

Instructions

This Response Template must be used for submission of written questions. All questions should provide the requested information. Those that do not, may not be answered by DHS. Vendor may add as many lines as needed. DHS would strongly prefer Vendor to ask multi-part questions as individual questions on separate lines.

Instructions: Complete all cells of each question asked in the Table below. Clearly identify the referenced section or text.

Question ID	Reference (page number, section number, paragraph)	Specific Language	Question	Answers
Example	Page 7, section 1.15, C	J. Vendors may submit multiple bid	May vendors submit more than one bid?	yes See section 1.15, J
1			Please reconfirm the due date for this procurement by providing it in response to answers to questions.	Please See Section 1.29, Schedule of Events
2			If there was a previous solicitation for these services, what was its title, number, release date, and due date?	Not Applicable to this solicitation.
3			Are bidders permitted to deviate in any way from any manner of quoting fees you may be expecting? For example, if there is a pricing page in the RFP, can bidders submit an alternate fee structure? If there is no pricing page in the RFP, do you have any preference for how bidders should quote fees or can bidders create their own pricing categories?	No. All costs must be included on the Official Bid Price Sheet. Please refer to Addendum 1, the Revised Official Bid Price Sheet and Sections 1.8.B and 1.12 of the solicitation.
4			Please describe your level of satisfaction with your current or recent vendor(s) for the same purchasing activity, if applicable.	Not Applicable to this solicitation.
5			Has the current contract gone full term?	Yes, the current contract ends August 31, 2024.
6			Have all options to extend the current contract been exercised?	Yes.
7			Who is the incumbent, and how long has the incumbent been providing the requested services?	Not Applicable to this solicitation.
8			How are fees currently being billed by any incumbent(s), by category, and at what rates?	The fees are currently billed by the minute. Refer also to the Official Bid Price Sheet.
9			What estimated or actual dollars were paid last year, last month, or last quarter to any incumbent(s)?	Not Applicable to this solicitation.
10			Is previous experience with any specific customer information systems, phone systems, or software required?	No. Please refer to Section 2.3 of the solicitation.
11			What is the maximum wait time?	Please refer to Addendum 1
12			What is the maximum hold time?	Please refer to Addendum 1
13			What percentage of inbound calls must be answered by a live operator?	100%. Refer also Attachment C
14			What percentage of calls must be resolved without a transfer, second call, or a return call?	0% of calls will be resolved by the Contractor. Refer also to Addendum 1.

15			What is the required degree of dedication for the call center? (Can call centers work on other contracts at the same time as this one)?	<i>The call center may have other contracts. The call center is required to be punctual and able to answer all calls. Please expect a high volume of calls.</i>
16			What is the required degree of dedication for the operators? (Can operators work on other contracts at the same time as this one)?	<i>The call center may have other contracts. The call center is required to be punctual and able to answer all calls. Please expect a high volume of calls</i>
17			What are the recording requirements for inbound and outbound phone calls and how long must recordings be maintained?	<i>Please refer to Addendum 1</i>
18			What are the recording and storage requirements for non-phone communications?	<i>Please refer to Addendum 1</i>
19			What information is to be included in call logs?	<i>Alleged Victim(s), Alleged Offender(s), and Reporter information. The allegations of suspected maltreatment.</i>
20			What was your average monthly call volume over the past year?	<i>The average monthly call volume is 9,725</i>
21			What is the current average wait time for phone calls?	<i>Please see Addendum 1</i>
22			What is the current average after-call work time for operators?	<i>The current average after-call work time for operators is not readily available as it can vary depending on individual operators and the specific circumstances of each call. The time required for completing the hotline intake would indeed depend on factors such as the complexity of the call and the efficiency of the operator. Additionally, information can be entered into the system during the call, which may impact the after-call work time</i>
23			Over the past year, what is the percentage of calls received in English versus non-English?	<i>Less than 5% of calls received were non-English.</i>
24			Over the past year, what percentage of calls received were in Spanish?	<i>Less than 5% of calls received were in Spanish.</i>
25			What time of day, days of the week, or times of the year do calls typically peak?	<i>After 4:00 pm, CST throughout the week, weekends, and holidays.</i>
26			Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada)	<i>No. Please See Section 1.1 of the solicitation, Purpose</i>
27			Whether we need to come over there for meetings?	<i>No, refer also to Addendum 1</i>
28			Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada)	<i>No. Please See Section 1.1 of the solicitation, Purpose</i>
29			Can we submit the proposals via email?	<i>No. Please See Delivery of Response Documents Section on pg. 1 of the Bid Solicitation Document.</i>

