

20PSX0080: DPH Answers to Questions received by DPH

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1. It is stated that the Contact Tracers will need access to a laptop and cell phone. Will the State be providing a telephony system for these users to utilize? It is our experience that utilizing cell phones for this work is problematic, for example there may be call backs that would ring to a Contact Tracer that is no longer available, as well as no ability for oversight or reporting on the calls to a cell phone

Answer: The ContaCT system and the telephony system in development will be provided by the state of Connecticut along with training. We expect Contact Tracers to be outfitted with laptop technology and adequate internet access to access ContaCT and use Voice over IP (VoIP) telephony. Laptops and cell phones will not be provided by the State of Connecticut.

2. What type of information exchange is expected to be provided between the Contact Tracers and Resource Coordinators? Does the ContaCT system provide for any of this capability? Would the vendor need to provide a web portal or other shared site for users to exchange data and files?

Answer: The selection and oversight of the community resource coordinators is the responsibility of a different state agency. The successful applicant will need to ensure communication between the established community resource coordinators and contact tracers, e.g. referrals and confirmation of engagement by the community resource coordinator.

3. Does the ContaCT system provide the ability to capture and track all documentation listed on bullet point 3? If not, is it expected that the Vendor provide a system that can electronically capture and track this data?

Answer: Yes, DPH is looking to the vendor to provide this system

4. Beyond what is stated in the RFP and to ensure adequate comparison, is the state able to clarify expectations regarding the blend (number) of volunteers to paid staff to be supported under this resulting contract?

Answer: DPH would like to onboard 700 contact tracers, with as many volunteers as possible. DPH understands there may be need to hire staff to meet goal of 700 contact tracers.

5. Does the state have data and can it please share typical volunteer schedules (full time, part time, average hours weekly, etc)?

Answer: The workforce management and scheduling are the responsibility of the successful applicant.

6. Does the state have data and can it please share current actual/estimated turn-over associated with volunteer staff?

Answer: Does not have data on volunteer turnover.

7. Regarding current volunteers, housed at non-profit organizations, are these volunteers currently supervised by those entities, the DPH, or some other entity? Will existing volunteers be transitioned to supervision by the new entity?

Answer: Volunteers who are managed by local health departments currently will have the option to remain under local control or if a volunteer is willing to work across the state, will have option to be transitioned to the selected vendor. Newly recruited volunteers will be managed by the vendor.

8. Will the contractor be accountable for the productivity and performance of volunteers?

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Answer: The vendor will be responsible for all volunteers except where a local health department has specifically identified the volunteer as their exclusive staff resource.

9. Is it unclear if ContaCT is a CRM, a contact tracing system or a document management system. Please clarify the purpose and function of the ContaCT system.

Answer: ContaCT is a contact tracing system. The job function of the Contact Tracers is fully contained in ContaCT. The workforce management and scheduling are the responsibility of the successful applicant.

10. Should the vendor expect to provide a scalable telco system to support all 700+ users. Please note that call monitoring and call recording for quality purposes cannot be done while utilizing cellular phones.

Answer: All non-phone communications (text and e-mail) are managed in the ContaCT application.

The State of Connecticut is procuring a cloud based VOIP phone system that would allow for a central number to both send and receive calls and distribute incoming calls regionally. While the successful applicant to this RFP would need to work within the system they would not need to develop. No calls will be recorded.

11. Should the vendor expect to provide a scalable workforce management system to support all 700+ users? In our experience the volunteer workforce approaches tracing more like a gig economy so understanding schedules and coverage needs is critical to meet demand.

Answer: We would like to onboard the 700 contact tracers as quickly as possible. Please provide your recommended timeline.

12. Should the vendor expect to provide a scalable Learning Management System to support all 700+ users? The LMS will provide the ability to monitoring training, measure completeness and competency scores prior to release to production as well as throughout operations.

Answer: There are workflows in the system that allow cases and contacts to be prioritized for follow up and could be used to manage work assignments in the system.

13. Should the vendor expect to provide a scalable Knowledge Management System or will there be a KMS integrated with the Contact Tracing / CRM tool?

Answer: Training materials are in development and will be provided to the successful applicant.

14. Should the vendor expect to provide capability for digital communications including live chat, chat bots, SMS, mobile apps so as to cut down the cost of operations?

Answer: At peak volume, in one week there could be up to 40,000 cases and contacts that would require initial and monitoring contacts. Up to 50-60% are expected to opt into email or text communications. This would be accomplished through the electronic ContaCT system.

