**COUNTY OF ALAMEDA**

**HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY (HCSA)**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**to  
RFP No. HCSA-900222**

**for**

**COVID-19 Community Testing Services**

**Summary of Q&A Submitted**

**Networking/Bidders Conferences held on December 16 and December 17, 2021**

**Notice to Bidders**

This County of Alameda, HCSA Questions & Answers (Q&A) Document has been electronically issued to potential bidders via e-mail based on the bidders conference sign-in sheets or from other sources. This Q&A Document will also be posted on the General Services Agency (GSA) Contracting Opportunities website located at <https://www.acgov.org/gsa_app/gsa/purchasing/bid_content/contractopportunities.jsp>

**Background Questions**

**Q1. Does this RFP intend to replace the county ceasing work with another provider? Or does this RFP address the need for additional testing (due to anticipated surges)?**

*A1. Alameda County has partnered with vendors to provide COVID-19 testing services since the beginning of the pandemic. Testing contracts procured through the Emergency COVID-19 Testing and Lab Processing Services Vendor Pool, RFQ No. HCSA-900320, will expire 3/31/2022. The list of vendors that have received Board of Supervisors approved contracts through 3/31/22 is available at* [*http://www.acgov.org/board/bos\_calendar/documents/DocsAgendaReg\_11\_16\_21/HEALTH%20CARE%20SERVICES/Regular%20Calendar/HCSA\_321518.pdf*](http://www.acgov.org/board/bos_calendar/documents/DocsAgendaReg_11_16_21/HEALTH%20CARE%20SERVICES/Regular%20Calendar/HCSA_321518.pdf)*. This RFP, No. HCSA-900222, is to award new contracts to provide COVID-19 testing services to address possible surges and support pandemic recovery.*

**Q2. Who are the incumbent prime and/or subcontracting vendors?**

*A2. Please see A1 above.*

**Q3. In the “Background” section, the County states that their eventual goal is to conduct at least 4,000 tests daily. Does this number reflect your current testing volume?**

*A3. This reflects our minimum. Alameda County generally tests at least this number and usually more.*

**Q4. Is there an anticipated minimum number of tests per day/per week?**

*A4. 4,000 per day.*

**Q5. Has the Health department determined how many tests will be needed on a daily basis?**

*A5. Please see A4 above.*

**Q6. How many vendors do you plan to contract with to provide these 4,000 PCR tests per day?**

*A6. The County may award contracts to as many vendors as needed to meet the needs of priority areas/populations Countywide.*

**Q7. Please explain/clarify the difference between “The total amount of the contract(s) awarded for this initial 3-month term for providing the scope of services described in this RFP is anticipated to be approximately $6.5 million” and “the initial awards to bidder(s) may be in the range of $200,000 to $1 million”?**

*A7. The County expects to award contracts to multiple vendors. A contract award to one bidder may be between $200,000 and $1,000,000. The sum of the initial 3-month contracts awarded to multiple vendors is approximately $6.5 million.*

**Q8. RFP states that the initial term shall be 3 months, with an award $200K - $1M. What is the anticipated cost per clinic?**

*A8. A bidder may propose to operate one or more clinics. A cost of a clinic would depend on bidder’s proposed scope and budget for that clinic.*

**Q9. In terms of the contract term, does the RFP mean to say that new RFP, proposals, and negotiations will take place every three months after the initial 3-month period?**

*A9: No. After the initial 3-month contract, subject to the availability of funding, if the County and vendor agree to extend the existing contract, the contract will be amended to add funds and extend the term, with no change to the scope of work.*

**Q10. After the initial 3-month term, if an extension is granted, how long will each subsequent extension period be?**

*A10. Each subsequent extension term will depend on the availability of funding.*

**Q11. How long are the renewal periods anticipated to be if a contract is awarded?**

*A11. Please see A10 above.*

**Q12. Please clarify: if the initial 3-month period is for $200,00 - $1,000,000, then what is the $6,500,000 referring to?**

*A12. Please see A7 above.*

**Q13. What accounts for the large difference between a potential award of $200,000 to $1,000,000?**

*A13. Bidders proposing to provide a larger quantity of services in multiple geographic areas may be awarded a higher contract amount.*

**Q14. What would be the value of the contract for additional months (past the initial 3-months and up to 57-months)?**

A14. *Each subsequent amendment award will depend on the availability of funding.*

**Q15. Is the County open to receiving an additional quote for an RT-PCR Flu A-B/RSV/COVID combination test for symptomatic individuals?**

*A15. Yes, the County is open to proposals for providing different types of COVID-19 tests.*

**Bid Submission & Requirements Questions**

**Q16. Do you anticipate hardcopy bid requirements may change given evolving scenarios with COVID/Omicron?**

*A16. No. Bidders are to submit one original hardcopy bid with original ink signatures, three copies of the original hardcopy, and an electronic copy on disk or USB flash drive. All bids, whether delivered by an employee of Bidder, U.S. Postal Service, courier, or package delivery service, must be received and time stamped at the stated address by 2 pm on January 11, 2022. Please refer to Section IV.S of the RFP, SUBMITTAL OF BIDS and Section IV.T of the RFP, RESPONSE FORMAT for instructions regarding bid submission.*

