



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE**

**Division of Procurement
Room 525, Health & Welfare Building
Commonwealth Avenue & Forster Street
PO Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17120**

**Daniel R. Boyd
Director**

**Telephone 717-783-3767
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January 3, 2011

FLYER 2

**SUBJECT: RFP NO. 10-10 A STATE MEDICAL REVIEW TEAM FOR THE DISABILITY
ADVOCACY PROGRAM**

Dear Prospective Offeror:

The attached package represents a formal issuance of materials related to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Public Welfare Request for Proposal (RFP) 10-10, A State Medical Review Team for the Disability Advocacy Program.

1. Written answers to the questions submitted for the above referenced RFP.
2. Presentation from the pre-proposal conference
3. Attendance list from the pre-proposal conference

**NO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS REGARDING RFP 10-10 WILL BE ACCEPTED OR
ANSWERED EITHER VERBALLY OR IN WRITING.**

All proposals must be received by January 27, 2011, **at or before 2:00 p.m.**, by the Department of Public Welfare, Division of Procurement, Room 525, Health and Welfare Bldg, 625 Forster Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel R. Boyd".

Daniel R. Boyd, Director
DPW Division of Procurement

Attachment(s)

PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE GUIDE

1. Ladies and Gentlemen, **my name is Janet Bush**. I am the **Special OIM Programs Division Director for the PA Department of Public Welfare, Office of Income Maintenance Operations**.
I am the Project Officer for this Request for Proposal and am responsible for overseeing the Disability Advocacy Program.

2. Please be sure to **sign the attendance register** that is being passed around. We have also provided you with **question forms to use when** submitting questions later in the conference.

3. May I ask you now to **introduce yourselves giving your name, title and the firm you represent?**

4. **THIS PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE HAS THREE PURPOSES:**
 - a. To furnish some **background** information leading to the issuance of this request for proposal;

 - b. To emphasize those **requirements of the RFP** we consider especially important;

 - c. To **answer your questions** concerning the RFP.

5. **Background.** OIM administers a Disability Advocacy program which provides assistance to public assistance recipients who potentially may be eligible for Social Security disability. As part of DAP, OIM uses a Medical Review Team to review public assistance recipient's medical, social and vocational histories to determine if they can be certified as disabled under Social Security Administration rules and regulations. DPW is seeking an entity that is able to provide these Medical Review Team services. The determinations made by the MRT are crucial to the pursuit of Federal disability benefits and the Department's determination of the correct category of Medical Assistance for each individual. To the extent that an individual is eligible for Federal disability benefits or a Federal category of MA, the Department's expenditure of State funds can be substantially reduced through reimbursement, cost avoidance, and/or the maximization of Federal Financial Participation. **Therefore, the quality and timeliness of the MRT determinations are of critical importance to DPW.**

6. **Critical Points in the RFP.** The selected contractor will be responsible for reviewing two types of cases:

- Objective A cases are for individuals who are pursuing Federal Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance benefits. The MRT will provide disability expertise that will assist the Disability Advocacy Program advocates **in pursuing SSI/SSD benefits for public assistance recipients under Social Security Administration rules and regulations.**
- Objective B cases are to determine disability **in order for public assistance applicants/recipients to qualify for a federal category of Medical Assistance benefits**

In relation to Objective A cases, the selected contractor will provide crucial information and reports to the DAP advocates. DAP is a statewide program that assists recipients of cash assistance, MA and/or SNAP (public assistance recipients) in their pursuit of Federal disability benefits (SSI/SSDI). Utilizing basic service planning/case management skills, the DAP advocates assist public assistance recipients who are mentally and physically disabled through the complex SSI/SSDI application and appeal process. MRT services are critical to the successful culmination of the application and appeal process for these Objective A cases. If SSA denies an initial application, the DAP advocate may refer the case to the selected contractor in order to determine if an appeal is warranted. Information will be forwarded to the selected contractor from any of the approximately 140 DAP advocates who cover the 67 County Assistance Offices located throughout the Commonwealth. The selected MRT contractor must review the information and render a disability determination. **For these determinations, the selected MRT contractor must prepare a comprehensive report including a vocational assessment.** The disability determinations made by the MRT may later be used as evidence in an Administrative Law Judge hearing. MRT staff is not required to attend the ALJ hearing.