15. Should the vendor expect to provide social media enhancements to target particular geographies for awareness?

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Answer: We do not anticipate the need for social media enhancements.

16. Would the state please articulate the ramp up period for 700 staff? Does the vendor need to have capacity to reach 700 by July 1st? August 1st? Does the state expect to run at capacity or somewhere closer to the relative infection rate of the state?

Answer: We would like to onboard the 700 contact tracers as quickly as possible. Please provide your recommended timeline. Call volume will be related to the infection rate in the state and will likely be related to increased exposure

17. What are the technical hardware requirements needed to support the State applications?

Answer: Applicants should have experience working with enterprise web-based systems and telephony solutions. The ContaCT system and the telephony system in development will be provided by the state of Connecticut along with training. We expect Contact Tracers to be outfitted with laptop technology and adequate internet access to access ContaCT and use Voice over IP (VoIP) telephony.

18. In order to compare apples to apples pricing the State must offer a ratio of paid staff to volunteer staff even if just for comparison purposes.

Answer: DPH would like to onboard 700 contact tracers, with as many volunteers as possible. DPH understands there may be need to hire staff to meet goal of 700 contact tracers.

19. Can a successful contact by a tracer be by a digital contract or must it be live?

Answer: Email and texting to cases and contacts is possible.

20. Is the contractor accountable for Community Resource Coordinators performance?

Answer: The selection and oversight of the community resource coordinators is the responsibility of a different state agency. The successful applicant will need to ensure communication between the established community resource coordinators and contact tracers, e.g. referrals and confirmation of engagement by the community resource coordinator.

21. Would the state please provide a pricing form to ensure apples to apples comparison? The form should provide line item evaluation including:

1. Hourly rate to manage volunteers
2. Hourly rate of contact tracer
3. Hourly rate of disease investigators
4. Hourly rate of epidemiologist
5. Program Management Cost
6. Systems Costs
7. Implementation Costs

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8. Ratio of volunteer / paid staff (given by state)

Answer: DPH will be providing preferred skills for all contact tracers. Minimum requirements are a college degree (associate or higher) or active enrollment in a college program with a healthcare focus. DPH seeks a contractor to develop volunteer/staff management system with costs projected by contractor.

22. Would the state clarify that reference for similar service within the last three years must be disease investigation and/or contact tracing in nature?

Answer: References should be included that support potential contractor's ability to perform services.

23. Will you post all answers to questions asked by all offerors?

Answer: Responses to all questions will be shared on the portal.

24. To ensure fair competition and equitable price comparison across offerors, can the state please provide

- a. The percentage of the 700 contact tracers that will be paid versus volunteer (unpaid).
- b. Estimated hourly rate for contact tracers in Connecticut based on those hired to date.

Answer: DPH would like to onboard 700 contact tracers, with as many volunteers as possible. DPH understands there may be need to hire staff to meet goal of 700 contact tracers. DPH has not set an hourly rate for contact tracers.

25. How many contact tracers (1) paid and (2) volunteer has the state trained to date and how many are currently working as contact tracers?

Answer: Currently DPH has 600 registered users in our ContaCT system. This includes a mixture of state and local staff and volunteers.

26. How many of the up to 700 contact tracers does the state anticipate will be required immediately following contract award?

Answer: We would like to onboard the 700 contact tracers as quickly as possible. Please provide your recommended timeline.

27. Has the state already prepared the training as described on page 4 of the scope of services? If so, please provide.

Answer: Training materials are in development and will be provided to the successful applicant.

28. Does the state have an existing staff training platform – and if so what is it – for providing training to staff?

Answer: Training materials are in development and will be provided to the successful applicant.

29. What training is there on ContaCT?

Answer: Training materials are in development and will be provided to the successful applicant

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30. Please provide ContaCT features and capabilities – does ContaCT have the capability to manage sample, including scheduling of call backs?

Answer: The job function of the Contact Tracers is fully contained in ContaCT. The workforce management and scheduling are the responsibility of the successful applicant.

31. What are ContaCT's workflow management and referral capabilities?

Answer: All non-phone communications (text and e-mail) are managed in the ContaCT application.

32. What are the hardware and software and operating system requirements for personal laptops in order to connect to ContaCT?

Answer: Applicants should have experience working with enterprise web-based systems and telephony solutions. The ContaCT system and the telephony system in development will be provided by the state of Connecticut along with training. We expect Contact Tracers to be outfitted with laptop technology and adequate internet access to access ContaCT and use Voice over IP (VoIP) telephony.

