



CITY OF HOUSTON

Annise D. Parker

Mayor

Lourdes Coss
Chief Procurement Officer
P.O. Box 1562
Houston, Texas 77251-1562

F. 832.393.8755
<http://purchasing.houstontx.gov>

September 24, 2014

SUBJECT: Letter of Clarification No. 2
Bullet-Resistant Body Armor for the Houston Police Department

REFERENCE: Request for Proposal No. S17-T24752

TO: All Prospective Proposers

This Letter of Clarification is issued for the following reason:

• **To revise the above referenced solicitation as follows:**

1. **Extend the Proposal Due Date to Thursday, October 16, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.**

• **The following questions and City of Houston responses are hereby incorporated and made a part of the Request for Proposal:**

1. Are you requesting that 3 samples be submitted with the bid or will they be requested later so that they will be the required customized sample vests?

Answer: Two phases: 1) Submit a sample with the bid. 2) The second phase of the evaluation will require proposers to custom measure and fit up to 3 officers of each product line submitted.

2. The solicitation calls for an 8% MWBE participation. The contract is very specialized and we cannot see where there is an opportunity to use an MWBE subcontractor. It is important that qualified individuals measure, fit and distribute body armor to officers to insure that they get the best protection.

Answer: The current contract has an 8% MWBE goal, utilizing measurement and delivery services. However, on the current bid, HPD has submitted a goal reduction request of 3% that has been approved by the Office of Business Opportunity.

3. 3.2.4 asks for a Uniform shirt carrier for the concealable body armor. Do you want this to be priced as an option for the body armor or do you want it as part of the package for each armor?

Answer: HPD allows officers to purchase carriers. Therefore, this needs to be available for individual officers or other entities to purchase as an option. Please indicate pricing of the shirt carriers in your proposal.

4. 3.4.4 asks for a tactical plate carrier. Is this a separate plate carrier that will be in addition too the tactical vest or are they wanting pockets on the tactical vest that will hold the plates mentioned?

Answer: This is a separate plate carrier that will be in addition to the tactical vest.

5. Can a vendor bid multiple body armor manufacturers on one RFP or do we need to submit a different RFP for each manufacturer of body armor?

Answer: Vendor may bid multiple body armor manufacturers on one proposal; however, not within the same line (i.e, one manufacturer for Level II male concealed, one manufacturer for Level II female concealed, one manufacturer for Level IIIA male concealed, one manufacturer for Level IIIA female concealed, one manufacturer for Level IIIA male tactical, one manufacturer for Level IIIA female tactical, etc.)

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manufacturer for Level IIIA male concealed, one manufacturer for Level IIIA female concealed, one manufacturer for Level IIIA male tactical, one manufacturer for Level IIIA female tactical, etc.)

6. Currently the solicitation asks that a vendor be open from 6:00 am to 4:00 pm. Most retail operations do not open at 6:00 am. Is it possible that this could be changed to 7:00 to 5:00 pm?

Answer: HPD officers are on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week over 3 shifts. The hours set in the solicitation are necessary to accommodate all officers' schedules.

7. Since this solicitation is for the procurement of body armor, does the Pay or Play program apply?

Answer: A Pay or Play Waiver has been approved by the Office of Business Opportunity.

8. There is currently no listed requirement for areal density. Does the City want to include a maximum areal density on the ballistics for any of the armor listed to better define the type of product the City wants to purchase for its Officers?

Answer: No. Material shall be of the latest designs/types and meet the performance standards of the required NIJ, FBI & DEA Protocols.

9. Is the list of accessories specified in section 3.2.10 on page 17 applicable to either tactical or concealable offerings, or both?

Answer: The list contains the most common items for both tactical and concealable. However, Proposer shall indicate in their response the accessories that are available for the body armor they are proposing.