In addition to providing assistance in individual client situations, the selected MRT Contractor must assist in the initial and ongoing training of the DAP advocates, supervisors, and liaisons, and assist in training given to agencies and organizations that interface with pertinent organizations, both within and outside DPW.

In Objective B cases, disability determinations are used to **establish an individual's eligibility for MA when a referral for Federal benefits is not made.** When an individual who is applying for or receiving MA alleges a disability, either the CAO's MRT coordinator or DAP advocate refers the case to the selected MRT contractor for an independent disability determination. **A vocational report is not necessary in these cases.**

To minimize delays in proposal evaluation and to avoid rejection of your proposal, read the RFP carefully and submit a complete proposal. Our evaluation will be based almost entirely on what is submitted by you. Follow as completely as possible the proposal format given in Part II of the RFP; this will aid us in making our comparative evaluation.

7. **PRESENTATIONS.** We now have three presentations to assist and provide you with additional information.

Our first Presenter, speaking on the Disadvantaged Business Submittal is:

Oslwen (Oz) Anderson, Construction Liaison, Dept of General Services, Bureau of Minority and Women Business Opportunities

NEXT, speaking on the Mentor Protégé Program Submittal, we have

Brenda Kates, Chief of Contract Compliance and Supplier Diversity, Bureau of Equal Opportunity

OUR FINAL PRESENTER, SPEAKING ON THE CONTRACTOR PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM IS:

Marcellus Simmons, Acting Supervisor, DPW, Contractor Partnership Program

8. **Problem Areas in the RFP.**

- a. No answer is official until it is confirmed in writing.

- b. Proposal must be properly signed by the Offeror and received by 2:00 P.M. on Thursday, January 27, 2011. **Late proposals will not be considered regardless of the reason.**

- c. The proposal shall consist of **five** separately sealed submittals:
 - i. Technical Submittal;

 - ii. Disadvantaged Business Submittal;

 - iii. Cost Submittal;

 - iv. Contractor Partnership Program Submittal; and

 - v. Mentor Protégé Program Submittal

- d. If you specify that the proposal is not firm for the time period specified in Section I-12 of the RFP, your proposal may be rejected.
- e. If there are any assumptions included in the cost submittal, your proposal may be rejected.
- f. If you state that the proposal is contingent on negotiation of Offeror terms and conditions, your proposal may be rejected.

Questions. We will now collect the question forms you have.

I will now answer those questions that have been submitted to us, in writing, after which I will attempt to answer any further questions you may have.

[READ THE QUESTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN RECEIVED AND THE REPLIES THERETO. DO NOT IDENTIFY THE POTENTIAL OFFERORS.]

I will now address your additional questions. I will read each question without identifying the firm involved and, if possible, answer it now. However, any answer given today must be considered unofficial until it is confirmed in writing. I will not attempt to answer any question not reduced to writing on the question form. All questions asked today will be officially answered in writing. **All questions and written answers will be posted to the DGS website by Wednesday, December 29, 2010 as an addendum to, and shall become part of, the RFP.** Each Offeror is responsible to monitor the DGS website for new or revised RFP information.

[Allow the Offerors sufficient time during the pre-proposal conference to write their questions. Whenever possible, answer questions by reference to the part of the RFP containing the answer.]

NOTE: The request to write out questions will not preclude some contractors from asking questions orally, particularly if the answer to one question generates another. Therefore, one of the Commonwealth members present, other than the conference chairman, should be assigned the job of recording the questions posed orally so they too may be confirmed in writing.]

FAREWELL STATEMENT: We would like to thank everyone for your interest and for attending today's conference. Have a safe drive home.

1. IV-2. Nature and Scope of the Project (p. 29) states:

Information will be forwarded to the selected contractor from any of the one hundred forty (140) DAP advocates who cover the sixty seven (67) County Assistance Offices (CAOs) located throughout the Commonwealth.

Question:

Are the records in an electronic format? How is information currently forwarded to the MRT vendor? What is the typical volume of medical records in a chart, and is information from prior applications included?

The records are forwarded by DAP staff to the selected Medical Review Team contractor via mail. The records can either be on paper or a CD, which DAP staff receives from the Social Security Administration. The volume of each medical record varies based on the applicant.

