Washington State

Department of Retirement Systems

Request for Proposals No. 12-004-02

Questions and Answers regarding Request for Proposals

Questions are written as they were received with corresponding answer following. Questions are in no particular order. All similar questions have been removed.

Q1. The RFP does not include a "not to exceeds" amount. Does the department have a budget associated with this work? Please include any information available regarding the assumption used to develop this budget including the number of contract staff, percent of time, and duration.

Rather than specifying a "not to exceed" budget amount for this project, DRS determined that it would ask respondents to provide their plans for executing the specified deliverables and associated costs for each. Respondents should consider the current budget environment happening in the state as they prepare their responses; however, DRS is committed to this initiative and will evaluate each proposal according to the published weighting criteria.

Q2. Can you send a summary of the most recent CEM benchmarking report?

For proprietary reasons, the CEM benchmarking report cannot be printed or distributed. You can view a copy of the Summary of Fiscal Year 2010 report here: CEM Benchmarking Summary Report.

Q3. What would constitute "personal and external impairments to independence" (Section 3.2 (A), first dot point)?

For this RFP, the Department defines "personal and external impairments to independence" to include, but not limited to, a family member who is a director, officer, or employed in a position to exert direct and significant influence over the vendor. Another example would be if the vendor has a financial interest that is direct, or is significant/material though indirect, in the Department of Retirement Systems.

Q4. What is intended by the request for information about "audit services, dates and percent of audit work performed, and type of report provided" (Section 3.2 (A), third dot point)?

Disregard the third bullet under Section 3.2 (A). See Addendum to RFP posted March 8, 2012 to WEBS and DRS' public web site.

Q5. How many references should be provided? Section 3.2 (A), third dot point says 2 references. Section 3.2 (G) asks for 3 references.

Please provide three references.

Q6. Is there a limitation on number of pages to submit?

There is no limitation on number of pages.

Q7. Would the WEBS and the Department of Retirement Systems consider extending the deadline for responses to this RFP by 2 weeks?

At this time, the Department plans on staying with the published schedule. However, we encourage you to continue to monitor WEBS and the Department's web site where any changes would be published.

Q8. What is the estimated cost of the program? We want to work within your budget.

See Question 1.

Q9. Will the results of RFP 21100 – Customer Satisfaction Needs Assessment – be available to the study?

The Customer Satisfaction Needs Assessment, as developed, will be available as necessary to meet the deliverables of this RFP.

Q10. Does DRS have an accepted strategic plan in place? How can it be accessed?

Yes. The strategic plan can be accessed here: DRS Strategic Plan.

Q11. Why are paper copies of proposals needed in this era of green practices and sustainability?

Due to the expedited schedule of this RFP, the Department wants proposals received to be ready for evaluation upon receipt. Future solicitations for RFPs will consider electronic submissions on a case-by-case basis.

Q12. Since questions will not be answered until 3/13, can the 3/16 due date be extended?

The Department plans to stay with the published schedule.

__Questions 13 through 19__ **– *The RFP states "The Department has begun its implementation of lean principles and is building a foundation of experts and talent to continuously improve its business systems, leadership capabilities, customer satisfaction, employee engagement and business process."***

Q13. Is the Department currently working with (or previously worked with) any outside consultants in connection with these areas? If so, who is/are those consultants?

The Department is currently working with Solutions@Work on customer satisfaction and leadership capabilities. This contract started in February 2012.

Q14. What successes has the Department had related to these efforts (in any/all of the various areas)?

The Department has improved several core processes, focusing them more on the customer while eliminating non-value added steps. Several other teams are in process and 10 employees have been in a lean and change management training program for the last 12 months and will continue their development over the next year. The Department has also finished its employee survey and has a team satisfaction measurement system in place where results are tracked on a quarterly basis.

Q15. What have been some of the Department's biggest challenges?

Challenges are inherent in any significant change but the most significant would be resources to balance increasing workloads (more calls, more retirements, etc.) with the change projects necessary to make the Department's processes more efficient and more focused on the customer, while having our teams be successful in delivering those services.

Q16. Please describe the general activities that have occurred as part of these efforts. For example, what kind of training have leaders/employees received on these various methods? Are you using specific methodologies for each of the target areas? For example, is the Department using any "brand name" leadership development programs, employee engagement programs, or customer satisfaction programs?

