

Women's Substance Use Disorder RFP Q&A

Question 1:

- Is there a not-to-exceed budget allocated by the Vermont Department of Health for this assessment?
- Is there a budget ceiling or estimated level of effort/hours for the contract?
- Page 3, Proposal Guidelines. Does the State have a maximum budget established for this project? If so, what is that maximum budget?
- Considering this is a Simplified RFP, are there identified budget limitations?

Answer 1:

There is no maximum allowable amount identified for this project. The Simplified RFP format was selected as we do not anticipate the project to exceed the threshold (inclusive of all future amendments) of \$100,000.

Question 2:

- Is the State working with a current vendor on services similar to those described in the scope of work? If yes, who is the vendor and what is the annual contract amount?
- Is there an incumbent?

Answer 2:

There is no current vendor.

Question 3:

- Page 1, Product/Service Description. The RFP states "...assess the current state of the women's substance use treatment services..." Does this assessment include Medicaid, grant and state-funded services?

Answer 3:

While other services may prove relevant to the assessment, the focus should remain primarily on services delivered by the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (ADAP) Preferred Provider network.

Question 4:

- Page 1, Product/Service Description. The RFP states "...assess the current state of the women's substance use treatment services..." Please clarify if the State wants to focus on all substance use disorders (SUD) or focus more specifically on more or more particular SUDs (e.g., alcohol and/or opioid use disorders).

Answer 4:

This project should include an assessment of treatment services available to women with all types of substance use disorders.

Question 5:

- Page 2, Product/Service Description. What data will the state make available for the evaluation and needs assessment? Will the selected vendor have access to demographic, population, service utilization and/or current outcomes data?
- Will the successful applicant have access to the following items through an executed Business Associates Agreement?
 - Service level client data across all levels of care
 - Contract information for service providers that are delivering services to women; women, children and families
- Is there a contact list of all existing treatment providers to be included in the assessment?

Answer 5:

The vendor is able to access any publicly published data brief produced by ADAP. Contact information will be provided for all preferred providers and other relevant community stakeholders. Contract and grant information between the state and providers is a matter of public record and will be shared with the vendor.

Question 6:

- Page 2, Reporting. The RFP states “Regular progress reports will be required throughout the contract term...” Please clarify what is meant by “regular.” How many progress reports does the State anticipate will be required (e.g., monthly, quarterly) and is there a specified format/length anticipated for these progress reports?

Answer 6:

The frequency and method of progress reports will be negotiated between the state and vendor based on the workplan. There is no standardized format or required length, but progress reports are anticipated to be due monthly.

Question 7:

- Page 2, Reporting. The RFP states “Payment of invoices will be contingent on the receipt, review and approval of required reporting and the meeting and/or exceeding of required performance measures.” Please clarify if monthly invoices should routinely be submitted or if the State is implementing a deliverables-based payment approach.

Answer 7:

We do not currently anticipate the contract to utilize a deliverables-based payment approach. Invoices will be submitted monthly for the duration of the contract.

Question 8:

- Page 2, Reporting. The RFP states “Payment of invoices will be contingent on the receipt, review and approval of required reporting and the meeting and/or exceeding of required performance measures.” Please clarify what the “required performance measures” are.

Answer 8:

Performance measures will be negotiated between the state and vendor based upon the approved workplan.

Question 9:

- Page 2, Reporting. The RFP states “Proposals must be submitted electronically...” Our email system will not allow us to transmit data that appears to contain a Social Security Number (SSN), Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or Protected Health Information (PHI). This has occasionally resulted in our RFP responses being blocked by our email system due to the RFP number resembling SSN data, PII or PHI. To ensure that our response is received, will the state accept responses that are encrypted by IronPort/Cisco Email Security or a similar tool that encrypts the body of the email as well as attachments? The State will receive an email requiring them to create a user account and password that they must use to open the message and all subsequent messages encrypted in this fashion.

Answer 9:

The state is willing to accept responses that require a log-in to an encrypted system.

Question 10:

- Page 3, Proposal Guidelines. The RFP states “Proposals will be no more than 10 pages in length excluding section C. (staff bio/ resumes).” Please clarify:
 - If a cover page, cover letter (with name and contact information of applicant), and table of contents are included in the 10-page maximum.
 - If the intent is to include the Budget and Narrative (B.4) in the 10-page max.
 - If the list of staff who will work on the project (C) should be included in the 10-page maximum, but the staff bio/resumes should not be included in the 10-page maximum.
- Is a cover letter included in the page limit?
- Can applicants submit a detailed workplan as an appendix that is excluded from the 10-page limit?

Answer 10:

The cover letter may be submitted in addition to the 10-page maximum. Budget, Narrative, workplan, and any additional lists of staff not included in bio/resumes or in the cover letter are included in the 10-page maximum.

Question 11:

- Page 5, Contractor Performance Guidance. The RFP states, “All bidders will be held to specific performance review criteria over the life of the contract to ensure that project deliverables as outlined in the RFP and attested to in the Scope of Work are being met.” Please provide clarification on the “specific performance review criteria.”

Answer 11:

Performance review criteria will be negotiated between the state and vendor based upon the approved workplan.

Question 12:

- Page 6, Attachment C - Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants. Will the State consider exceptions, additions, or modifications to the contract terms and conditions?
- Page 6, Attachment C - Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants If exceptions will be considered, what is the preferred format for submitting them?
- Page 6, Attachment C - Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants Will the State consider incorporating a Limitation of Liability provision into the contract?
- Page 6, Attachment C - Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants Will proposed exceptions count towards the 10-page response limit?
- Page 6, Attachment C - Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants Will proposing exceptions have an impact on the scoring of the vendor's proposal?

Answer 12:

The State of Vermont prefers that vendors agree to all provisions in Attachment C. Requested modifications may be submitted as an addendum and may be excluded in the 10 page limit. Any requests for modifications will not have an impact on scoring.

Question 13:

- Please provide the names of vendors who submitted questions. If the State is unable to provide the names, please provide the number of vendors who submitted questions.

Answer 13:

We are not able to disclose that information at this time.

Question 14:

- Who are the members of the evaluation team?

Answer 14:

Proposals will be evaluated by staff persons from the Vermont Department of Health, Divisions of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs and Maternal Child Health.

Question 15:

- The RFP (page 2, #3) states that vendors will "make recommendations for substance use disorder treatment service system enhancements". There is also a reference to "improving the Vermont treatment system" (bottom of page 3, #2a). Does systems refer to actual information systems and technology that captures data or is it in reference to the programs, services, and policies? Or both?

Answer 15:

This language in no way relates to information systems or use of technology to capture data. It is a reference to the ADAP Preferred Provider network program/service array.

Question 16:

- Is there an existing task force or coalition addressing women's health and substance use treatment? If yes, can budget funds be used to pay for incentives to participate in focus groups or key stakeholder interviews?

Answer 16:

There is no existing task force utilized by ADAP for Women's Services. Funds may be budgeted for stakeholder/ focus group incentives.

Question 17:

- Has an assessment of treatment service providers been conducted in the state previously; within the last 3-5 years?

Answer 17:

No.

Question 18:

- For stakeholder interviews and/or focus groups with women with lived experience (voluntary participants), will ADAP require an approved IRB or is a written protocol describing patient protections sufficient?
- Are there activities that require IRB (Institutional Review Board) process/approval or other process/approvals for human subject research (specifically working with

clients within the programs)? Or will the vendor work with only program staff and not clients?

Answer 18:

The chosen vendor and ADAP will submit the approved workplan to the Vermont Department of Health Institutional Review Board for review.