30	PAGE 11 Section B 2.	*All operators must have access to a work environment suitable for taking calls, including at a minimum a telephone and an internet-ready computer so that they will be able to capture the required information from the "	Will service equipment be provided by DAABHS? (Computers, headsets and phones)	No, refer also to Addendum 1
31	Page 11 Section C	Answering Service Requirements	What type of phone system is required to take calls? (VoIP Voice over Internet Protocol or Landline)	The Contractor must have the capability to answer all calls. There are no phone system requirements.
32	Page 12 Section 2.5	ADULT MALTREATMENT HOTLINE BASIC SCRIPT	Will DAABHS be providing system/software training?	No, DHS will provide training on the script and web based link for data entry. Refer also to Section 2.4.B of Addendum 1.
33	PAGE 11 Section B 2.	All operators must have access to a work environment suitable for taking calls, including at a minimum a telephone and an internet-ready computer so that they will be able to capture the required information from the callers in real time.	If equipment is not provided. What is the minimum equipment requirements?	A computer that is able to access web based links, internet connection, and telephone service. Refer also to Section 2.4.B.2.
34	Page 12 Section 2.5	2.5 ADULT MALTREATMENT HOTLINE BASIC SCRIPT	According to the script will be asking for personal information. Will we be servicing on a VPN (Virtual Private Network)?	All information is entered to a web base link that is secure so a VPN is not required.
35	Section 1.9	DO NOT include any other documents or ancillary information	Are certs such as SBA SDVOSB, or other state small business certifications considered ancillary information?	Please refer to Section 2.3 Minimum Qualifications of Solicitation 710-24-058.
36	Page 10, Section 2.3, Item C	Contractor must have a minimum of three (3) operators available at all times. For verification purposes, Prospective Contractor must provide a list of all proposed operators and working schedule on page five (5) of the Response Packet. Vendor shall be responsible for determining the qualification of each employee.	As this contract is not scheduled to start until September, would a list a shifts and anticipated number of agents assigned to each shift (as well as a description of the minimum staffing qualifications) suffice as an actual schedule showing employee assignments may not be available at the time of bid submission?	Yes. Please refer to Section 2.3.C of Addendum 1 and the Revised Response Packet.
37	Page 11, Section 2.4, Item A - 2	Contractor must determine if a call requires an immediate (without delay) response from an on-call worker. If so, Contractor must contact the on-call worker in the appropriate region and relay information.	Will the contractor need to patch/conference the on-call worker to the caller? (Or, will the on-call worker make independent outbound calls as necessary to resolve urgent issues?)	Contractor will not patch or conference call the on-call DHS worker. Contractor will complete the call and if required, immediately relay the information to the on-call DHS worker.
38	Page 11, Section 2.4, Item C - 5	Contractor shall have a telephonic interpretation service available for callers who speak a foreign language.	Please disclose which languages (in addition to English) are required and the estimated or historical monthly volume of non-English calls.	There is no historical data for non-English calls. Approximately 95% of all calls received are in English. While the remaining 5% are non-English
39	Page 11, Section 2.4, Item C - 8	a. Each month five-to-ten percent (5-10%) of calls will be sampled for quality control. A low error rate is defined as less than five percent (5%) of the sample being deemed as failed calls.	Will the QA review be conducted by DHS or is the contractor expected to conduct these QA reviews and forward the results to DHS?	DHS will conduct the QA reviews.

