**COUNTY OF ALAMEDA**

**HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY (HCSA)**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (Q&A) V2

**to
RFP No. HCSA-900522**

**for**

**COVID-19 Lab Processing Services**

**Summary of Q&A Submitted by February 23, 2022**

**Networking Virtual/Bidders Conferences held on February 22, 2022 and February 23, 2022**

**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>

**This Q&A V2 replaces the original Q&A posted on March 4, 2022 in its entirety. Q&A no. 65 to 68 are newly added.**

**Background Questions**

**Q1. Is it a pool or one vendor for award?**

*A1. Under this Request for Proposal (RFP), the County intends to award an initial 2.5 months contract(s) for the approximate term of April 15, 2022-June 30, 2022 (with an option to renew or extend up to an additional 57.5 months) to the Bidder(s) selected as the most responsible Bidder(s) whose response(s) conform(s) to the RFP and meets the County’s requirements.*

**Q2. Do you have any insight regarding how many contracts will be awarded a contract on this RFP? It indicates that the total PCR tests to be processed is at least 4,000 per day. If 1 lab is selected the number to be processed is at least 4,000 per day. If 10 labs are selected, then the volume may only be “at least 400 tests per day”. Any insight you can provide regarding the number of labs to be selected (therefore the approximate number of tests to PCR process per day) would be helpful. Even providing an anticipated range would be helpful (example 1 to 3).**

*A2. Please see A1 above. Additionally, as stated in Addendum No.1, the County seeks laboratory services from a lab(s) to process approximately 50-500 molecular COVID-19 tests per day conducted by testing providers on behalf of the County. The number of tests the lab may process per day may fluctuate by week/month depending on varied testing needs and future surges. During surges, the lab(s) must be able to accommodate approximately 1,000 molecular COVID-19 tests per day without significant impact to workflow and timelines.*

**Q3. What is the expected initial volume for testing and what is the max expected testing volume?**

*A3. Please see A2 above.*

**Q4. We understand the total target test per day is 4K for the County, but what is the expected daily/weekly volume for each vendor?**

*A4. Please see A2 above.*

**Q5. Could you please provide clarity on the requirement “minimum number of tests the Bidder has capacity to process per day”? Is this the number of tests required to keep the lab open?**

*A5. Please see A2 above.*

**Q6. How many sites will each vendor be expected to support and volume per site?**

*A6. The County will identify sites based on testing needs and seeks lab vendor(s) that can be as flexible as possible. Awarded Bidder(s) must have the capacity to process approximately 50-500 molecular COVID-19 tests per day conducted by testing providers on behalf of the County. The number of tests the lab may process per day may fluctuate by week/month depending on varied testing needs and future surges. During surges, the lab(s) must be able to accommodate approximately 1,000 molecular COVID-19 tests per day without significant impact to workflow and timelines. Bidders may propose the number of sites they can support that aligns with the County’s need for lab (s) to process the aforementioned number of tests per day.*

**Q7. Can the County please provide a list of locations in which Contractor will need to provide services? What are the hours of operation *for each location?***

*A7. The County expects Awarded Bidder(s) to process COVID-19 tests at their laboratory site/location. For locations and hours of current testing vendors, please visit Alameda County COVID-19 website -Community Testing site locations at* [*https://covid-19.acgov.org/testing.page?#Community*](https://covid-19.acgov.org/testing.page#Community)

**Q8. Is the Contractor expected to provide any on-site staffing services for the community testing providers? If so, what on-site services are expected?**

*A8. Awarded Bidder(s) may provide on-site staffing but is not expected to.*

**Q9. Can the County please explain what type of alternative mechanisms would be acceptable for meeting the needs of low barrier testing, receiving results/information, and meeting the accessibility needs of prioritized communities?**

*A9. Bidders should use their discretion to describe their experience utilizing a technological platform and/or other mechanism(s) to communicate test registration/results information to individuals tested who have limited English proficiency, lack of access to technology, phones, or stable addresses, or other access barriers.*

**Q10. Does Alameda County have any experience with effective means of delivering results to individuals without phones, internet access, or a home address? If so, can those be shared?**

*A10. Please see A9 above.*

**Q11. Can the bidder assume that field collection staff will have devices with reliable internet access when they are conducting tests?**

*A11. Yes. These costs may be included in the proposed budget.*

**Q12. Can a bid be submitted by a consortium, i.e. more than one beneficiary?**

*A12. As specified in Section I.D.3 of the RFP, BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS, Prime Bidders may propose subcontractors in the bid response as part of the proposed scope of services; subcontractors are subject to County approval if the Prime Bidder is awarded a contract. Prime Bidders must meet the Bidder Minimum Qualifications in order to be considered for contract award. Prime Bidders may not use the experience of proposed subcontractors and/or partners to meet the Bidder Minimum Qualifications.*

