

Unemployment Insurance Modernization and Worker Experience Agile Development Services - Q&A Round 1 - 3/18/2022

Question#	RFQ Page#	RFQ Section#	Question	Response
Q1	7	1.1.1. SCOPE	Is the 2 year, \$4MM plan for part A to replace your legacy UI system in its entirety, or for a subset of that scope? If the latter, please confirm the scope of this specific RFQ.	The State will be partnering closely with the vendor to prioritize the user stories and deliverables of highest priority during the base period across the entire Program Area (RFQ Section 1.0) and in accordance with the Scope of Work (RFQ section 3.0). It is not expected that there will be a one-for-one replacement of the existing system during the base period.
Q2	7	1.1.1. SCOPE	Similarly, is the 2 year, \$2.5MM plan for part B to complete the execution of your full WE program, or a subset of that scope? If the latter, please confirm the scope of this specific RFQ.	The State will be partnering closely with the vendor to prioritize the user stories and deliverables of highest priority during the base period across the entire Program Area (RFQ Section 1.0) and in accordance with the Scope of Work (RFQ section 3.0).
Q3	10	1.2.1 TECHNICAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION	It seems that NJ has a preference for a custom-built solution using the planned technology stack listed on page 10. Is the state open to other technical solutions, such as a configurable COTS based platform to achieve NJ specific requirements, or must the selected vendor custom build the solution on open source technology?	The State intends to use a modular approach to build the solution. It is expected that the Contractor will work closely with the State to perform analyses to determine which components should be built vs bought. Bidders may provide initial perspectives regarding the use of specific components in the Technical Response. The technical stack listed applies to expectations regarding components or integrations that are custom developed.
Q4	6	1.1 Purpose and Intent	If a bidder decides to be considered for both Program A (UI Program) and Program B (WE Program), is the State of New Jersey going to evaluate the bidder response separately for Program A (UI Program) and Program B (WE Program) or is the evaluation a joint evaluation.	Please see section 7.2 (Final Contract Award) of the RFQ for details regarding the evaluation. To award this Contract, the State will perform the evaluation of all Quotes collectively according to the evaluation criteria specified in this solicitation.
Q5	6	1.1 Purpose and Intent	Does the State of New Jersey prefer a single vendor for both Program A (UI Program) and Program B (WE Program)?	Please see section 7.2 (Final Contract Award) of the RFQ for details regarding the evaluation. The State intends to award each Program to different Bidders, but reserves the right (without obligation) to award both Programs to the same Bidder in the event that the State has not received sufficient Quote(s) advantageous to the State.
Q6	6	1.1 Purpose and Intent	Is it the goal of the State of New Jersey that the new UI and WE systems achieve feature parity with the existing systems? If 'yes', is the feature parity required at the launch at the time of the target date?	Both Programs are expected to ship improvements iteratively and continuously rather than wait for a one-time launch. Feature parity is not required. Development is expected to occur based on prioritization of user stories.
Q7	7	1.1.1 Scope	Does the State of New Jersey have any team size expectation for both Program A (UI Program) and Program B (WE Program), given the budgets provided?	The State expects Bidders will provide the most competitive team to achieve the scope of work based on the budget provided.
Q8	7	1.1.1 Scope	Can the State of New Jersey share the source of the project funding?	The State cannot provide this information at this time.
Q9	7	1.1.1 Scope	The RFQ mentions the possibility of additional funding, can the State of New Jersey provide any information regarding the source of this additional funding?	The State cannot provide this information at this time.