The programs we are using do not carry a "brand name". Specific training for leaders on coaching and mentoring and customer focused processes were built in coordination between executive management and human resources supported by readings such as "From Good to Great", "We don't make widgets" and "The Lost Art of Listening". The lean training has been provided in coordination with the Governor's Office, Boeing and Children's Hospital to name a few.

Q17. Whether or not "brand name" programs been used, are there any "brand name" programs that the Department prefers or is interested in pursuing?

The Department has no "brand name" preference.

Q18. How does the Department currently measure Customer Satisfaction? Please explain the approach and frequency of your data collection methods.

Customer Satisfaction is currently measured by point of service surveys. Data is collected daily in some processes and at time of service (such as a retirement seminar) in other processes.

Q19. How does the Department currently measure Employee Engagement? Please explain the approach and frequency of your data collection methods.

The Department measures employee satisfaction through two primary methods 1) participation in a state employee engagement survey and 2) through a custom process developed internally where employees were interviewed and asked what criteria they use to measure whether they are satisfied as an employee of the Department. From those interviews team satisfaction criteria was developed, a baseline measurement taken, with ongoing quarterly interviews to measure progress toward goal.

Q20. Did the Department consult with any outside consultants on the preparation of this RFP? If so, whom?

The Department did not consult with outside consultants on the preparation of this RFP.

Q21. Did the Department consult with any other government agencies on the preparation of this RFP? If so, whom?

The Department prepared the RFP, based on its own needs assessment. However, research into other agencies best practices was done.

Q22. Does the Department view any other government agencies as a "model" for how the effort is being structured?

No.

Q23. Are the insurance coverages, terms and amounts included in the RFP negotiable?

No. Insurance coverages, terms and amounts are supplied by the Office of Financial Management and approved by the Attorney General's office. These insurance coverages are necessary because of the type of financial and member information/data that is received, stored and maintained by the Department.

Q24. What is the origin of the term "Business System and Management Map"?

The origin of the term is based on the needs identified by the Department's executive management team during the last strategic planning cycle. Business and management systems need to be "mapped", "drawn", etc. to ensure common understanding throughout the organization regarding the output measures for all key processes (i.e. output measures such as Customer Satisfaction and Employee Engagement). This enterprise view of the agency will connect all other major pieces of work already underway within the Department.

Q25. How large is DRS' staff?

231.

Q26. Is there a budget for this initiative?

Yes. See Question 1.

Q27. Does DRS have a current strategic plan and scorecard? If so, are they available online?

See Question 10 for information on the strategic plan. The scorecard is available here: DRS Scorecard.

Q28. What other consultants or firms have you worked with on related projects?

The Department entered into a contract with Solutions@Work in February 2012, to assist in identifying customer expectations and continued focus on leadership development.

Q29. Have you defined a budget for the project? If so, can you share it with us?

Yes. See Question 1.

Q30. Has the DRS project manager for this project been identified? Can you share with us that person's name and role within DRS?

The DRS Project Manager has not been identified.

Q31. For payment purposes, are deliverables limited to those listed in the RFQQ? Would the department entertain interim deliverables?

The Department may entertain interim deliverables.

Q32. Have you identified specific targets or other operational goals for DRS?

Yes, the Department has operational targets and goals for many of its processes.

Q33. Do you use or prefer any specific tools or conventions for process mapping?

The Department does not have a preference but proposers should consider using value stream mapping methods as one tool.

Q34. Do you have a standard for office productivity tools to be used for this project (e.g. MS Office 2010, MS Project, MS Visio, Citrix GoToMeeting, etc.)?

Yes, the Department uses MS Office.

Q35. Has the Department used any external Lean six sigma consultant trainer/facilitators in the past?

Yes, the Department has used a trainer provided through the Department of Enterprise Services and is working with the University of Washington to train 20 employees in their green belt program.

Q36. Is the approach to Lean in the organization supported by a central project/program office that provides trained facilitators?

The Department has chosen to implement lean by providing experts in each of the business areas with additional support from an internal source who reports to the Policy and Strategic Initiatives Division.

Q37. How is "policy deployment" accomplished currently in the organization?

Policy deployment is done through normal communication channels (emails, updates to knowledge management systems, etc.) as well as focused attention by a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC).

Q38. What is meant by 'other process mapping tools'?

The Department understands there is more than one set of process mapping tools and each proposer may have deeper experience in one toolset over another.

Q39. Are there any current KPI service level benchmarks for the goals on page 5, Section 2.2 Scope of Services? i.e. Customer Satisfaction Index.