2. IV-2. Nature and Scope of the Project (p. 30) states:

In addition to providing assistance in individual client situations, the selected MRT Contractor must assist in the initial and ongoing training of the DAP advocates, supervisors, and liaisons, and assist in training given to agencies and organizations that interface with pertinent organizations, both within and outside DPW.

Question:

Is the training provided in each of the sixty seven (67) CAOs, or is it provided regionally throughout the Commonwealth? What is the average annual frequency of training?

Training is provided regionally on an annual basis.

3. IV-2. Nature and Scope of the Project (p. 30) states:

In Objective B cases, disability determinations are used to establish an individual's eligibility for MA when a referral for Federal benefits is not made. When an individual, who is applying for or receiving MA, alleges a disability, either the CAO's MRT coordinator or DAP advocates refers the case to the selected MRT contractor for an independent disability determination. A vocational report is not necessary in these cases.

Question:

Are Objective B cases not subject to a vocational review, if a medical listing is not met/equaled? Please elaborate regarding if a five step sequential analysis is/is not required on these cases. Additionally, is there a recommended disability determination worksheet/format that must be utilized by the MRT contractor? If so, can that be made available for review?

Objective B cases are subject to a vocational review, but a vocational report is not required. There is no recommended worksheet. The worksheet/format for reviews would need to be developed by the selected MRT contractor. Offerors should describe their format as part of the technical submittal.

4. IV-3. Requirements (p. 30) states:

The selected MRT contractor and key personnel such as physicians and vocational counselors must have a minimum of two (2) years experience in determining disability under 20 C.F.R. Part 416 or other similar experience.

Question:

Can Registered Nurses be utilized as key personnel, assisting the physicians in the medical review, in addition to the vocational counselors? Is it required that the MRT clinical personnel be provided within the state, or can the “review” portion of the services be provided from out of state?

Registered nurses can be utilized as key personnel. MRT clinical personnel can be out of state.

5. IV-3. Requirements (p.31) states:

The selected contractor must have pediatricians review children’s cases and psychiatrists or Ph.D. psychologists review cases involving mental impairments.

Question:

How many children’s cases are adjudicated annually?

Approximately 8,000 children’s cases are reviewed annually.

6. IV-4. Tasks (p. 31) states:

In the Objective B counselor denial cases in which there appears to be a significant impairment, the counselor will complete a summary of the medical findings and functional limitations necessary to support the diagnosis. The counselor will also identify types of documentation necessary to verify the disability. These requests for additional information should be forwarded to DAP staff within the twenty (20) calendar day time limit.

Question:

Is the federal Residual Functional Capacity form utilized for this and other steps involving the vocational part of the review? If not, can a copy of the form(s) that is utilized be made available?

If a request for additional information is made within the twenty (20) calendar day time limit, does that mean that the “clock” stops and the case remains pending with the MRT until the additional information is obtained

The federal Residual Functional Capacity form is not utilized by the MRT. The selected contractor would need to develop its own form.

The twenty calendar day time limit begins each time the MRT contractor receives the case for review. The MRT contractor has twenty days to review the case for the initial review and twenty days for the subsequent review once the additional information is received.

7. Re: IV-7. Reports and Project Control (p. 34):

Question:

Can you provide any examples of reports you are currently receiving or using now (omitting any PHI or other personal information)?

Currently, the MRT contractor provides a weekly report indicating the number of cases received from each county, with the name and Social Security Number of the recipient. The MRT contractor also provides a monthly report designating the county, type of case, result, and recipient identifying information.

8. I-12. Proposals states:

To be considered, Offerors should submit a complete response to this RFP to the Issuing Office using the format provided in Part II, providing **ten (10) paper copies of the Technical Submittal** and **two (2) paper copies of the Cost Submittal**, two (2) paper copies of the Disadvantaged Business Submittal, two (2) paper copies of the Mentor Protégé Program Submittal, and two (2) paper copies of the Contractor Partnership Program Submittal. In addition to the paper copies of the proposal, Offerors shall submit two complete and exact copies of the entire proposal (Technical, Cost, Disadvantaged Business, Mentor Protégé and Contractor Partnership Program Submittal along with all requested documents) on CD-ROM or Flash Drive in Microsoft Office or Microsoft Office-compatible format. The electronic copy must be a mirror image of the paper copy and any spreadsheets must be in Microsoft Excel. The Offerors may not lock or protect any cells or tabs. Offerors should ensure that there is no costing information in the technical submittal.