Q10	7	1.1.1 Scope	Can the State of New Jersey provide additional information about the make-up of the Program Team?	<p>UI Program: The Contractor will be an integral part of the New Jersey Office of UI Modernization. There is a lead for this Office and additional roles will be recruited in the areas of Product, Customer Experience, Policy, and Operations. This team works closely with the other technology and program area staff in the department and state.</p> <p>WE Program: The WE Program has a project executive in place and multiple agency sponsors that contribute to program requirements and the identification of user needs.</p>
Q11	9	1.2 Background	Are there date-driven deadlines for deploying the new UI and WE systems? If yes, what is driving the deadlines?	There are not currently specific deadlines, but the team will be looking to continue momentum of existing development by shipping improvements iteratively.
Q12	9	1.2.1 Technical Background Information	Can the State of New Jersey provide more information about the legacy systems? Are they traditional Mainframe (COBOL, DB2, CICS) systems? Are there any client/server, Java modernizations that need to be intergrated or further modernized?	<p>UI Program: The existing systems are generally comprised of a public intake web form, powered by a Java web application and Oracle database, a case management system (VB desktop application client), and a mainframe system that stores data and processes business logic. Mainframe technology includes IBM zseries platform, comprised of COBOL programs writing to both IMS and DB2 databases. There are various initiatives underway to modernize these systems, including a python-based intake form, and a web-based Java application to replace the case management client.</p> <p>WE Program: Existing user-facing application is a modern JavaScript web application, which may need to integrate with other systems in the future.</p>
Q13	10	1.2.1 Technical Background Information	Can the State of New Jersey describe the maturity of its current AWS and DevSecOps implementation? Is there a fully functional Product Development environment with an established CI/CD pipeline?	The State of New Jersey successfully manages production applications in AWS, leverage CI/CD pipelines to integrate source code control and automated testing. This infrastructure is not currently used for UI-related systems but it is expected that new development would.
Q14	10	1.2.2 Product Backlog/User Stories	Will the Product Owner be responsible for maintaining the product backlog and writing the user stories? Or is the State envisioning a collaborative effort?	The State envisions a collaborative effort.
Q15	20	3.1.5 Product Development	How will the State of New Jersey be involved in technical design and coding decisions and reviewing the technical choices made by the vendor's teams?	<p>The State's product owner will be responsible for reviewing technical architecture proposals and sprint deliverables.</p> <p>The State will sign off on technical approaches but expects to do so collaboratively with the vendor.</p>
Q16	20	3.1.5 Product Development	How and to what degree will the State of New Jersey influence the agile development and engineering practices of the team?	Vendors will be evaluated based on their established agile development practices. The State is flexible in the implementation of agile methodology, on things like sprint cycle length and reporting mechanisms, but the State will aim to align the agile development process of this project with industry best practices, as best captured in the Digital Services Playbook.
Q17	20	3.1.5 Product Development	What is the purpose, level-of-detail, and expected accuracy of the product plan and roadmap described on page 20?	The product plan and roadmap are intended to be guiding documents that assist the team in maintaining a consistent and aligned vision. It is expected that this plan and roadmap will evolve continuously. It is not expected that these documents will be overly detailed beyond what is useful for delivery and alignment.

Q18	27	3.1.17.1 Attachment A: Digital Services Best Practices	Can the State of New Jersey explain the average percentage of time the PO will be involved with the project and which of the PO accountabilities listed on page 27 the state's PO will have versus which the vendor will have?	All members of the team, including the vendor, are expected to follow the Digital Service Best Practices. UI Program: The UI Product Owner is fully dedicated to UI Modernization. WE Program: The WE Product Owner is fully dedicated to this initiative.
Q19	50	4.2.2.3 Staffing Plan	Can the State of New Jersey clarify Key Personnel expectations if a bidder elects to propose for both programs? Is the State expecting three key personnel to be named that would work across both programs or is the State expecting the bidder to name three key personnel for each of the programs?	It is expected that the Key Personnel will be dedicated to the program that the Bidder is awarded. In the event the Bidder wishes to specify different Key Personnel that would be assigned depending on which Program is awarded, it may do so in the Staffing Plan. See Q5 for details regarding awarding of Programs.
Q20	51	4.2.2.4 Similar Experience Overview and Work Samples	From the instructions, it appears that the State of New Jersey would like the bidder to extract the Source Code Repositories and send as an attachment. Would it be acceptable to provide a link to the repositories?	The State has updated the RFQ (section 4.2.2.4) to allow for submission of links.
Q21	21	3.1.6	How does the state distinguish Production Systems versus Business-critical systems?	The RFQ (section 3.1.6) has been updated to clarify that the distinction is based on the severity and impact of the outage (e.g., customer-facing outage, security or privacy incident).
Q22	24	3.1.14	Is the optional Help Desk Support task and its staff of dedicated technicians included in the budget provided for these projects?	The optional help desk support task and its staff of dedicated technicians is not included in the budget. These staff do not need to be allocated in the "Base Team".
Q23	49	4.2.2.2	When the state requests that the vendor describe their "Product Management and Development Methodology," would they like an explanation of product management and agile delivery and/or application development? In short, where should the vendor describe their software engineering approach?	The RFQ (section 4.2.2.2) has been updated to better clarify that this should be included in the Written Technical Proposal.
Q24	51	4.2.2.4	For the similar experience submission, would a project that started in the range that you specified (~5-20 FTE) and then subsequently grew larger than the specified range be an appropriate example?	Yes.
Q25	N/A	N/A	To ensure our staffing plan is as accurate as possible, please provide an estimated start date for the contract.	The State intends to act promptly to award a contract. At present time, the State intends to award a contract by mid-May. Following award, the State is open to starting as soon as feasible for the vendor.
Q26	N/A	N/A	Should the vendor take into account any launch deadlines for either program?	See answer to Q11.
Q27	7	1.1.1 Scope	Is it possible for a single vendor to be awarded contracts for both the UI and WE Programs?	See answer to Q5.

