

## Proposers' Questions and CalMHSA Answers



*"A George Hills Company Administered JPA"*

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## Evaluation of Statewide Prevention and Early Intervention Initiatives Request For Statement of Qualifications Follow Up Questions and CalMHSA Answers

The CalMHSA Evaluation of Statewide Prevention and Early Intervention Initiatives Request for Statement of Qualifications Webinar was held on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and included a total of 25 attendees. In addition to a question and answer section during the webinar, a number of written questions were received prior to the webinar and were read aloud and responded to during the webinar. All questions and CalMHSA responses will be posted on the CalMHSA website on August 22, 2011. Following are the Proposer questions and CalMHSA responses to each question.

### Part A: RFSQ Introduction

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|----|---|
| 1. | <p><b>Proposer Question:</b><br/>Do you advise that organizations interested in subcontracting roles team now with a prime who is planning to respond to the RFSQ? Will there be any opportunity to become involved later i.e. after the prime is selected?</p> <p><b>CalMHSA Response:</b><br/>Yes, ideally if you can assemble a team now that is preferred. On the other hand, CalMHSA will examine SOQs from potential subcontractors and will work with those respondents to see how they may appropriately fit together or subcontract. If only a prime contractor is selected, it will be up to that organization to control the next steps and as such future involvement may or may not be an opportunity.</p> |
| 2. | <p><b>Proposer Question:</b><br/>Is it the expectation that the overall evaluation effort will make use of data, analyses and other information generated through the research and evaluation activities being implemented under the individual PEI initiative contracts? If so, how will this co-ordination take place?</p> <p><b>CalMHSA Response:</b><br/>Yes, it will make use of the data but furthermore it is an expectation that there will be considerable interaction and collaboration with at least 25 program partners/ contractors in the design of their evaluations, use of data and analyses (see Part A 1.2.1 – development of a strategic plan and 1.2.1.1 collaboration on pages 8-9).</p>          |

## Part A: RFSQ Introduction

3. **Proposer Question:**  
Is there an expected role in the statewide evaluation for counties and municipalities implementing local PEI efforts?
- CalMHSA Response:**  
The evaluation represented in the RFSQ is for the PEI statewide projects; if any of those 25 projects of the PEI statewide projects involve counties and municipalities, then the evaluation should involve the local level as appropriate. It is not the intention of this evaluation to evaluate local PEI efforts, but the evaluation should be aware there will be other local efforts underway throughout the three-year period of the PEI Statewide Evaluation.
4. **Proposer Question:**  
Please clarify the process that will be followed after qualified contractors are identified through this RFSQ. For example, will all qualified contractors selected under this RFSQ participate in the design of the evaluation? If so, how will resources be allocated among them?
- CalMHSA Response:**  
Selected respondents will participate in the design of the evaluation. While one contractor will be identified as the lead, Part A 1.2 page 7 states that “because the evaluation is intended to be comprehensive and integrated, it is expected that if more than one contractor is selected, that the selected contractors will work together in a collaborative and strategic manner”. Resources allocated to contractors will be based on Scopes of Work (SOW) that will be developed in collaboration with CalMHSA.
5. **Proposer Question:**  
Please clarify that the SOQ does not need to include a formal evaluation strategic plan or example of what we'd include in a plan if selected. Rather, we are simply responding about our qualifications more generally to complete the types of tasks listed in the RFSQ.
- CalMHSA Response:**  
The SOQ does not need to include a formal evaluation strategic plan. As Part A 1.2.1 describes, the development of an evaluation strategic plan will be part of the scope of work.

## Part A: RFSQ Introduction

6. **Proposer Question:**  
Will you be issuing RFPs that ask selected contractors to bid for all specific work for the design phase as well as implementation tasks?
- CalMHSA Response:**  
Again, our intent is not to issue additional RFPs but rather work collaboratively with selected contractors in the development of scopes of work.
7. **Proposer Question:**  
Can you describe your version of what a dashboard approach is for data collection?
- CalMHSA Response:**  
A “dashboard approach” (from Part A, section 1.2.2) for the purposes of the Statewide PEI Evaluation would allow CalMHSA and stakeholders to see ongoing progress with respect to the programs. This would be in contrast to simply providing a report of “final” findings. Particular variables/indicators would be chosen for which data can be collected at baseline and subsequent timeframes in order to gauge progress, quality improvement needs, and course correction opportunities. The dashboard would be a consistent set of indicators followed over time, available for review as a report by CalMHSA – essentially an accessible progress report.
8. **Proposer Question:**  
Are the PEI project plans/workscopes available so that we can take them into count in preparing our responses?
- CalMHSA Response:**  
CalMHSA is currently in the process of contract negotiations with our program partners which involves a further refinement of specific scopes of work. Once this process concludes the program partners’ scopes of work will be public and posted on our website. This may or may not be before the submission deadline for the SOQs. We recommend that interested proposers focus on reviewing the deliverables and intended outcomes identified in the RFPs for the Suicide Prevention and Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Initiatives and the RFA for the Student Mental Health Initiative posted at [www.calmhsa.org](http://www.calmhsa.org). Also, continue to monitor this website as some scopes of work may be posted and available before September 16, 2011.