40	Page 15, Section 3.1, Item C	<p>1. Billing must be on a twelve (12) month cycle.</p> <p>2. Billing must be for a per-minute rate to include all charges.</p> <p>3. Billing must not contain charges for hang-ups; if the caller hang-up halfway through the script questions, the Contractor must only bill for the time spent on the call</p> <p>4. Billing must be for incoming calls only. (No additional charges for outgoing or faxing).</p> <p>5. Billing shall not include "general administrative charges/fees."</p> <p>6. Billing must not contain any "hidden" charges or fees not identified in the supplied quote.</p> <p>7. Mail or email a monthly billing statement listing each invoiced call. The statement must include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Time (must show either AM or PM status) of incoming call. Date of incoming call. Day of the week. Length (minutes) of call. 	<p>Please clarify the pricing; the minimum requirements for this project are that the contractor maintain a staff of at least three operators during each shift of operations. The Scope of service also instructs that the contractor will be required to complete outbound calls/texts messages. Yet, the billing instructions only allow for compensation for incoming call time on a per minute basis.</p> <p>Is DHS going to provide a guaranteed minimum usage or accept a monthly base rate to allow the contractor to recoup some of the costs associated with maintaining a minimum of 3 staff members?</p>	<i>Please see Addendum 1, Revised Official Bid Price Sheet</i>
41	General Question	N/A	Please provide the historical inbound and outbound call/text volumes for the past 12 months. If historical information is not available, please provide the estimated inbound and outbound volumes.	<i>The current call center spent approximately 116,709 minutes last year on calls.</i>
42	General Question	N/A	How are the after-hours calls currently being handled? If by in-house staff, please disclose the number of staff members. If by a contractor, please name the contractor and length of the contracting relationship.	<i>Not Applicable to this solicitation.</i>
43	Page 10 Section 2.3, C.	Contractor must have a minimum of three (3) operators available at all times.	I see 3 is the minum, what is the max?	<i>There is not a max number requirement.</i>
44	Page 10 & 11 Section 2.4 SCOPE OF WORK	Contractor must provide answering services twenty-four (24) hours daily for three hundred and sixty-five (365) days annually for four (4) Arkansas regions.	Are you looking to have a vendor to provide services to integrate with DHS contact center system? Or Are you looking for a new contact center solution?	<i>The contractor will be providing a new contact center system. As part of this system, the contractor will offer support for incoming calls and enter corresponding information into a secure web-based link.</i>
45	Page 10 Section 2.2 Overview	DHS primarily operates the hotline from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. CST Monday through Friday. However, Contractor will take roll-over calls throughout the day when all lines are busy at DHS and provide answering services after State normal business hours. Contractor will provide telephone answering services twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week.	Are you looking to have a vendor to provide services to integrate with DHS contact center system? Or Are you looking for a new contact center solution?	<i>The contractor will be providing a new contact center system. As part of this system, the contractor will offer support for incoming calls and enter corresponding information into a secure web-based link.</i>
46	Page 10, section 2.4,	Contractor must provide answering service	PeopleShores requests to look at the data of call arrival pattern, preferably for every 30 minutes interval in order to understand the call flow pattern for 24 hours, 365 days a year	<i>Please see Addendum 1 and call logs A - F.</i>
47	page 11, Section 2.4, 2	2. After hours are 4:01pm	PeopleShores requests to know how many calls are outcalled everyday out of the total calls that come in	<i>The average number of calls received on a given day, based on the data collected, is 10.7</i>
48	page 11, section 2.4, B2	B2. Contractor must maintain at least 3	Assuming each operator works for 8 hours, will we be correct to assume that 3 operator in each shift will work for 8 hours hence contractor would need 9 operators in a 24 hours window everyday 7 days a week, so technically we are looking at a team of minimum 14 operators assuming week offs and planned and unplanned leaves.	<i>It is the responsibility of the Contrator to ensure that there are (3) three operators available at all times.</i>
49	Page 11, section 2.4, C3	Calls shall be answered within 3	In answering service requirements, does 3 rings and 5 rings signifies the "Average speed of answering" and can be reflected in the system as seconds and if yes, what is the expecatable limit in seconds as compared to 3 and 5 rings!	<i>Please see Page 11, Section 2.4, C3. All calls shall be answered within 3 rings.</i>