10. Under section 3.3.2 on page 17 the specifications that the Concealable body armor will...."Have complete, unstitched ballistics panels with the exception of tacks at the panel edges". We read this to mean that the City does not desire any concealable panels that has stitching through all layers on the ballistic lay-up but that stitching is allowable as part of a subpanel of the package. If this interpretation is not correct could you please clarify this requirement? There are times when stitching is desirable. For example, it is not possible to build structured female ballistic panels without the use of stitching and, in our experience, structured packages are the most comfortable for female officers.

Answer: Irrespective of how 3.3.2 is interpreted, any vest approved by NIJ will be considered.

11. Will Houston Police Dept. supply a specification for the Plate Carrier referenced in section 3.4.4 on page 17?

Answer: Plate Carrier is to be worn outside the tactical vest. Plate Carrier is to be separate piece of equipment. Plate Carrier is to have shoulder straps and side buckles. Plate Carrier is to meet NIJ/FBI/DEA standards.

12. Section 8.3 on page 20 requires replacement vests in 72 hours. In section 8.2 the contractor will have 30 calendar days to correct problems. Is the 30 days allowed for correcting fitting issues on armor? Additionally, could you please define defective as it relates to this requirement? We would not generally consider a fit issue to constitute a "defective" vest.

Answer: 30 days is appropriate. DELETE sentence referring to replacement in 72 hours.

13. Section 7.1.25 on page 25 asks for (3) customized samples of each vest type being bid. (if requested) – When will we know if this is requested? How much lead time will be provided if these samples are required with the proposal?

Answer: Please refer to answer #1. Lead time will be further discussed with the selected vendor(s). However, we will be looking at expedited delivery.

14. Section 3.4.1 on page 17 – Specifically regarding the FBI requirement. FBI BAPT 4.1 requires new conditioned and conditioned testing against all listed threats. Is it the City's desire that all submissions for tactical armor be tested to the full FBI BAPT 4.1 protocol to include both new condition and conditioned armor

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and all four (4) threats and all nine (9) tests (A-H) listed within the protocol, or just the new condition testing as is typically performed by outside testing labs? If the City is requiring the conditioned testing under the FBI protocol an extension of the closing date is requested. To properly test to the under FBI BAPT 4.1 conditioned requirements it takes approximately 2 weeks to condition the ballistic panels prior to conducting testing, and there won't be enough time to do that testing prior to the current bid submission date. Does the testing need to be done at independent lab – Section 3.4.1 seems to say it does, while 4.1.3 seems to imply not (“if available”).

Answer: The FBI and DEA protocols are not a requirement at the time of the proposal due date. However, it is highly desired. Vendors may be requested to have it tested at an approved NIJ compliant laboratory during Phase II of the evaluation process. The bid deadline has been extended to 10/16/14.

15. Section 3.3.2 Have complete, unstitched ballistics panels with the exception of tacks at the panel edges. Please clarify if you are looking for a uncovered panel to inspect.

Answer: These are Options that should be available for purchase. The following list of pouches are to be included in the bid, however this list is not all inclusive and is not intended to limit vendors on the options and equipment they choose to include.

1. AR 15 Mag pouch
2. Handgun Mag pouch
3. NFDD (flash bang) Pouch
4. Radio pouch
5. Horizontal Administration pouch
6. Shotgun Shell pouch
7. Handcuff pouch

16. Section 3.3.2, Have complete, unstitched ballistics panels with the exception of tacks at the panel edges. Please clarify if you are looking for an uncovered panel to inspect

Answer: No, we are not looking for an unstitched ballistic panel to inspect. Irrespective of how 3.3.2 is interpreted, any vest approved by NIJ will be considered.

17. With today's technology, you are limiting your options, please clarify corner tacks only?

Answer: Irrespective of how 3.3.2 is interpreted, any vest meeting required NIJ specs will be considered. Stitching on vest is allowed as long as vest meets listed NIJ Standards.

18. How would an unstitched ballistic panel be compatible or compliant for a female design?

Answer: Irrespective of how 3.3.2 is interpreted, any vest meeting required NIJ specs will be considered. Stitching on vest is allowed as long as vest meets listed NIJ Standards. Inner ballistic panel pleating and stitching is allowed as long as vest meets required NIJ testing protocol standards.

