



CITY OF HOUSTON

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August 21, 2020

Subject: Letter of Clarification No. 1

Reference: Request for Proposals (RFP) No.: S36-T29220 On-Call Planning Services

To All Prospective Respondents:

This Letter of Clarification is issued for the following reason:

- **To answer the following questions:**

1.	Question	Does an MBE have to be headquartered in Houston in order to participate as an MBE?
	Answer:	<i>No, the MBE does not have to be headquartered in Houston in order to participate as an MBE. However, the business must maintain a significant and local presence in Harris, Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto, or Waller County.</i>
2.	Question	Can you please share the attendance list showing a list of the participants?
	Answer:	<i>The Participants Roster has been posted at the Strategic Procurement Division's website for this Request for Proposals.</i>
3.	Question:	I know that it states in the RFP that we need to submit one Original in Blue Ink. Do all of the Sub consultant forms that will be provided need to be originals/blue ink, too?
	Answer:	<i>Part IV, 1.0 Instructions for Submission requirement refers to the Offer and Submittal form submitted with the Technical Proposal.</i>
4.	Question:	Are we able to submit as both a prime and as a subcontractor? If we submit as a subcontractor, is there a maximum number of teams that we are allowed to be on?
	Answer:	<i>Yes, firms may submit as both a prime and a subcontractor. There are no specifications about the maximum number of teams one firm can join.</i>

Council Members: Amy Peck Jerry Davis Abbie Kamin Carolyn Evans-Shabazz Dave Martin Tiffany D. Thomas Greg Travis Karla Cisneros
Robert Gallegos Edward Pollard Martha Castex-Tatum Mike Knox David W. Robinson Michael Kubosh Letitia Plummer Sallie Alcorn

Controller: Chris Brown

5.	Question	Electronic submission only. In light of the ongoing COVID crisis, many cities and agencies (including Houston Public Works) have switched to digital submission of proposals, instead of bound paper documents which require access to specialized equipment in shared public environments. Our employees continue to work safely in isolation at home. Will the City of Houston allow electronic only submission of these proposals in PDF form?
	Answer:	<i>The City is accepting any hard copies of Proposals.</i>
6.	Question:	Work categories. We understand from Item 3.4 (page 7) that proposers may have expertise in some but not all of the Work Categories. Please confirm whether it is acceptable for a firm to propose on only a single Work Category (e.g. 3.4.1 Urban Planning Services).
	Answer:	<i>It is acceptable for a firm to propose only one Category of Service. However, only selected firms that have indicated a Category of Service matching the Task Order will be invited to submit a work plan for the Task Order.</i>
7.	Question:	Work categories and subtasks. As a transportation planning firm, we bring deep subject matter expertise in some (but not all) of the sample tasks/services listed under the 3.4.1 Urban Planning Services work category (page 7). Please confirm whether it is acceptable for firms to propose only on specific tasks (e.g. 3.4.1.7 Creative Placemaking Strategies), or if you would prefer to see teams that can provide all of the services suggested under a given work category.
	Answer:	<i>A firm or team is invited to select the Category of Service(s) that best matches with their expertise, even if their expertise does not cover all examples of services listed in 3.4, Exhibit C: Categories of Service(s) should indicate the proposer's selected categories of service(s). The firm's proposal should reflect the firm's or team's experience in the selected Category of Service(s) that aligns with the example tasks/services. Selected firms/teams can choose to reply to task orders with work plans.</i>
8.	Question:	Financial statements. Item 5.4 (page 14) requests two years of financial statements. Our firm has successfully provided professional services for 50 years, but it is privately held. Will a current bank reference letter from our local banking partner satisfy this requirement to demonstrate financial stability?
	Answer:	<i>A current bank reference letter will not meet the Financial Stability requirement.</i>
9.	Question:	Anti-boycott of Israel. Part VI Item 6 (page 20) requires vendors to certify they do not boycott Israel. Does the City have a required certification form for firms to complete, or will a statement suffice
	Answer:	<i>The Anti-boycott of Israel certification is included in any resulting contract.</i>
10.	Question:	Required forms from subconsultants. The forms in exhibits I and II appear to apply only to prime proposers. The remaining forms could be relevant from all firms. Please clarify which forms you would like from all subconsultants and which the City needs only from prime proposers.
	Answer:	<i>Part VIII - Required Forms to be Submitted with Proposal refers to the proposer responding to the solicitation.</i>
11.	Question:	Do the references need to be from projects where the City was a client?