Q28	9	1.2.1 Technical Background Information	The Government indicates that some legacy systems are mainframe based. Which kind of mainframes are being utilized, and is it expected that the vendor will write code within those mainframes that supports integration of new components?	It is not a requirement that the vendor develop mainframe code, but this capacity or an understanding of such may be helpful, and can be highlighted in the technical submission. The State anticipates working with the vendor to determine how to best address changes to existing systems, as relevant. See answer to Q12 for additional details regarding existing systems.
Q29	24	3.1.14 Help Desk Support (Optional)	Does the Government have a system in place today to manage all help desk activities, or is it expected that the vendor define this system and associated processes?	In the event that this optional task is needed, the State will collaborate with the vendor to evaluate if new systems are needed to augment or replace existing systems. It is expected that help desk processes will need to be evaluated and updated as part of this task.
Q30	50	4.2.2.2 Technical Proposal	Are Vendors able to submit a cover letter within our Technical Proposal Submission that is not included in the page count?	A cover letter should not be provided. A cover page and table of contents may be included, but any material content should be included in the Technical Submission.
Q31	50	4.2.2.2 Technical Proposal	We recommend that the Government consider increasing the page limit for the Technical proposal from 4 to 8 pages to give vendors adequate space to address any approaches that will differ between the two programs.	The page limit for the Technical Proposal has been raised to 5 pages. RFQ sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.2.2 have been updated.
Q32	51	4.2.2.3 Staffing Plan	The solicitation states that vendors shall "Identify the proposed full-time" key personnel. It also states that "The State anticipates that bidders will submit the same Key Personnel for either Program." If a single vendor proposed the same Key Personnel for both programs and is awarded both, would the Key Personnel be split part-time on each program, or would additional Key Personnel need to be identified?	See answers to Q5 and Q19.
Q33	51	4.2.2.3 Staffing Plan	The solicitation states that vendors must "Explain the Bidder's ability to meet the needs of the Contract beyond the specified budget, if necessary, including expanded product talent and technical support expertise." Would work beyond the contract's budget be purchase under a separate contract, a modification, an option period, a follow-on contract, or some combination of the four?	It is anticipated that working beyond the initial budget would be purchased under a combination. For example, additional budget within the base period of two years may be made applied via a contract modification. Further, if option periods are exercised, it is anticipated that additional budget will be allocated for these periods.
Q34		Section 1.2.1 (Technical Background Information) and Section 4.2.2.5 (Price Submission)	Note: Additional tracked updates have been made to the following RFQ sections/areas to provide clarity and/or correct errors.	Section 1.2.1 (Technical Background Information) and Section 4.2.2.5 (Price Submission) have been updated with tracked changes.
Q35			Note: The first worksheet of the Pricing Submission template has been updated.	The first worksheet name and references to "Base Year Proposed Team" have been changed to "Base Period Proposed Team".
Q36			Note: Opportunity to receive answers to additional questions	Additional questions can be submitted by the "Questions Regarding Request for Quote Round 2 Due Date" specified on the cover page of the RFQ.