However, Appendix H states:

APPENDIX H - PROPOSAL COVER SHEET COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE Office of Administration/Office of Income Maintenance - Enclosed in **five separately sealed submittals** is the proposal of the Offeror identified below for the above-referenced RFP.

Question:

As the Proposal Cover Sheet (Appendix H) requests 5 separately sealed submittals, this contradicts page 3 of the RFP. Can you clarify the number of copies and how you want them separated/sealed?

There is no inconsistency. The entire Proposal to be submitted by an Offeror consists of five separate submittals, specifically a Technical Submittal, a Cost Submittal, a Disadvantaged Business Submittal, a Contractor Partnership Submittal and a Mentor Protégé Submittal. Each of these submittals should be separately sealed. Section I-12 states the number of copies which is required for each of these submittals; specifically, ten copies of the Technical Submittal and two copies of each of the other four submittals. Labels are provided for your convenience.

9. APPENDIX J CORPORATE REFERENCE QUESTIONNAIRE states:

The Offeror must submit Appendix J, Corporate Reference Questionnaire, directly to the contacts listed. The references should return completed questionnaires in sealed

envelopes to the Offeror. The Offeror must include these sealed references with its proposal.

Question:

Since references will be returned to us in sealed envelopes, will one copy of each suffice, or do we need to request that our references submit multiple copies?

Offerors should submit 2 copies of their references.

Questions:

1. Has this contract been previously awarded to a vendor or is this an entirely new solicitation?

DPW has previously contracted for MRT services.

2. If there is an existing contract that is up for renewal, can you please provide me with the name and contact information for correct "Right-to-Know" officer who can provide me with a copy of the existing contract?

DPW's Right to Know officer is Andrea Bankes from the Right to Know Law Office. More information about Right to Know can be found on the DPW website.

1. Does the Department have a current contractor for identical or similar services as described in the RFP and if yes, can the Department disclose the name of this contractor?

The current Medical Review Team contract is with Action Review Group, Arbor E&T. The current contract and its requirements are not relevant to this procurement.

2. Will the Department disclose the dollar amount(s) of the fee(s) paid to the current contractor, if any, for the most recent contract year for Objective A and Objective B services?

This information is not relevant to this procurement.

3. Does the scope of this project include TANF recipients as part of the cash assistance program?

Yes, TANF recipients are included.

4. What is the current number of recipients in each of the Commonwealth programs (cash assistance, Medical Assistance, and SNAP public assistance recipients)?

There are 291,040 cash recipients; 2,250,188 MA recipients; and 1,694,752 SNAP recipients.

5. The RFP states that “approximately one hundred forty (140) DAP advocates cover the sixty-seven (67) County Assistance Offices (CAOs) located throughout the Commonwealth”. Approximately how many total applications for SSI did all of the DAP initiate and submit annually for each of the past three years? Approximately how many total applications for SSDI did all of the DAP advocates initiate and submit annually for each of the past three years?

DAP staff received 42,778 referrals in 2009; 44,974 in 2008; and 41,857 in 2007. When recipients apply for federal disability benefits, they apply for both SSI and SSD concurrently. The numbers are cumulative for both programs.

6. Approximately how many SSI applications initiated by the DAP advocates were awarded benefits annually for each of the past three years? Approximately how many SSDI applications initiated by the DAP advocates were awarded benefits annually for each of the past three years?

In 2009, DAP staff obtained 16,949 approvals; 17,872 in 2008; and 16,759 in 2007. These numbers include both SSI and SSD; we are unable to provide separate numbers for each program.

7. Who will provide Objective A and Objective B cases to the MRT team for review? Is this the sole responsibility of the DAP advocates, or will the MRT be responsible for identifying potentially eligible SSI/SSDI recipients for initial application to SSA?

DAP staff will send cases to the MRT contractor for review. The MRT contractor is not responsible for identifying potentially eligible recipients.

