

Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Case Management Request for Proposals

Frequently Asked Questions

March 26, 2021

Revised March 30, 2021

Finalized March 31, 2021

- 1. What technology solution are you using to collect and organize the personal data, or does the consultant provide that?** The City intends to contract with [Unqork](#) to provide an online application management platform.
- 2. How many grantees do you expect to support? Average size of grant?** DOH is estimating approximately 10,000 grants of approximately \$7,500 on average, but actual figures could differ substantially and will not be known until applications come in.
- 3. Will there be a separate RFP for the partner agencies handling the other 25%?** No, DOH is contracting directly with these organizations.
- 4. Will the City take additional questions after this session today?** Questions will be accepted until 5 pm on Monday, March 29.
- 5. Does the consultant assist with public relations and marketing of the program?** The respondent is not expected to market the program.
- 6. Do you have an idea of how soon the program might begin?** DOH intends to open applications in late April or early May.

- 7. How many clients might we be expected to serve weekly?** We expect to approve at least 500 applications weekly. However, this number may need to change as we learn more about average grant awards.
- 8. Is there a list of communities in need?** DOH expects applications and need to come from every community in the city. However, we know that the impact of COVID-19 has not been felt evenly in all neighborhoods. One indicator of impact is the Chicago Department of Public Health's [COVID-19 Vulnerability Index](#).
- 9. Do previous grantees have to re-apply for new ERAP?** Yes. Previous grantees' past awards will be subtracted from their maximum award amount in this round.
- 10. With the first grants, what was the time frame to get applications approved, were clients notified of their status and what was the turnaround time to get payments to landlords and vendors after an app was processed?** Applications were approved between a few days and a few months after the application period closed, with longer timelines generally being for applications that needed additional case management or corrections. Payments generally went out within a few days of being approved.
- 11. Is there a specific number of awards for the staffing and case management services? Max budget?** The Chicago City Council has authorized DOH to award a contract for case management of up to \$6 million, although DOH does not expect to need to allocate this entire amount.
- 12. Who is responsible for Unqork training?** DOH and Unqork will coordinate training on the software for application processing.
- 13. What are the qualifications for a landlord?** Landlords will need to provide photo ID, a SSN or EIN, proof of ownership, and documentation of a lease.
- 14. Are you looking for one provider or a few?** DOH intends to award one contract.

- 15. Will the program include situations where there isn't a lease?** Treasury guidance on ERAP indicate that in situations where the tenant and landlord cannot provide either a lease or other documentation of regular rent payments, such as bank statements, jurisdictions can provide up to three months' of rent at the HUD-designated Fair Market Rent or Small Area Fair Market Rent levels.
- 16. Do apartment managers/management agencies qualify as a landlord?** Management agencies can apply on behalf of landlords, but will have to provide both proof of ownership as well as a management agreement.
- 17. Will you provide a listing of the community partners already approved?** When these partnerships are finalized, we will share a list with the selected bidder.
- 18. In support of our price offering what level of budget detail is necessary....i.e. Full itemized detail, a NTE lump sum total, Labor Categories only, etc.?** Per the RFP, complete a program budget outlining all detailed expenses in its entirety for this proposal (e.g. salaries, program materials, travel reimbursement). DOH may follow up with additional questions.
- 19. The RFP States: Provide a copy of its audited financial statements for the last 3 years. Respondents that are comprised of more than one entity must include financial statements for each entity. Do you want 3 years of audited financial statements for subcontractors as well as the Prime? Fiscal Capacity: (section VI (e), page 6): If a subcontractor does not have audited financial statements, is there an acceptable alternative?** If you plan to subcontract more than 5% of the total budget to an individual subcontractor, please do submit the audited financial statements.
- 20. You said no Indirect Cost is allowed in the budget. Are you implying that vendors won't be allowed to apply their DCAA approved indirect rates to the labor component of our bid?** That is correct, that is not allowed per federal guidelines.

