a myriad of other security certifications that are accepted equivalent certifications for system and application security. The CCIE certification does not include other disciplines that appear to be important for ensuring IT security for the State. For example, HIPPA security, Banking Security, etc. Would the state consider allowing other security certifications as an alternative to the CCIE certification?

The State will maintain the requirement of at least one person with a CCIE within the network, or security or voice principals, no alternatives will be allowed. Note that this does not mean that every individual working under every Task Order issued under Category 5 must hold a CCIE, only that one must be available.

39. Would the State consider allowing travel costs for work performed in Juneau or Anchorage in certain pre-approved instances?

Not at this time.

Questions Pertaining to Appendix A & Related Legal Concerns

40. Can Article 10 be modified?

Article 10 is not subject to any further modification.

41. Can our proposal include additional terms and conditions?

Per Section 2.05, supplemental terms and conditions are not allowed and the inclusion of such will cause the proposal to be considered non-responsive.

This amendment is for informational purposes only and need not be returned to the State.

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