8. Who is responsible for completing and submitting SSI/SSDI applications to SSA, DAP advocates or MRT?

DAP staff is responsible for assisting the recipients in the completion of their SSI/SSD application.

9. Are DAP advocates responsible for pursuing other federal benefits besides SSI/SSDI? If yes, which ones?

No, DAP staff only assist with SSI and SSDI.

10. We understand that this scope of work is being offered by the Department as a firm fixed price contract. Will the Department provide us with a total contract value dollar range or a not to exceed price for this scope of work?

No.

11. What is the average amount of monthly cash benefits per program that is paid to each recipient? What is the average amount of time a person receives assistance from each of the programs included in the scope of work?

The average cash amount paid to TANF recipients is \$123.42. The average cash amount paid to GA recipients is \$184.97. We do not have any information available on the average amount of time that individuals remain on cash assistance, MA or SNAP.

12. Page 29 of the RFP states that “Objective B cases are to determine disability in order for public assistance applications/recipients to qualify for a federal category of Medical Assistance (MA) benefits”. Please delineate all types of assistance included in this category.

**MAWD – Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities
Healthy Horizons
MA for Children with Special Needs
SSP – State Supplemental Payment**

RFP #10-10, Questions submitted at pre-proposal conference on Tuesday, December 21, 2010

- Resources exist for prime contractors to locate M/WBE firms, but what resources exist to help M/WBE firms locate prime contractors interested in bidding on this and/or other DPW contracts?

ANSWER:

- a. The Department will include a listing of RFP Pre-Proposal Conference attendees on the DGS website. This list includes the names of all vendors that were in attendance at the conference and may be interested in submitting a response to this RFP.
- If a prime has held this contract for some time and is highly likely to be awarded this contract again due to a lack of competition, then what incentives does the prime have to work with a M/WBE or submit a proposal for the MPP program?

ANSWER: The Department issued this RFP in order to promote a fair and open competition for any resulting contract. The Department encourages all interested vendors to submit a proposal which includes a commitment to Disadvantaged Businesses. As specified in Part III Evaluation Criteria, the Department has allocated a significant portion of the evaluation points to the Disadvantaged Business Submittal and the failure to submit a Disadvantaged Business submittal will impact the scoring of any proposal. In addition to the incentives to encourage disadvantaged business participation outlined in the Request For Proposal document, the Department may address the lack of commitment to disadvantaged businesses through "Best and Final Offers" .

RFP 10-10 Pre-proposal Conference

December 21, 2010

Questions to Marcellus Simmons, Contractor Partnership Program

- Do you have to be considered as a small business for you to get CPP credited?
 - o It should be clarified that CPP is a separate requirement to Small, Minority, and/or Disadvantaged Businesses. The Prime/Direct Contractor who holds the contract with DPW is credited regardless of type of business they are. Any Prime/Direct Contractor for this RFP (10-10) is responsible to participate in the CPP Program.

- Acting as a subcontractor to prime, can I hire someone and get credited or does credit go to prime?
 - o You hire someone and prime would get credit since you are subcontractor.

- If we get people from the EARN center, are they counted?
 - o Any individual receiving TANF benefits at the time of hire can be credited towards meeting the CPP requirement. Earn centers are the largest Employment and Training sites that service these individuals but there are many others throughout the Commonwealth that service/train TANF recipients, including but not limited to Work Ready, KEYS, Refugee, and ISI programs.

- If prime has a contract as an EARN center, do they get CPP credit?
 - o Yes, for TANF hires that are made on any contract in which the EARN center is the Prime/Direct contractor to DPW. Individual hires cannot be credited toward multiple contracts. Hires are credited toward specific contracts at the discretion of the Prime/Direct contractor.

- How do we know the person is not counted on any other contract?
 - o Every calendar quarter Prime/Direct contractors are required to report TANF hires and Termination via the Quarterly Employment Form (PA 1540). Since it is possible for individuals to hold multiple jobs, Prime/Direct contractors are responsible to not duplicate TANF hires on contracts under their jurisdiction. It is assumed that in answering the required questions of the CPP section of the RFP, contractors will detail how qualified TANF recipients will be tracked for progress, to encourage advancement and as a byproduct not be duplicated.