- 21. How is staff time factored into program costs? Is there a ratio of, say, a \$1,000 grant to tenant or landlord to staff time involved in each case?** We do not know exactly how much time an average application will require. A complete application should be reviewable in a matter of 10-20 minutes on the Unqork platform. Cases that require followup, additional submitted or corrected documentation, or additional outreach to a tenant (in the case of a landlord application) may require substantially more time.
- 22. Can there be a partnership application in addition to prime-subcontractor?** Yes.
- 23. Can you clarify if the City’s planned ERAP application platform will include a call system (via VOIP, etc.) for inbound/outbound calls with applicants? Or should RFP respondents be budgeting for the buildout of a call center system that can be shared by them and their subs?** The City will not be providing a call system.
- 24. With regard to subcontractor/grantee info, what level of detail regarding each organization are you looking for in the proposal?** Please describe proposed staffing plans for each subcontractor, including estimated budgets, as described in the “Staffing Plan” section of the RFP. Please provide information on each subcontractor’s role and experience, as well as fiscal capacity including three years of audited financial reports, as described in the “Fiscal Capacity” section of the RFP.
- 25. What is the plan for cases where the tenant does not verify the information provided by the property owner?** By federal statute, DOH cannot provide a grant to a landlord if the tenant does not complete their portion of the application.

Additional Questions – 3/30/21

- 26. Staffing Plan (section VI (c), page 6): The RFP makes reference to “salary and/or hourly rate of staff assigned to this contract.” Is it accurate that the City is seeking labor categories, corresponding billing rates, and estimated hours for each labor category?**
Yes.
- 27. Financial Proposal (Section VI (f), page 7): Should the financial proposal be based on labor categories, corresponding billing rates, and estimated hours for each labor category? Is this the same as the billing rate that will be reflected in our “Financial Proposal”?** Yes.
- 28. Section IV, Budget and Available Resources states “the selected respondent will be expected to cooperate as necessary with these other providers,” referring to the community-based organizations. Will the provider be responsible for providing any support to these community-based organizations, including QA/QC? The provider will not be responsible for quality control for any applications processed by a community-based organization or delegate agency partner of the City.**
- 29. The answer provided to Question 19 in the ERAP RFP FAQ, issued on March 26, states that “if you plan to subcontract more than 5% of the total budget to an individual subcontractor, please do submit the audited financial statements.” However, many small businesses do not have audited financial statements and yet may conduct more than 5% of the work. Can these entities provide unaudited financial statements in lieu of audited financial statements?** Yes.
- 30. Can you provide clarity on how the scoring works for MBE/WBE participation? Will achieving the percentage goals stated in the RFP result in being awarded the full 10 points? If not, how will lesser or greater percentages be scored? Achieving the percentage goals stated in the RFP will result in being awarded the full 10 points.**



- 31. Will DOH accept “Language Line” technology for language call ins vs a live person with that dialect or language skill?** A live person with language skill will be preferred, but other interpretation solutions will be considered.
- 32. Will DOH accept a staffing plan that includes personnel based in other States as long as all key management personnel are local?** Yes, though local personnel are preferred.
- 33. Does DOH have a minimum staff amount they’d prefer to be active on a monthly basis?** DOH has not set a staffing minimum, but staffing plans should be sufficient to process 500 or more applications per week.
- 34. Can DOH commit to funding minimum staffing levels that can be negotiated in a contract?** The contract will include staffing levels commensurate with the requirements of the program.
- 35. Is the City going to require agents be available to meet with members of the public in-person at outreach events (such as vaccination centers)?** DOH will strongly prefer proposals that provide some level of in-person staffing with social distancing precautions. Staffing at outreach events will be considered.
- 36. Will the City allow agents to work from home as long as they are using technology to ensure the information that is being collected is secure?** Yes.
- 37. Are there any word limitations or font size requirement?** No.
- 38. Any specific details or format for budget sheets? Note: We are a City of Chicago's delegate agency for over 15 years. Can we use City's budget templates/sheets for personal, non-personal and summary sheets?** Budget sheets should include the information required by the RFP. If an existing template includes that information, it can be used.