19. Section 3.4.1 DEA and FBI protocols through approved NIJ compliant laboratories. Are you looking for the current FBI testing 4.1?

Answer: No, please refer to 4.0

20. 3.2.10 Accessory list clarifications. Special Threat trauma plates – for high velocity handguns, or rifle, or both? Plate size?

Answer: NIJ Standard – Options for both plate sizes offered by the vendor.

Answer: Concealable Vest – Soft Trauma Plate - Front 5"x 8 "/ Rear 7"x 10"

Answer: Tactical Carrier – 10"x 12" with the shooters cut with a curve, weighing no more than 3.5 lbs.

21: Patrol Outer Carrier – What color options are preferred? Does pockets need to be Fixed or Removable?

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Answer: Meets HPD standard for dark navy uniform. Pockets-fixed.

22. Side Plates – NIJ level? Size? Max weight?

Answer: Tactical Vest that have ballistic panels in the outer cummerbund threat level III and above. Vendor should bid side plates as indicated with all available threat levels, sizes and weights.

23. Shirt tails – Does HPD expect concealable carriers to have detachable (replaceable) shirt tails rather than having shirt tails sewn in during carrier construction?

Answer: Shirt tails should be sewn in during concealable carrier construction.

24. Concealable carry bags – Bags to be constructed out of what kind of material?

Answer: Strong enough to contain vests for daily usage.

25. 3.3.2 “Complete unstitched ballistic panels with the exception of tacks at the panel edges” Does this mean that there should be no outer stitching that penetrates the permanent protective cover after ballistics panels have been sealed within, or do you mean that no stitches are allowed in the construction of the ballistics panels themselves before the panels are sealed in the permanent protective cover?

Answer: No outer stitching that penetrates the permanent protective cover of the inner ballistic panel. This is not meant to prevent attachment of the inner ballistic panel suspension system to the protective cover. No matter how interpreted, all vests must meet NIJ standard as indicated.

Specific to Tactical Vests (3.4.1 thru 3.4.8)

26. 3.4.1 Due to variations, please identify the specific version of the DEA and the FBI testing protocols that apply here.

Answer: FBI 4.0 / DEA 2009

27. 3.4.3 Shoulder armor inserts – ‘breathable’ or ballistic?

Answer: Ballistic.

28. 3.4.6 Rifle plates – size, cut, multi or single curve? Max allowed weight for NIJ 06 III+ Max allowed weight for NIJ 06 III.

Answer: 10” x 12” Curved / Less than or equal to 3.5 lbs each.

29. 3.4.8 Noting the ballistic cummerbund “for side protection” – does this eliminate HPD requirement for *side edges of the front & back ballistic panels to meet or overlap* – specifically, under the cummerbund of a tactical vest? (See Pg. 19 7.4.1)

Answer: No – for concealable body armor. Yes – for tactical outerwear equipment that includes the cummerbund.

30. Pg. 20: 11.1 *Testing that reveals that a vest failed can require repair, replace, or refund for ALL vests of same Model.* Does this also apply to HPD randomly selecting a vest and conducting a standardized range test? If yes, what are the standardized range tests for Level II and Level IIIA armor?

Answer: No, HPD will not be conducting random standardized range tests. Contractor shall submit annual ballistics testing results from each vest type. All testing will be conducted at an NIJ approved independent lab.

31. Pg. 62: Do you have specific criteria or a model guideline for Contractors to follow when designating an employee to a Safety Impact Position.

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Answer: Refer to the City of Houston Executive Order No. 1-31, Mayor's Drug Detection and Deterrence Procedures for Contractors, found at this link: <http://www.houstontx.gov/execorders/1-31.pdf>

32. After responses are posted, will there be an opportunity to request further clarification of response if needed?

Answer: Questions were due by August 22, 2014. No new questions will be accepted; only further clarification to City's answers of the questions already submitted will be permitted.