The customer satisfaction index is underway. The team satisfaction index is 50% of DRS employees' will score an 8 or better on the team satisfaction criteria, developed internally in 2011.

Q40. What is the definition of Scorecard? Is it now similar to what is known as a Dashboard for goals and progress of goals? (Page 6 Item B Deliverable)

Yes.

Q41. How are customer satisfaction and team success requirements defined? (Page 6 Item C Deliverable)

See Question 39.

Q42. Will employees be notified of the project by executive sponsor indicating full cooperation in scheduling information-gathering meetings?

Yes.

Q43. Is there an escalation process for barrier removal in order to meet desired timeframes?

Although we don't anticipate a problem, the Department will always provide an escalation process to mediate any issues regarding expectations and delivery.

Q44. Changes to scope. If the scope of the project changes for any reason, what is the change management process to update the timeline or costs for the project?

Through an amendment to the contract.

Q45. What is the project governance structure? Who is the Executive Sponsor? What is their availability weekly to the project? Who is the Program Manager? Day to Day contact? What is their availability Daily to the project? Is there a committee to report to on a weekly basis and at the end of each deliverable time frame?

The Deputy Director is the executive sponsor while the entire executive management team will be available to meet on a weekly basis. The day to day contact has not been identified yet. The committee will be the Department's executive management team.

Q46. What is the approval process for each deliverable?

Upon approval by executive management that deliverable meets expectations.

Q47. What is the lead time for the document submission prior to the approval meetings for each deliverable?

One week.

Q48. Are there any BPM standards implemented currently that need to be followed by the project team, i.e., BPMN 2.0?

No.

Q49. Does the State of Washington or the Department of Retirement Systems currently make use of any applications to act as a business process mapping repository?

No.

Q50. What are the 'block out' time periods for meetings? Holidays, special events, business operations key events.

All state holidays.

Q51. Will there be a team of Subject Matter experts available to the project team for each Pension area?

Yes.

Q52. Are all of the SMEs represented on page 22, departments organizational structure?

No.

Q53. The March 8th Addendum states we are to disregard Section 3.2, Bullet 3 which previously stated to list "the firm's prior experience with two business references." Our firm is in the process of submitting for the Annual DES Refresh where our prior experience will be concisely provided. If our Annual DES Refresh application is not already in place, but will be submitted by the 3/22 deadline, how can we provide our firm's prior experience to the RFP selection committee?

You can include your references in your Letter of Submittal.

Q54. Because of the March 8th Addendum (i.e. – "disregard Section 3.2, Bullet 3), will the evaluation weighting and scoring of Section 4.3 change?

No.

Q55. What is the estimated anticipated budget range for this effort and how was it developed?

See Question 1.

Q56. Do you have a preferred structured documentation format acceptable for proposal submissions? Otherwise, we are left to follow elements and headings listed in Section 3 of the RFP.

The Department believes that Section 3 provides the information necessary for potential vendors to submit a proposal.

Q57. How should the completed proposal be submitted: Emailed electronically and with the three (3) signed copies via mail?

Electronic submissions will not be accepted (Section 2.6 Submission of Proposals).

Q58. What is the principal outcome (deliverables) expected throughout the project?

See the deliverables section of the RFP.

Q59. In relation to this project, how is the vendor's success defined?

The ability to accomplish the deliverables outlined in this RFP. A key part of this RFP is the ability to facilitate with SMEs also.

Q60. Does the Department have a Vendor currently working in-house on this initiative or related initiatives? If awarded the contract, must the Contractor transition ownership or work alongside the Vendor?

Yes. The Department is working with another vendor on customer satisfaction processes and training. This successful vendor will not be expected to transition ownership or work alongside.

Q61. If the Contractor is introducing new technology or processes, must we train the department beyond an informative level to facilitate assessment prior to delivering the Framework deliverable? Or must the Department be trained as a proficient future user of the business application or technology?

The Contractor is not expected to train on the use of new technology or processes beyond an informative level for the deliverables outlined in this RFP.

Q62. Does the Department or the Contractor have the responsibility for change management?

This will be a shared responsibility.

Q63. Can you expand upon the deliverables for leveraging technology?

The Department is heavily reliant on its mainframe systems for providing benefits administration. There are several other technology options that could be used by the Department to improve upon customer and team satsifaction.

Q64. To best understand the "current state" (e.g. – objectives, processes, policies, performance measures), the Contractor will interview key experts and knowledge workers within the Department? Can you estimate the number of the 230 Department personnel that serve as key experts and knowledge workers that we must interview?