50	Page 11, section 2.4, C5	5. Contractor shall have a telephonic interpretation service	Does the document refers to the IVR or does the contractor needs to have operators who can speak all foreign languages? How many languages does contractor needs to plan for & how many calls for each language does the process gets everyday in the current scenario!	<i>Contractor must have the capability to communicate with calls of any language. This may be accomplished through the utilization of a telephonic interpretation service. Over the last ye ar, 5% of all calls were non-English speaking."</i>
51	Page 11, section 2.4, C6	6. Contractor shall have a way to communicate	Does this mean contractor needs to have 1 person available at all point in time who can communicate with deaf or hard of hearing caller? How many such calls do we get in a current set up? Request to please share the data of such calls.	<i>The department has not encountered such calls at this time. The contractor must have the ability to communicate with deaf or hard of hearing callers.</i>
52	General Questions	None	It is our understanding that the vendor can provide services remotely (anywhere in the U.S.). Is it correct?	<i>Correct.</i>
53	General Questions	None	Is this a new initiative or does the OP have an incumbent on this?	<i>This is not a new initiative.</i>
54	General Questions	None	If there is an incumbent, please disclose their names and if possible, provide the incumbent's proposals along with their cost proposals to facilitate competitive pricing.	<i>Not Applicable to this solicitation.</i>
55	General Questions	None	Is the OP facing any issues under the current contract? If so, please specify.	<i>Not Applicable to this solicitation.</i>
56	General Questions	None	Please specify the average annual/monthly/weekly call volume.	<i>The average annual calls received 116,709, monthly average 9,725, weekly average 2,244</i>
57	General Questions	None	What is the current average wait time for phone calls?	<i>The average waittime is less than 2 minutes.</i>
58	General Questions	None	What is the current Average Time to Abandon?	<i>Unknown. Need additional clarification of question to provide an answer.</i>
59	General Questions	None	What time of day, days of the week, or times of the year do calls typically peak?	<i>Holidays and weekends are when calls usually peak.</i>
60	General Questions	None	How many agents are currently working under this contract?	<i>Not Applicable to this solicitation.</i>
61	General Questions	None	Does the OP have set any subcontracting goals for this contract?	<i>No, Please see Section 1.11 Subcontractors & Section 3.3 Conditions of Contract of solicitation.</i>
62	General Questions	None	It is our understanding that subcontracting is not mandatory for the vendor to bid on this contract. Is it correct?	<i>Please see Section 1.11 of solicitation, Subcontractors</i>
63	General Questions	None	Is it possible for the OP to amend the proposal delivery mode from mail to email?	<i>No</i>
64	Page #5, 710-24-058-Response	As outlined in Section 2.3 Minimum Qualifications in the solicitation	Under this section, does the vendor need to demonstrate their capability/experience that they are meeting the "2.3 Minimum Qualifications"	<i>Please see Section 2.3 of solicitation, Minimum Qualifications</i>
65	Page #6, 710-24-058-Response	Documentation Checklist	It is our understanding that the OP does not require any vendor information such as vendor qualification, approach/Process, etc. apart from "Active registration from the Arkansas Secretary of State's Office, or other state approved documentation; Official <i>Bid Price Sheet</i> ; All documents provided in the <i>Bid Response Packet</i> ; Copy of Vendor's <i>Equal Opportunity Policy</i> ; Signed Addenda, if applicable; EO 98-04 Disclosure Form (<i>Attachment A</i>)". in the proposal. Is it correct?	<i>Please see Section 2.3 of solicitation, Minimum Qualifications</i>
66	Page #16, 710-24-058-Solicitation, Section 3.3 Conditions of Contract	Contractor agrees to the Performance Based Contracting standards as presented in <i>Attachment C</i> , DHS Standard Terms and Conditions as presented in <i>Attachment D</i> , a pro forma contract as presented in <i>Attachment E</i> , the Business Associate Agreement as presented in <i>Attachment F</i> , and the Organizational or Personal Conflict of Interest policy as presented in <i>Attachment G</i> .	It is our understanding that vendors only need to agree on <i>Attachment C</i> , <i>Attachment D</i> , <i>Attachment E</i> , <i>Attachment F</i> , and <i>Attachment G</i> and do not need to submit this attachment with the proposal. Is it correct?	<i>Correct.</i>

67	Page #2 and #3, 710-24-058-Solicitation, 1.8 Response Documents		It is our understanding that the vendor needs to prepare 2 envelopes for the submission. 1 envelope containing all the documents apart from the Official Bid Price Sheet in printed hard copy along with 1 electronic copy in USB Flash Drive in a sperate envelope and 1 envelope containing printed hard copy of Official Bid Price Sheet along with 1 electronic copy in USB Flash Drive in a sperate envelope. Is it correct?	<i>Please see Section 1.8 of solicitation, Response Documents Vendor's submission shall contain two (2) envelopes. Envelope one (1) Bid Response Packet along with items listed in Section 1.8.A.3; Envelope two (2) shall contain: Offical Bid Price Sheet, see Section 1.8.B.</i>
68	page 10/11, section 2.4 A. Schedule	Twenty-four (24) hour operation on holidays and weekends	Will the State please provide historical call volumes for holidays and weekends?	<i>The average for weekends is 79 calls.</i>
69	page 10/11, section 2.4 A. Schedule	Schedule 1. Normal business hours are 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Central Time, Monday – Friday	Will the State please provide historical call volumes for Monday-Friday business hours 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.?	<i>An average of 287 calls were taken Monday-Friday between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm</i>
70	page 10/11, section 2.4 A. Schedule	After hours are 4:01 p.m. – 7:59 a.m., Monday – Friday	Will the State please provide historical call volumes for Monday-Friday after- business hours 4:01 p.m. - 7:59 a.m.?	<i>An average of 137 calls were taken Monday-Friday between the hours of 4:01 pm-7:59 am</i>
71	page 11, section 2.4 B. Staffing Requirements	. Staffing Requirements 1. Operators must be able to fluently communicate in the English language	Will the State have any bi-lingual staff requirements?	<i>The Contractor must have staff that is able to answer calls in various languages. Please see Section 2.4.C.5 of solicitation, Answering Service Requirements.</i>