## Part B: General Information

9. **Proposer Question:**  
Is it the expectation that responders will identify all the main members of their teams in their response or can they designate areas where subcontractors will be used but identify/propose them later?
- CalMHSA Response:**  
If the respondent has identified the main members of their team, they should include this information. (Part B 1.6 on page 15). If there are areas where subcontractors have not been identified then the respondent may propose those subcontractors later. In short, we need to know if there is an area of expertise you do not intend to fulfill yourself or through a subcontractor in the future.
10. **Proposer Question:**  
Section 3.2, p. 30, states that qualified respondents will be those who demonstrate the ability "to either lead and assemble the best 'team' of experts in all the areas needed for the statewide evaluation, or who individually provide specific necessary and exceptional expertise" (emphasis added). However, numerous sections seem to state that the only respondents that will be qualified will be those that "previously assembled and managed a team of individuals or subcontractors/partners and specialists with the skills necessary to conduct a complex evaluation" and have "substantial demonstrated experience in large scale, multifaceted evaluation" (Sections 1.0, 1.6, 5.1, 4.4.2, 5.4.3, etc.). Will respondents who do not propose to conduct or supervise the entire multi-faceted evaluation, but demonstrate expertise to conduct one or more facets, be qualified?
- CalMHSA Response:**  
Our purpose is not to exclude anyone from submitting a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ). At the same time, we will not just be selecting contractors who have specialized expertise that is limited in scope. We are very interested in a meta-evaluator to lead the large scale multifaceted evaluation. Specialized, limited scope contractors will need to work collaboratively and under the umbrella of the larger evaluation.
11. **Proposer Question:**  
Are you expecting formal teams to be proposed in the SOQ? Is it sufficient to provide a thorough description of the qualifications of the lead/prime organization and brief descriptions of potential partners/ subcontractors and letter of support,

**Part B: General Information**

or do you require complete documentation for all partners subcontractors and/or evidence of formal agreements?

**CalMHSA Response:**

Generally, we feel it is reasonable to not complete ALL required documentation for potential partners and subcontractors but a competitive respondent must clearly demonstrate that the breadth and scope of required expertise identified in the scope of work will be provided. Please see Part B 1.6 on page 15. Separate SOQs are not expected for the subcontractors identified within an SOQ.

12. **Proposer Question:**

If, instead of demonstrating the ability to assemble and manage a team of individuals “to conduct a complex evaluation,” will it be acceptable if the respondent demonstrates the ability to conduct one or more pieces of an evaluation, such as evaluation of services to particular populations, evaluation of a sample using special techniques, overview of outcomes of a particular type, or other facet of the evaluation?

**CalMHSA Response:**

Yes, it is acceptable if the respondent demonstrates the ability to conduct specialized or particular types of evaluation. The respondent will be expected to specify which specific pieces of the evaluation they wish to be qualified for. Respondent should reference the Work Plan Addendum and/or specific statewide PEI projects that they believe they are qualified to evaluate. (The Work Plan Addendum and statewide PEI proposals are available on the CalMHSA website.)

13. **Proposer Question:**

P. 8 of the RFP notes 25 contractors. The RFPs for the SMH state organizations receiving sole source contracts (five). Who are the Suicide Prevention and Stigma and Discrimination Contractors?

**CalMHSA Response:**

When CalMHSA’s provides the written responses to today’s webinar questions, we will include this information as reference. CalMHSA is currently in contract negotiations with awarded proposers. In the interim respondents can consult the CalMHSA website for this information.