- 39. Can we attach current Insurance Certificate we already have your department's name or do you need a separate certificate of insurance for the ERAP program?** To complete the contract, we will need a separate certificate of insurance indicating coverage of the ERAP program.
- 40. Does non profit organization has to be MBE/WBE? We noticed that in your proposal that 10 points are given to MBE/WBE, since we are not MBE /WBE certified. How can we make up the 10 points that we will lose by not being MBE/WBE certified?** Because nonprofits cannot be MBE/WBE certified, the MBE/WBE requirements do not apply to nonprofits. Nonprofits will not be penalized for this in the evaluation of bids.
- 41. What days and hours will the call center be needed operationally? Will the hours of operation for case management be the same or different?** The call center should be open during evening and weekend hours, as well as during the day, to allow access to individuals with varying schedules.
- 42. Are agents required to be a resident of Illinois along with being located in the city of Chicago?** DOH does not have a residency requirement for employees of the vendor.
- 43. What are the SLAS- Average time to Answer, Overall Answer rate % or a Maximum abandoned rate?** DOH has not set required numbers for these metrics.
- 44. Would the required reporting for the call center be needed daily, weekly and monthly?** Weekly reporting would be sufficient in most cases. DOH will prefer the option to get more up-to-date reporting if and when necessary.
- 45. Vendor's proposed price offering isn't assigned a value within the referenced Evaluation Criteria table. Please provide clarification as to how proposed pricing will be evaluated & what value will be applied.** Competitiveness of the price offering will be considered within the "Comprehensiveness and adequacy of the proposal to process applications" criteria.

- 46. If a subcontractor must also submit financials with the prime bid, is there an acceptable alternative to audited financial statements?** If audited financial statement are not available, unaudited financial statements may be accepted.
- 47. Will the City permit a subcontractor to a bidding prime to submit their financial information to the City separately, out of concerns over sharing competitive B to B information for a consolidated submission?** Yes.
- 48. Given the short time between submission of questions and the April 2nd date, would the City consider extending the proposal due date?** Launching the ERA program as quickly as possible is a priority for the City. However, we recognize that this RFP has a very tight response period. DOH would consider a short extension if it becomes clear that several bidders require additional time. DOH will communicate this by 12 pm on Wednesday, March 31. **THIS ANSWER HAS BEEN UPDATED BELOW.**

Additional Questions – 3/31/21

- 49. Included with the Staffing Plan vendors are required to provide salary information for employee staff put forth. If staffing includes subcontractors labor would providing the subcontractors direct rate to the Prime suffice?** Ideally, a vendor would provide copies of the vendor's subcontracts showing exactly what services are being performed and at what rates. If there are no such contracts, please provide a detailed list of the subcontracted labor including salary, fringe, and percentage of time dedicated to our contract.
- 50. In response to question #20 asked during the bidders' conference, you confirmed that vendors will not be allowed to apply their DCAA approved indirect rates to the Labor component of their bids. It is through the application of the vendors indirect rate structure that cost incurred for Fringe, G&A and Overhead are recovered. Should vendors limit their bid offering to only Direct Labor these supporting cost would not be recovered by vendors. Our firm bid these rate factors in dozens of federal grant management programs for state and local government, including a large number of ERA programs, and many led to contracts. In every case the DCAA rate factors were acceptable. Can the city clarify why its position is that these labor costs are not acceptable due to federal mandate?** Treasury has changed its policy in the last several days on the question of indirect costs as allowable under ERAP. The City is evaluating this change and will provide additional guidance soon.
- 51. Given the short time between submission of questions and the April 2nd date, would the City consider extending the proposal due date?** **UPDATED FROM 3/30 FAQ. Due to the tight turnaround, DOH will accept proposals submitted until 9 am Central Time on Tuesday, April 6, 2021.**