**Q17. How many references are required?**

*A17. At least three references are required.*

**Q18. RFP states that qualified organizations MAY include CBOs, CHCs, and FQHCs. Are other types of organizations permitted to apply? Will other types of orgs be penalized in the application process?**

*A18. All bidders that meet the Bidder Minimum Qualifications listed on Section I.D. of the RFP, BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS are encouraged to apply.*

**Q19. If we are working with our collection partner on this bid, do we both bid or just one bid?**

*A19: A bid response, whether submitted by a single organization or by a prime bidder with proposed subcontractor(s), must include a “description of proposed services” that addresses the full scope of work described in this RFP. Bidders should use their discretion to propose services that meet the requirements of the RFP.*

**Q20. If we are working with a lab (who provides our registration and reporting software), should we declare them as a subcontractor in our proposal?**

*A20: Lab expenses are not allowed in the proposed budgets.*

**Q21. We are interested in offering testing services as a subcontractor in partnership with a prime local vendor. Can you help us get in touch with interested prime vendors?**

*A21. Please review the Bidders’ Conferences Attendee List posted on GSA website (* [*https://gsa.acgov.org/do-business-with-us/contracting-opportunities/current-bid/?bidid=2450*](https://gsa.acgov.org/do-business-with-us/contracting-opportunities/current-bid/?bidid=2450)*) and the Alameda County SLEB Program website (*[*https://acgov.org/sleb/overview.htm*](https://acgov.org/sleb/overview.htm)*) to identify local organizations for partnership.*

**Q22. I would like to know the process on how to subcontract in providing on-site personnel?**

*A22. Please review the Bidders’ Conferences Attendee List posted on GSA website (* [*https://gsa.acgov.org/do-business-with-us/contracting-opportunities/current-bid/?bidid=2450*](https://gsa.acgov.org/do-business-with-us/contracting-opportunities/current-bid/?bidid=2450)*) to identify and contact organizations interested in this RFP.*

**Scope of Work Questions**

**Q23. Can a vendor bid on providing services at one of the listed settings (stationary testing sites, mobile testing sites, or response driven/mobile testing)? Or is the expectation that an awarded vendor provides services for all three scenarios?**

*A23. A vendor can propose to provide testing services in one, two or three types of sites.*

**Q24. For stationary testing sites: Will the County secure the location for these sites? What are the daily hours required?**

*A24. The County will request and recommend locations based on priority areas for community testing. Hours should take into account accessibility of working peoples/families, offering testing before/after traditional work hours and on weekends.*

**Q25. Will the County secure the location for mobile sites?**

*A25. The County will request and recommend locations for mobile sites and also expects that the vendor will identify mobile sites that meet priority testing goals to be approved by the County.*

**Q26. How will the County identify sites for mobile testing, and how will that be shared with the contractor?**

*A26. The County will identify sites based on need, in alignment with priority testing and public safety goals, including urgent and emergent requests.*

**Q27. Is there a specific requirement for the logistics of mobile sites? For example, will these sites be at 1 location a day, or visiting multiple locations each day?**

*A27. The County seeks mobile services that can be as flexible as possible, including mobile testing for the duration of one day, multiple repeat dates, or multiple sites in one day.*

**Q28. For mobile sites and LTCF teams: is there a guaranteed minimum utilization of these teams (e.g., minimum 3 events per week)?**

*A28. No. Ideally testing teams would provide other services with strike/response teams available as needed.*

**Q29. Are there similar requirements for education and follow-up at mobile sites, as compared to those specified for stationary sites?**

*A29: Yes. All sites are expected to provide education and required COVID-19 follow-up guidance. The County expects mobile testing to be intentional in meeting the cultural and linguistic needs of any targeted community being served.*

**Q30. To support community-based testing sites, will Alameda County make any storage facilities available? If not, can these costs be contracted to a subcontracting vendor?**

*A30. Yes, these costs can be included in the proposed budget.*

**Q31. Which type(s) of tests does the County expect awardees to have available at testing sites?**

*A31. PCR/NAAT tests, but also ideally a broad spectrum of testing options where best applicable with appropriate workflows per Federal, State and County guidance.*

**Q32. On page 9, the RFP notes that the vendor should provide and oversee staff coordinator and training for clinical services associated with testing, including "(5) Provider conducted nasopharyngeal, oropharyngeal, Anterior Nares, or other methods as agreed." Are saliva-based tests acceptable?**

*A32. Experience and training in conducting the stated methods as well as additional methods are welcome.*

**Q33. What turnaround time is required for send-out tests?**

*A33. 48 hours or less is preferred; 72 hours or less is required.*

**Q34. On page 7 of the RFP, in regards to response driven/mobile testing settings, please define "deployed rapidly." Does this mean one- to two-day notice, as defined in the mobile testing sites section on page 6?**

*A34. Ideal deployment turnaround time is 24-48 hours from notification.*

**Q35. What is the current testing model for the County’s population? Are there any specific operational site requirements or expectations other than those stated in the RFP?**