Approximately 20 employees.

Q65. To best understand the "current state" (e.g. – objectives, processes, policies, performance measures), will this require discussions with individuals outside of the Department led by Steve Hill? If so, which organizations or departments should the Contractor contact and where are they located? If so which of the organization should contact and communicate with?

No.

Q66. Is there existing documentation of policies, processes and performance measures? Will this documentation be made available to optimize necessary review and/or interviews of the Department personnel?

Yes. There is some documentation available and it will also be made available to Contractor.

Q67. Have preliminary efforts been undertaken to date that can be leveraged at the start of this project, e.g. collection of previous data?

Yes.

Q68. Will the Contract Manager facilitate project meetings, interview scheduling, project milestone reviews and deliverable approvals? Or is this the responsibility of the Contractor? Will the Contract Manager assist in any issues with project meetings, interview scheduling, project milestone reviews and deliverable approvals?

This is negotiable.

Q69. Is there a project management application preferred by the Department or Contract Manager (e.g. – Excel, Microsoft Project)? Or preferred methodology?

The Department uses Microsoft Project.

Q70. How must the Contractor provide status reporting? (e.g. – weekly email, monthly executive review)

This is negotiable.

Q71. As the Contractor must be available to the Department personnel, will a work area be provided for the length of the engagement within reasonable proximity to the Department? Will there be necessary lighting, telephone and building access?

This is negotiable.

Q72. We assume building access will be granted during business hours. Will building access be granted to the Contractor before and after business hours should the project effort require it?

No.

Q73. How are project deliverables approved? (e.g. By Steering Committee, By Contract Manager approval)

By contract manager and executive management team.

Q74. To best understand the technology, applications and Information Services currently in place and utilized by the Department, must the Contractor meet with any personnel outside of the Department? If so, where are they located and how does this group or organization interact with the I.S. Division supporting the Department?

No. All contacts will be available within the Department. The Assistant Director for Information Services is on the executive management team and will be available as needed.

Q75. If the proposed framework requires revisions or replacement of current technology, applications or Information Services, how are approvals obtained from the Department? Can we assume budget, timeline and resource estimates must be provided?

Yes. Assume budget, timeline and resource estimates must be provided. Depending on nature of the “revision or replacement”, the Department may need to consider whether it will make a request, outside the agency, to receive funding.

Q76. Are the technology or application platforms supporting the eight (8) public retirement systems? If so, please describe how? Are the processes and policies unique across these systems?

Yes. Primary support is through mainframe systems, supported completed by Department employees. DRS has a large investment in these systems and they take care of 95% of all processing requirements.

Policies are different across the systems. Assume some processes will be unique also.

Q77. Are the technology or application platforms supporting the fifteen (15) pension plans integrated? If so, please describe how? Are the processes and policies unique across these systems?

Yes. They are integrated. See Question 76.

Q78. What security and access policies are in place for administrator and participant access? Must this project evaluate and possibly revise them?

There are security and access policies in place. This is out of scope for this project.

Q79. What security and access considerations must be provided to the physically challenged participants (e.g. – ADA, sight, handicapped)? If so, what percentage of participants is physically challenged?

None.

Q80. What are the current performance measures established for the Department?

There are several process measures in place – the following is not an inclusive list but gives an illustration of a few key measures for one division. The Contractor will have access to all performance measurement data.

- 90% of phone calls are answered within 30 seconds by a knowledgeable Retirement Services Analyst.
- Walk-in customers, with or without an appointment, meet with a Retirement Services Analyst within 4 minutes of arrival.
- Benefits estimates are done within 5 days.
- Routine correspondence is responded to within 5 days, complex correspondence within 10 days.

Q81. Are there overarching organizational goals for the Department that must be addressed in the performance measure exercise of this project. Can you list the categories? (e.g. lower cost, increased self-directed updates, reduce complaints)

Goals for this effort will include more efficiencies and higher value for customers and employees.

Q82. Are there performance goals set by the executive committee for this initiative? Is the Department to attain 100% of the goal with the first implementation or prescribe a phase approach over time?

The Department is open to both approaches.

Q83. What is the goal of the scorecard, ongoing progress and roles?

The goal of scorecards is to report progress toward goals and to focus attention where it's needed.

Q84. Is there a current Dashboard in place?

Yes. The Department uses a product called PBViews.