33. PAGE 17: Bid "Have a rear ballistics panel that covers the back of the wearer's torso just above the shoulder blades down to just above the waist belt, with sides of the torso covered from both the front and rear panels as customized by HPD to maximize both coverage and comfort. What constitutes "customized by HPD" What type of fit is mandated by the agency? Side coverage?"

Answer: Fit to measure each individual officer is considered "customized by HPD". See Custom Measurement and Fitting, Section 7.1 thru 7.5.

34. Also page 17 Bid. "Have complete, unstitched ballistics panels with the exception of tacks at the panel edges." Fabric pads will have stitching, this will severely restrict the product offerings, is this the intention? To create a restrictive specification?

Answer: ALL VESTS MUST MEET NIJ TESTING PROTOCOL STANDARDS. Inner panel ballistic material stitching is allowed. Suspension tacking for inner panels is allowed.

35. Page 18 – Bid "Contractor's quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) for HPD shall include: 6.1.1 Annual ballistics testing of all vest types supplied to HPD shall begin one year from the date the Director first accepts the vests for use. Contractor shall randomly select a vest from each vest type for testing." "Is this ballistics testing required to be done in NIJ approved laboratory? Or is this in house documentation?"

Answer: NIJ approved independent lab.

36. Page 19 – Bid. "The sizing program shall help reinforce a perfect fit with guarantee of a 12-month precision fit" What does this entail? Guarantee that the vest fits original measurements for one year? The vest should fit to be accepted correct? Most manufacturers offer a 30-60 day fit guarantee.

Answer: Customized fit to meet NIJ standard. 60 day fit guarantee. This is also meant to ensure vests maintain their original dimensions and that contoured vests maintain their original shape / measurements.

37. In Section 3.2.10 it requests accessory options for each piece of body armor. Some of those accessories are for concealable body armor and others are for tactical body armor. Would it be possible to separate the concealable accessories from the tactical accessories?

Answer: The following list is not meant to be all inclusive and all vendor submissions will be considered.

Concealable

1. Impact ST Trauma Plate (Front)
2. Outer Carrier for Patrol
3. Carriers (Inner)
4. Uniform Shirt Carrier
3. Shirt Tails
5. Additional Removable Side/Shoulder Straps
6. Concealable Carry Bags

Tactical

1. Impact ST Trauma Plate
2. Tactical Outer Carrier
3. Side Plates
4. Deltoid Axillary Protectors
5. Modular Pouches and Holsters

38. In section 3.3.2 it states "Have complete, unstitched ballistics panels with the exception of tacks at the panel edges." In level IIIA ballistic packages it is very common for the panels to be stitched. Can that be removed from the RFP?

Answer: Any approved NIJ body armor will be considered.

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39. In section 3.4, can you provide photographs of the vest that the department is currently wearing?

Answer: No photograph is available as we are specifying an item not currently in use.

40. In section 3.3.4 can you provide the specifications on the type of tactical plate carrier that the department is looking for?

Answer: Plate Carrier is to have Shoulder Straps & Side Buckles. The Plate Carrier is to be worn on top of the Tactical Outer Vest. Ballistic Plates are to be 10"x 12" Curved.

When issued, Letter(s) of Clarification shall automatically become a part of the proposal documents and shall supersede any previous specification(s) and/or provision(s) in conflict with the Letter(s) of Clarification. All revisions, responses, and answers incorporated into the Letter(s) of Clarification are collaboratively from both the Strategic Purchasing Division and the applicable City Department(s). It is the responsibility of the proposers to ensure that it has obtained all such letter(s). By submitting a proposal on this project, proposers shall be deemed to have received all Letter(s) of Clarification and to have incorporated them into this proposal.

If you have any questions or if further clarification is needed regarding this Invitation for Bid, please contact me at 832-393-8736.

Thank you,



Murdock Smith III
Senior Procurement Specialist

End of Letter of Clarification No. 2