*A35. Alameda County is committed to expanding COVID-19 testing services in priority areas and priority populations in compliance with Federal and State guidance. As stated in Section I.E of the RFP, SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS, and Addendum No. 1, awarded bidder(s) must follow all guidelines set forth by Alameda County Public Health Department with regard to testing and testing sites:*

*Alameda County Testing Criteria:* [*https://covid-19.acgov.org/covid19-assets/docs/testing/testing-guidance-for-alameda-county-2020.08.17.pdf*](https://covid-19.acgov.org/covid19-assets/docs/testing/testing-guidance-for-alameda-county-2020.08.17.pdf)

*Alameda County Testing Site Requirements:* [*https://covid-19.acgov.org/covid19-assets/docs/testing/testing-site-requirements-acphd-2020.03.30.pdf*](https://covid-19.acgov.org/covid19-assets/docs/testing/testing-site-requirements-acphd-2020.03.30.pdf)

**Q36. Will the County provide the ordering physician for testing? Or is the bidder be expected to?**

*A36. The awarded bidder is expected to provide the ordering physician for testing. If a bidder is requesting an exception, they should state so in their bid response under “Exceptions and Clarifications” (Exhibit B Bid Forms, page 4).*

**Q37. Is there a CLIA waiver currently in place with the County?**

*A37. A CLIA (Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments) certificate is required for any lab used to process COVID-19 tests. In some cases, a CLIA waiver is required for administration of rapid tests on site, without the function of an actual lab. The CLIA Waiver must be obtained by the vendor, either through the Department of Health & Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) or the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).*

**Q38. On page 10 [of the RFP], a requirement notes that the vendor must provide outreach and health education around COVID-19, including "(6) Vaccine, boosters, 3rd dose, monoclonal antibody treatment" etc. Must the vendor provide actual vaccines/treatments or rather share educational information about their availability?**

*A38. This RFP is for testing services. The awarded bidder(s) shall provide outreach and education on COVID-19 follow-up care, vaccines, and treatments in an accessible manner for populations being served. When possible and appropriate, co-location of vaccination or other opportunities may be offered through separate vendors/contracts.*

**Q39. In regards to providing culturally competent services and "language capacity," what specific languages must be supported?**

*A39. All Alameda County threshold languages (English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Farsi, Korean, Tagalog), as well as any language spoken by a population served, including Mam, Arabic, Tigrinya, Pacific Islander/Polynesian languages. Language support should be available in accessible ways, including non-digital interfaces, phone, in-person translation etc.*

**Q40. Can you provide a list of languages and cultures outside of those listed on page 12 of the RFP, under #2 Bidder Qualifications?  Specifically, languages outside of English and Spanish.**

*A40. Please see A39 above.*

**Budget Questions**

**Q41. Are expenses for lab services allowable in the proposed program budget?**

*A41. Lab expenses are not allowed in the proposed budgets. Contracted vendors must utilize the State’s lab services vendors (Color/Perkin Elmer) and additional labs provided by the County. Additionally, the County will coordinate appropriate lab services to meet the needs of vendors providing mobile or response testing. To this end, the County is considering a separate procurement for COVID-19 lab processing services. Should the opportunity become available, the County will notify vendors of the opportunity via separate outreach.*

**Q42. Could you clarify if the lab cost is separately covered by the County and is not a cost that the tester should have in the submitted budget?**

*A42. Please see A41 above.*

**Q43. What kinds of lab costs will be allowable in the proposed budget? If any.**

*A43. Please see A41 above.*

**Q44. We request clarification regarding billing/invoicing – will the winning vendor(s) be expected to bill insurance?**

*A44. The County is committed to providing community testing services accessible for all residents. Asking for documentation and insurance information is at times a barrier. Therefore, in general, we do not include insurance billing for testing at this time. As an exception, in Long Term Care Facility (LTCF) settings, billing insurance may be required on a case by case basis. Please refer to Section I.C. of the RFP, SCOPE OF WORK, page 11.*

**Q45. How will the insurance billing piece work? Should bidders estimate insurance collection rates in the bid, and assume the County's award will make up the rest of the program budget? Is there a minimum collection rate you expect contractors to achieve?**

*A45: Please see A44 above.*

**Q46. Regarding the budget: a. Will Alameda County be paying for additional expenses on top of any reimbursement we collect? For example, RFP budget line items for additional site set-up costs, additional costs for on-site testing teams, in office support staff, technology, operating expenses, and indirect expenses.**

*A46. The RFP supports the programmatic and operational costs of proposed testing programs. Reimbursement for services through insurance billing is currently discouraged in order to reduce barriers to testing.*

**Q47. Does the County consider outreach expenses, in-office support staff, on-site admin staff, and technology to be billable operating expenses under this RFP?**

*A47. Where appropriate to the scope and size of the operation, yes.*

**Q48. On page 11, the RFP notes that "the funds awarded by any contract resulting from this RFP are to cover costs not reimbursable through other mechanisms" under additional specifications for response driven/mobile COVID-19 testing services. Are these funds applicable to "(3) stationary testing sites," "(4) mobile testing services," and/or all other required modes of service delivery?**

*A48. Yes, all required modes.*