## Part B: General Information

14.	<p><b>Proposer Question:</b> Will you make available the list of potential responders so that those interested in teaming can contact one another?</p> <p><b>CalMHSA Response:</b> Potential respondents who participated in the webinar will be emailed and ask for their consent to post contact information to facilitate any collaboration. CalMHSA can post this information in conjunction with posted written responses to RFSQ questions.</p>
15.	<p><b>Proposer Question:</b> Given the scope and complexity of this evaluation the 3-year window for demonstrating experience may be a bit narrow. Is it the case that relevant experience that falls outside the 3-year window will not be considered?</p> <p><b>CalMHSA Response:</b> In Part B, 1.1 of the RFSQ it states, “Respondent must have been in business for at least three (3) years and demonstrate a minimum of three (3) years experience within the last seven (7) years planning and providing similar comprehensive Project Evaluation services to public and/or private sector agencies.” If the respondent has 3 years of relevant experience that falls outside of the 7-year window, the respondent may nevertheless include that information for consideration. However, CalMHSA is most interested in recent and relevant experience.</p>
16.	<p><b>Proposer Question:</b> Would you consider experience 4 to 5 years old if it was pertinent?</p> <p><b>CalMHSA Response:</b> In Part B, 1.1 of the RFSQ it states, “Respondent must have been in business for at least three (3) years and demonstrate a minimum of three (3) years experience within the last seven (7) years planning and providing similar comprehensive Project Evaluation services to public and/or private sector agencies.” The “last 7 years” timeframe includes any experience obtained 4 to 5 years ago.</p>
17.	<p><b>Proposer Question:</b></p>

## Part B: General Information

Can we assume that subcontractors we propose do not have to meet all the criteria listed in the RSFQ, but rather that we should show how their experience and particular skills help us, as the 'prime contractor', to meet the overall requirements? For example, that subs would not have to have 5 references.

**CalMHSA Response:**

Please see response to questions #10 and #11

18. **Proposer Question:**

Please define "non-hierarchical working relationships". We consider all our relationships with subcontractors as collaborative

**CalMHSA Response:**

The purpose of this statement is simply to clarify that it is our expectation that all selected respondents will practice strong collaboration and work together as a team to accomplish the tasks required for this complex evaluation project.

## Part C: Instructions to Respondents

19. **Proposer Question:**

Part C, section 5.1 states "The transmittal letter should specifically indicate that the Respondent has substantial demonstrated experience in large-scale multifaceted evaluation consistent with the Scope of Work described in Part A, Section 1.2" (p. 22). If the respondent is not stating qualifications to conduct the "large scale multifaceted evaluation" but instead is stating qualifications to provide "specific necessary and exceptional expertise," will the statement of qualifications be accepted even though the transmittal letter does not "specifically indicate that the Respondent has substantial demonstrated experience in large-scale multifaceted evaluation?"

**CalMHSA Response:**

The statement of qualifications will be accepted if the transmittal letter indicates either: (1) The Respondent has substantial demonstrated experience in large-scale multifaceted evaluation consistent with the Scope of Work described in Part A, Section 1.2, or (2) The Respondent has specific necessary and exceptional expertise to provide evaluation services for a component of



## Part C: Instructions to Respondents

the statewide PEI evaluation.

20.

**Proposer Question:**

Is there a page limit for the full response or for various sections of the SOQ or its attachments?

**CalMHSA Response:**

We request that the respondents use discretion and provide adequate but not extraneous responses to the required information.

21.

**Proposer Question:**

Can we include additional attachments not official requested?

**CalMHSA Response:**

Yes, but information should be directly applicable in demonstrating the respondent's qualifications.

22.

**Proposer Question:**

In reference to describing your evaluation capabilities, do you want responders to provide a general discussion of their evaluation capabilities or rather the specific approach or methods that would used for this work? I am assuming it is a combination of both.

**CalMHSA Response:**

Yes, while Part C 5.4.1 requires a summary of relevant background information to demonstrate meeting minimum qualifications, Part B 1 describes the minimum qualifications for the RFSQ, which includes instructions in 1.3 to provide a detailed description of Project Evaluation capabilities as it relates to the Scope of Work.

## Part D: Statement of Qualifications Review, Selection, and Qualification Process

23. **Proposer Question:**  
If there are multiple awards will the awardees compete with each other for specific assignments later? If so, how will this work?
- CalMHSA Response:**  
It is not CalMHSA's intent to conduct an additional formal competitive process beyond this RFSQ. CalMHSA, staff and consultants will work with awardees to determine Scopes of Work (SOW) based on identified expertise, qualities, strengths and capacities, etc.

## Appendices A and B

24. **Proposer Question:**  
Are the general terms in the sample agreement provided in the RFSQ negotiable should we qualify and be asked to submit a full proposal at a later time?
- CalMHSA Response:**  
Yes, CalMHSA will negotiate a final contract and the General Terms and Conditions will be the starting point for negotiations.
25. **Proposer Question:**  
The RFSQ states that all work produced by the contractor(s) will be owned by the state, however there maybe methods or tools that we would like to use the may be under copyrights by others and therefore cannot be owned by the state. Is this clause negotiable?
- CalMHSA Response:**  
Similar to above, CalMHSA will negotiate a final contract and the General Terms and Conditions will be the starting point for negotiations.