

**Employee Health Benefits Consulting Services
RFP No. BLR-210001**

RFP Questions and Answers for the Week of March 15-21, 2021

No Questions were submitted during this time period.

RFP Questions and Answers for the Week of March 22-28, 2021

No Questions were submitted during this time period.

RFP Questions and Answers for the Week of March 29, 2021 - April 4, 2021

Q1: As far as the compensation, is an hourly compensation model required or is a lump sum proposal for the entire project acceptable? Or some kind of lump sum/hourly combination?

A1: The contract awarded will have a maximum contract amount. The Successful Vendor will be paid based on monthly invoices submitted to the BLR, documenting actual work performed at the hourly rates set forth in the Official Proposal Price Sheet, and actual travel expenses. The Bureau of Legislative Research will pay those invoices submitted up to the maximum contract amount and not beyond. Section 4 of the RFP sets forth the requirements for the Cost Proposal – compensation under any resulting contract “shall be paid based upon the work performed as specified in this RFP.”

As such, all Vendors should submit hourly rates and a maximum contract amount, and in doing so comply with all requirements regarding submission of a pricing proposal set out in the various provisions of the RFP.

Q2: Not sure if you can disclose this or not but would you be able to share with me which consulting firms the State of AR has utilized in the past or are utilizing currently?

A2: In 2013 and 204, the Bureau of Legislative Research contracted with Collier Insurance and with Human Factor Analytics to provide consulting services to the State and Public School Life and Health Insurance Program Task Force.

Q3: Would you be able to provide enrollment by plan type for state employees and for public school employees?

A3: The Bureau of Legislative Research is not the custodian of that information and therefore I am unable to provide it to you. The Successful Vendor would have access to the enrollment data and the ability to work through the BLR with the plan administrators.

Q4: What is the budget established for this project?

A4: The Executive Subcommittee has not established a budget for this project. Vendors are asked to provide the pricing information requested in various sections of the RFP as well as completing the Official Proposal Price Sheet. Each proposal will include the requested hourly rates, expense amounts, travel amounts, and a maximum contract amount. The Subcommittee will consider pricing proposals submitted as part of its evaluation process.

Q5: Please explain the current budget and contribution process. As it may differ from ASE and PSE, please clarify the difference. If the current budget is underfunded, how does the State handle the shortfall?

A5: The Bureau of Legislative Research is not the custodian of that information and therefore I am unable to provide it to you. The Successful Vendor would have access to the enrollment data and the ability to work through the BLR with the plan administrators.

Q6: Please explain the premium deficiency process and how the estate books any projected loss. Also clarify any differences between ASE and PSE.

A6: See Answer to Question 5, above.

Q7: What is the current reserve policy and what happens to any excess reserve at the end of the policy year? Are excess funds maintained in the ASE and PSE's budgets or are they reallocated?

A7: See Answer to Question 5, above.

Q8: Who approves the annual budget and reserves for ASE and PSE? Please provide historical budgets. Also, clarify if the numbers are based on eligible employees v. enrollees.

A8: See Answer to Question 5, above.

Q9: Do eligible employees that do not enroll in the health plan receive any benefits?

A9: See Answer to Question 5, above.

Q10: Per Section 1.3, there is reference made to 1 original and 15 hard copies as well as emailing an electronic version to Jillian Thayer at thayerj@blr.arkansas.gov . Can we submit an electronic version including all signed documents as our sole submission?

A10: No. Proposals must be submitted in the manner set forth in the RFP. The hard copies are requested so that we may provide them to the Subcommittee members.

Q11: Section 1.12 and Section 3.0.A, require the successful vendor to attend a meeting on May 19, 2021, and on May 21, 2021, as well as monthly meetings of the Subcommittee. Do you require those meetings to be in person or can they be attended via video conference?

A11: That will be a determination to be made by the Subcommittee. It would be advisable to budget for in-person appearances in the event that virtual participation is not allowed.

Q12: Per Section 3.0.B, Topics for Analysis and Recommendations, does the market analysis need to be focused on Arkansas employers or any large self-funded employer both governmental and private sector?

A12: Section 3.0.B does not specify only Arkansas employers, but requests a “comprehensive market based analysis of large self-funded employers, both governmental and private sectors, to compare key elements of the Plans.” The Subcommittee is looking for comparisons and analysis in order to identify best practices. In addition, Section 3.0.B. requests the Vendor to “consult fully insured employer groups for applicable comparisons as well as large employers in both the self-funded and fully-insured market.”

Q13: What is the State’s current plan financial reporting and can copies of the last three years reports be provided?

A13: See Answer to Question 5, above.

Q14: What is the State’s current contribution strategy by plan and tier?

A14: See Answer to Question 5, above.

Q15: Per Section 2.0, please confirm that the two (2) separate and distinct self-funded arrangements centered around two (2) non-federal governmental health plans refer to the State Employees and the School District Employees.

A15: Yes – the “Plans” refers to the ASE Plan for state employees and retirees and the PSE Plan for public school employees and retirees.

Q16: Per Section 2.0, the Plan are governed by the State and Public School Life and Health Insurance Board (the “Board”) as established in Arkansas Code § 21-5-401 et seq. What have the historical reserve requirements for PSE and ASE been?

A16: See Answer to Question 5, above.

Q17: Per Section 4.0, what is the budget for this project?

A17: The Executive Subcommittee has not established a budget for this project. Vendors are asked to provide the pricing information requested in various sections of the RFP as well as completing the Official Proposal Price Sheet. Each proposal will include the requested hourly rates, expense amounts, travel amounts, and a maximum contract amount. The Subcommittee will consider pricing proposals submitted as part of its evaluation process.

Q18: Is the response to be organized in the sequential order listed in the RFP, or can we organize it in this manner? [proposed order for listing is omitted here, as it is not relevant to the answer, below.]

A18: Section 1.3 states that “Vendors shall respond to each numbered paragraph of the RFP, including by written acknowledgment of the requirements and terms contained in paragraphs that require no other response.” While it is not required that this be done in sequential order, it is required that the Subcommittee be able to identify the response to each numbered paragraph. Please reference each numbered paragraph to which you are responding.