	Answer:	<i>No, references do not need to be from projects where the City was a client.</i>
12.	Question:	Can the City please clarify its requirements and preferences regarding the submission of proposals from full project teams vs. firms fulfilling one or more (but not all) categories of work requested? The RFP indicates that “Contractors are encouraged to apply for one or more categories in their area of expertise” but also that points will be allotted based on a demonstration that the organizational structure of the team “is compatible for the selected Categories of Service”. Does this indicate that the City is seeking and/or preferring full teams with firms covering all requested disciplines?
	Answer:	<i>Proposals should demonstrate how the firm or team has experience and qualifications related to the selected Categories of Service(s) in the proposal. The RFP does not give preference to firms/teams that select one or multiple Categories of Service(s). Task orders will be sent to selected firms/teams that indicated the Categories of Service(s) related to each task order.</i>
13.	Question:	NGIP Codes – How are these codes pertinent to the applicant?
	Answer:	<i>NIGP Codes are numerical codes assigned to the specific type of commodity/ service being procured; and vendors with corresponding codes listed on their City of Houston's business profile are solicited via an automated system to participate in procurement opportunities.</i>
14.	Question:	<u>24% M/WBE subcontractor goal</u> – If the prime has the M/WBE certification, do they need to partner with firms who have similar certifications to achieve this goal? Please clarify this point further.
	Answer:	<i>A Prime Contractor participation is not counted towards meeting M/WBE goal requirements. Only certified firms through the City of Houston, Office of Business Opportunity can be used toward goal achievement. Contractors listed on the Prime's Schedule of MWBE Participation to meet goal requirement must be certified at the time of solicitation submission.</i>
15.	Question:	How detailed does the Fee Proposal need to be?
	Answer:	<i>The Sample Fee Schedule should be used to list participate specific staff positions and staff members that will be used in each of the selected Categories of Service(s) and in the overall management of the contract. For selected firms/teams, the Fee Schedule should match the staff and hourly rates in the firm's submitted Work Plans.</i>
16.	Question:	In the RFP, it states that the Fee proposal needs to be filled out on Exhibit D; however, Exhibit D is not in the RFP. Where can that document be found?
	Answer:	<i>Exhibit D - Sample Fee Schedule is posted at the Strategic Procurement Division website as a supplemental document.</i>
17.	Question:	For teaming, is the COH planning on assigning teams to projects and teaming up firms with other firms? Or, do we make our team, and if awarded, that certain team will receive a project?
	Answer:	<i>The City will not be creating teams. Firms should create teams before submitting a proposal.</i>
18.	Question:	Will all Task Orders be awarded on a competitive basis?

	Answer:	<i>Task Orders will be awarded to a contractor based on criteria including, but not limited to, cohesiveness, soundness, capacity, ability to perform work timely, and its budgeted Work Plan, to determined best value to the City.</i>
19.	Question:	Is there a minimum or maximum budget amount for task orders?
	Answer:	<i>There is no minimum or maximum budget amount for task orders.</i>
20.	Question:	Will there be external reviewers included on the selection panel?
	Answer:	<i>The evaluation committee consists of City of Houston employees.</i>
21.	Question:	Is it HCDD's intent to distribute work among the selected pool of firms?
	Answer:	<i>Task Orders will be issued for each Category of Service, which requires the selected firm(s) to respond by submitting its proposal to perform the services. The proposal should include deliverables, projected schedule, and staffing at rates per the contract. All firms responding to a particular Task Order may not meet the requirements; and therefore, deemed non-responsive.</i>
22.	Question:	In section 2.12, Can you provide further clarification on supplemental materials that would aid in your decision making process (i.e. project qualifications, firm awards, etc.)?
	Answer:	<i>Section 2.12.Other – The supplemental material provided is left to the discretion of the Proposer.</i>
23.	Question:	In section 2.3.1, the RFP requests that we need to “provide a brief narrative summary and list of past (3 to 5 years) projects.” Do these projects need to be completed within the last 3-5 years, or under-contract?
	Answer:	<i>The list can include completed projects and projects that are in progress. The list should show the proposer's experience and ability to provide on-call planning services.</i>
24.	Question:	Per Sections 2.3 and 2.4 of the RFP, should firms submit for select services (e.g. Urban Planning & Design, Resiliency) or should firms submit as teams to address all select services?
	Answer:	<i>It is left to the discretion of the firm how to submit to meet the requirements of the selected Categories of Service(s).</i>
25.	Question:	Given the stage of this process, and the requirements specified in the RFP, are you requesting specific percentages of work assigned to M/WBE elected firms, or an acknowledgement that M/WBE goals will be met?
	Answer:	<i>The percentage of participation must be specified for each certified firm intended for use to meet the MWBE goal requirement.</i>
26.	Question:	The submittal requirements ask for original signatures in blue ink – is there a possibility we could use digital signatures due to COVID safety concerns and working across offices? - If we cannot, would it at least be possible to use digital signatures on forms required by subcontractors?
	Answer:	<i>Digital signatures are allowed on forms that require subcontractors' signatures.</i>
27.	Question:	Can the prime firm count toward the M/WBE goal?

	Answer:	<i>A Prime Contractor participation is not counted towards meeting M/WBE goal requirements. Only certified firms through the City of Houston, Office of Business Opportunity can be used towards goal achievement. Contractors listed on the Prime's Schedule of MWBE Participation plan to meet goal requirements must be certified at the time of solicitation submission.</i>
28.	Question:	Can you tell us how many firms/ teams you plan on selecting?
	Answer:	<i>The number firms recommend for an award cannot be pre-determined.</i>
29.	Question:	In the preproposal call and RFP there are references to SBE. If a contractor only has a SBE certification, will they count towards the 24% requirement?
	Answer:	<i>SBE certification cannot be used to meet the 24% MWBE Goal requirement. SBE certification is relevant to construction contracts.</i>
30.	Question:	Exhibit II (MWBE Forms) - On Attachment A, can we put TBD for Bid Amount since this is an on call service? The same question for subcontract amount in Attachment D.
	Answer:	<i>Yes, Attachment A, Schedule of MWBE Participation, Total Bid Amount can be designated as TBD, as well as the Subcontract Amount on Attachment D, Contract Compliance MWBE Utilization Report.</i>
31.	Question:	Can you confirm you still require a hard copy response?
	Answer:	<i>The City is accepting any hard copies of Proposals.</i>

When issued, Letter(s) of Clarification shall automatically become a part of the submission 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 Procurement Division and the Housing and Community Development Department.

It is the responsibility of each respondent to obtain any previous Letter(s) of Clarification associated with this solicitation. By submitting a response to this solicitation, respondents shall be deemed to have received all Letter(s) of Clarification and have incorporated them into this solicitation

If you have any questions or if further clarification is needed regarding this Request for Proposals, please contact Valerie Player-Kaufman at (832) 393-8749.

Regards,

DocuSigned by:

Jerry Adams

Jerry Adams

Chief Procurement Officer

c: File T29220