Q85. Is there a current reporting application method or tools in place currently? Is it COTS, third-party?

Assuming this question relates to Dashboard/Scorecard, please refer to Question 84.

Q86. Have any performance thresholds been established for Performance Measures already established for the Department? Note: If a measure falls below a threshold, then action is taken.)

Yes, some performance measures contain thresholds.

Q87. Have any performance measures been established for future Performance Measures under consideration for the Department?

More clarification would be needed to answer this question.

Q88. What is the budget or anticipated cost established for the work described?

See Question 1.

Q89. Can we propose additional deliverables (at a fixed all-inclusive fee) that we believe would be beneficial to the Department in performing the work requested?

The Department is interested in costs associated with the stated deliverables but is open to listening to an all-inclusive fee.

Q90. Sec. 2.3, p.7 states, "The original working papers…will be the property of the auditor." Is the term "auditor" meant to refer to the Contractor to whom the requested work is awarded?

Please assume "contractor".

Q91. Sec. 3.2 item H, p. 15 directs proposers to specify whether their staff or subcontractors were employees of the State of Washington in the preceding 24 months. Does this refer only to the individuals we specifically include in our proposal, or to all employees nationwide in our firm?

Only applies to those who will work under this contract.

Q92. What are the specific resource constraints they are referring to on page 3 in the Objective section?

In Section 1.2 – Objective, there are no resource constraints identified.

Q93. Could the State confirm it is requesting information on if the Proposer's was/is an employee of the State of Washington during the past 24 months for those staff proposed on this engagement only and not firm wide staff? (RFP Section 3.2.H Related Information)

See Question 91.

Q94. How many business systems are in use today, including MS Excel and Access programs developed offline to support Department workflow?

Most work is done through the mainframe, an imaging application which takes care of work flow, with support by all MS Office products.

Q95. Has DRS been working with any other consultants in the past year on Lean process improvement, balanced scorecard or business enterprise mapping? If so, please identify that consultant. Is this consultant precluded from proposing on the current RFP?

No.

Q96. Have there been any executive orders, reports, budget notes or directives that have been issued in the past year that anticipated or laid the groundwork for the current RFP? Can I get a copy of this document(s)?

The Governor issued an executive order for lean application in state agencies.

Q97. Is there a budget for this project?

See Question 1.

Q98. Could DRS be more specific on what is expected from task C on page 6?

Not at this time.

Q99. Also, could DRS be more specific on what kind of deliverable is expected from task D on page 6?

Not at this time.

Q100. There doesn't seem to be a section of the RFP requesting a description of previous experience? Where should proposers present previous projects?

Through references and in cover letter.

Q101. Would the DRS entertain submission of proposals by email (in pdf format)?

No. Electronic submissions will not be accepted (Section 2.6 Submission of Proposals).

Q102. How many staff members are in each of the divisions: Policy & Strategic Initiatives, Information Services, Retirement Services, and Administrative Services?

Employees per Division:

- 14 – Policy & Strategic Initiatives;
- 42 – Information Services;
- 104 – Retirement Services;
- 51 – Administrative Services; and
- 20 – Executive.

Q103. Would CEM benchmarking data be of value for this project? If so, will CEM benchmarking data for DRS be available for this project?

CEM data will be valuable and will be made available through the SME sessions. DRS' participation in external benchmarking for over a decade has enabled it to develop and track a large amount of performance data. Due to the proprietary nature of CEM's benchmarking report/methodology, however, we can only provide elements of DRS' input, not the input of the other participants.

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Q104. Is DRS already using a lean methodology? If so, can you tell us a little about the lean methodology or practices DRS has adopted and/or is using?

Yes. The Department is using lean, including value stream mapping and all other tools associated. More information will be available to the Contractor.

Q105. Does DRS have an estimate of the number of managers, supervisors and other business experts the consultant would interview or meet with in completing the deliverables for this project? If not, can you tell us the number of managers and supervisors included in your employee count of 230?

Approximately 20 employees.

Q106. In Section 3, Proposal Contents, some items included under Section 3.1 appear to duplicate the information contained in Proposer's Information (Attachment A). Should we provide that information twice?

There is no intent to be duplicative.

Q107. Please clarify the total number of references you would like to have (the RFP indicates 2 in section A, 3 in section B)?

Please provide three references.

Q108. With regards to the implementation of lean principles and continuous improvement, will you tell us more specifically what you have been doing and who, if anyone, has been helping you with this kind of work?

See Questions 13 - 19.