33. Please confirm all contact tracers and appropriate offeror staff will be provided secure access to ContaCT.

Answer: yes, the ContaCT system and the telephony system will be provided by the state of Connecticut along with training.

34. Are licenses required for ContaCT and if so please clarify the cost and if these should be included in the offeror's price quote.

Answer: DPH will provide the ContaCT system and cover user license fees.

35. How many community resource coordinators are there across the state?

Answer: The selection and oversight of the community resource coordinators is the responsibility of a different state agency. The successful applicant will need to ensure communication between the established community resource coordinators and contact tracers, e.g. referrals and confirmation of engagement by the community resource coordinator.

36. Please confirm the community resource coordinators are not to be hired by the offeror.

Answer: The successful applicant will need to ensure communication between contact tracers and community resource coordinators. Use of volunteer and paid staff is anticipated under the management and direction of the selected contractor.

37. What are the state regions noted in the solicitation?

Answer: The regions mentioned in the solicitation refer to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection/Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security regions of the state: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEMHS/Emergency-Management/Resources-For-Officials/Regional-Offices/Towns-by-Region>

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38. What are the expected AM and PM shifts expected for contact tracers? How many hours in each shift?

Answer: Contact Tracers are expected to be scheduled from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days per week.

39. Please clarify what is meant by the bullet that daily contact will be made with all confirmed positive individuals and their contacts.

Answer: COVID-19 positive cases and contacts will require initial and monitoring contacts. Up to 50-60% are expected to opt into email or text communications. This would be accomplished through the electronic ContaCT system. Those cases and contacts not utilizing the email and/or text communications will require telephone contact to ensure they are complying with public health guidance and to monitor symptoms.

40. How frequently are new cases imported into ContaCT (e.g, one daily, continuous)?

Answer: New cases are imported daily.

41. Selection criteria - "DAS may award by individual item, group of items, or the entirety of all items" – what constitutes an item in this SOW?

Answer: It is the intention of DPH to partner with one qualified, responsible proposer that meet the specifications and requirements in order to best meet the contact tracing staffing demands of the COVID-19 pandemic and accommodate, in whole, tracing efforts throughout the State.

42. Please confirm the state will provide contact information for the community resource coordinators and the partner organizations.

Answer: The selection and oversight of the community resource coordinators is the responsibility of a different state agency. The successful applicant will need to ensure communication between the established community resource coordinators and contact tracers, e.g. referrals and confirmation of engagement by the community resource coordinator.

43. Please clarify the purpose of phone calls to partner organizations on a weekly basis.

Answer: Call volume will be related to the infection rate in the state and will likely be related to increased exposure the frequency of communication among community resource coordinators and partner organizations to confirm resource needs are met may require more frequent communication.

44. Please clarify the level of background checks required for hired contact tracers, for the volunteers, and for other project staff. Specifically, will fingerprint checks as noted in section 44 be required for all staff and volunteers, noting too that these are lengthier checks to complete.

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Answer: DPH will be providing preferred skills for all contact tracers. Minimum requirements are a college degree (associate or higher) or active enrollment in a college program with a healthcare focus. There are no requirements for drug screening or fingerprinting.

45. What languages other than English are contact tracers requested to speak and in what proportion?

Answer: English and Spanish must be available. Other languages prevalent in CT like Polish, Portuguese and Chinese would be useful but could be accomplished using something like language line.

46. Please confirm you require only a one-year price proposal.

Answer: DPH is requesting a one-year proposal currently.

47. The revised RFP indicates a strike out of Attachment 1 Sample Contract. Will the State provide a revised sample contract, or will the State provide a list of contract terms and conditions, e.g., indemnification, insurance requirements, and invoicing instructions?

Answer: DPH will share specifics of contract language with selected contractor.

48. Revised RFP - Scope of Services 3 This Section states that the “contractor will develop protocols on how volunteers will be screened, selected, and retained” and on page 6, Section 1, it asks “what strategies and practices would you use to conduct screening and review potential candidates for contact tracing roles? How would you ensure these candidates are qualified?” Does the State have any hiring requirements vendors should include in their screening process (i.e., drug screening, fingerprinting, etc.)? If so, please clarify what the hiring requirements are.

Answer: DPH will be providing preferred skills for all contact tracers. Minimum requirements are a college degree (associate or higher) or active enrollment in a college program with a healthcare focus. There are no requirements for drug screening or fingerprinting.

49. Revised RFP - Scope of Services 3 This Section states that the “total number of needed contact tracers will be based on virus models supplied by DPH Infectious Disease Epidemiology and may change over the course of this contract.” Will the State please describe the frequency and manner in which these models will be revised and provided to the contractor in order to scale staffing up or down to meet volume requirements in a timely manner?

Answer: Contact tracing volume will be related to the infection rate in the state and will likely be related to increased exposure. DPH will establish communication frequency with the selected contractor to adjust staffing as needed.

50. Revised RFP - Scope of Services 4 This Section describes how the Contractor shall use the Department’s ContaCT system to deliver these services. Will the contractor be responsible to develop training modules for the access and use of this tool, or will this be provided by the Department?

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Answer: Applicants should have experience working with enterprise web-based systems and telephony solutions. The ContaCT system and the telephony system in development will be provided by the state of Connecticut along with training. We expect Contact Tracers to be outfitted with laptop technology and adequate internet access to access ContaCT and use Voice over IP (VoIP) telephony.

51. Revised RFP - Scope of Services 4 This Section describes how the Contractor shall use the Department's ContaCT system to deliver these services. Will the Department provide helpdesk support to Contractor staff for the Microsoft ContaCT system?

Answer: The State of Connecticut is procuring a cloud based VOIP phone system that would allow for a central number to both send and receive calls and distribute incoming calls regionally. While the successful applicant to this RFP would need to work within the system they would not need to develop.

52. Revised RFP - Scope of Services 4 This Section describes how the Contractor shall use the Department's ContaCT system to deliver these services. Will the Department provide helpdesk support for the Microsoft ContaCT system?

See above

53. Revised RFP – Community Resource Coordinators 4 The Section requires contractors to “develop a mechanism for information exchange between the contact tracers and the Community Resource Coordinators.” Does the Department's ContaCT system include functionality to meet this requirement or should proposers include a different IT solution to meet this requirement?

Answer: The selection and oversight of the community resource coordinators is the responsibility of a different state agency. The successful applicant will need to ensure communication between the established community resource coordinators and contact tracers, e.g. referrals and confirmation of engagement by the community resource coordinator.

54. Revised RFP - Instructions to Proposers 5 This Section requires that proposers submit bids via email. However, item 1 of the Standard Terms and Conditions – RFP-19 states that all “RFP documents must be submitted on-line through the DAS Business Network (“BizNet”) and will be accepted as your official submission by DAS. If DAS receives additional submissions of your RFP hand delivered or delivered to the mailing address listed on this RFP, DAS will reject those submittals.” Will the State please clarify how proposers should submit proposal documents.

Answer: Proposals are to be submitted by email to contacttracingproposals@ct.gov

55. Revised RFP - Submittal Requirements 6 The revised RFP indicates a strike out of the Statement of Qualifications (DAS-14). This form is still available on the procurement website. Is this form required as part of the bid submission?

Answer: No, this form is not required to be submitted with bid submission.

56. Revised RFP - Pricing 8 The pricing PDF form released with the original RFP is no longer available to download on the RFP website. Can the State please clarify how proposers should provide cost proposals?

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Answer: The successful applicant will be responsible for coordinating with all local health jurisdictions in Connecticut to ensure statewide coverage for contact tracing. The successful applicant will need to ensure communication between the 64 established local health departments/districts. Please provide your recommendations for estimating the cost for providing this statewide coverage. DPH would like to onboard 700 contact tracers, with as many volunteers as possible. DPH understands there may be need to hire staff to meet goal of 700 contact tracers.

57. Standard Terms and Conditions – RFP-19 1 Item 8, Guaranty Surety, says performance bonds may be required. Will the work under this solicitation require the contractor to obtain a performance bond?

Answer: DPH does not anticipate need for a performance bond.

58. Revised RFP – Scope of Services 4 The Section requires that contractors “shall assign and schedule contact tracers to adequately cover the entire state working in collaboration with local health departments and DPH based on where local health departments fall behind or need additional help to make timely contact with all newly identified cases and their contacts.” Please describe how the Department will communicate to the contractor where to focus resources when local health department fall behind or need additional help? How much advance notice will be provided to the contractor to scale staffing in a timely manner?

Answer: Contact tracing volume will be related to the infection rate in the state and likely will be related to increased exposure. DPH will work with the selected contractor to monitor timely contact tracing adherence, where target response timelines are not being met, DPH will request adjustment as needed.