**Q13. Which labs or other organizations are currently fulfilling these services for Alameda County?**

*A13. Currently, County COVID-19 testing providers utilize Alameda County Public Health Lab, Fulgent Genetics, Berkeley IGI, Quest Diagnostics, and Valencia Lab.*

**Q14. Are any other organizations providing molecular laboratory COVID-19 testing services to Alameda County beyond the Valencia Lab?**

*A14. Please see A13 above.*

**Bid Submission & Requirements Questions**

**Q15. The bidder holds a California Clinical and Public Health Laboratory License, is this the same as being certified by the California State Laboratory Field Services?**

*A15. Yes, they are the same. As stated in Section I.D of the RFP, BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS, a bidder MUST provide copies of both the California State Laboratory Field Services (LFS) and Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certification materials to verify stated; documents must be clearly identified within bid response packet. Bidders must provide the required documentation in order for their bid response to be deemed complete. Incomplete bid submissions may be rejected prior to evaluation.*

**Q16. Can the required flash drive and three hard copies be submitted via FedEx, UPS, or certified mail?**

*A16. Yes. Please refer to Section IV.S of the RFP, SUBMITTAL OF BIDS for instructions regarding bid submission.*

**Q17. Please confirm 3/14/2022 at 2:00 PM PST as submittal deadline?**

*A17. Yes, please refer to Section II. in the RFP, CALENDAR OF EVENTS for specific dates.*

**Q18. Are all of the current bid docs, and addendum included within the single link shared within the bidders’ conference?**

*A18. Yes. All documents related to the RFP are posted at* [*https://gsa.acgov.org/do-business-with-us/contracting-opportunities/current-bid/?bidid=2486*](https://gsa.acgov.org/do-business-with-us/contracting-opportunities/current-bid/?bidid=2486)

**Q19. Does filling out information via Google docs/Word docs qualify as typewritten? Or must all Exhibits be filled out by hand (in ink) or use a typewriter?**

*A19. As per the first bullet on page 1 of Exhibit A, Bidders are to submit one original hard copy bid (Exhibit A-Bid Response Packet including Additional Required Documentation), with original ink signatures, plus three copies and one electronic copy of the bid in PDF (with OCR preferred). In other words, the original hardcopy bid must include original ink signatures where signatures are required. The rest of the content on pages that require signature may be typewritten. Additionally, see Section IV.S.3. of the RFP, SUBMITTAL OF BIDS for additional instructions.*

**Q20. Any other requirements that are mandated?**

*A20. The RFP and Addendum No. 1 include all requirements.*

**Q21. Have the contractor requirements changed in any way as listed within your RFP?**

*A21. Please see A20 above.*

**Q22. The bidder qualifications state that “Bidder must be a laboratory that demonstrates at least one year of experience providing COVID-19 lab processing services to a CBO, CHC, or FQHC”. Because COVID is only two years old, many labs that have not been in operation for that long. Most of the bidder’s staff members have been working in COVID since the beginning of the pandemic, but the laboratory was operated for less than 1 year. Is this a dealbreaker or can bidder still submit a proposal for this RFP**

*A22.*   *To be eligible to participate in this RFP, Bidder(s) must meet the Bidder Qualifications as outlined in Section I.D. of the RFP, BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS. All Bidders who meet the Bidder Minimum Qualifications are encouraged to apply. Bidders that do not comply with the requirements, and /or submit incomplete bid packages, shall be subject to disqualification and their bids rejected in total.*

**Q23. Would a school district that offered testing services to the surrounding community qualify as a Community Based Organization (CBO)? If not, is this failure to meet this requirement grounds for immediate disqualification of the bidder?**

*A23. As stated in Addendum No. 1, a Community-Based Organization (CBO) is any agency or organization that provides services to the community. For example, CBOs include non-profits (501-c3) providing direct participant services to residents of Alameda County. Additionally, see A22 above.*

**Q24. What kind of organizations count as a CBO? Are schools included in this list?**

*A24. Please see A23 above.*

**Q25. Does the bid require to fulfill the entire capacity needs or is partial accepted?**

*A25. A bid response must include a “Description of the Proposed Services” that addresses the full scope of work as described in the RFP and Addendum No. 1.*

**Scope of Work Questions**

**Q26. For internet/phone lacking patients, are test results available at previous/current location acceptable?**

## *A26. Awarded Bidder(s) may communicate test results to previous and/or current locations if Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) consent is obtained in advance.*

**Q27. Will the contractors be collecting patient insurance information and by what method will this information be shared with the lab services contractor?**

*A27. 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 lab processing services.*

**Q28. Is our web application for registering and resulting considered a subcontractor as it is our only product line?**

*A28. See A12 above.*

**Q29. Are there any specific app/cloud security details to which contractors should be aware?**

*A29. Yes. All apps used must comply with HIPAA regulations of protecting the privacy and security of electronic protected health information. Information on HIPAA and cloud computing information is available at the US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Information Privacy website at* [*https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html*](https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html) *and* [*https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/health-information-technology/cloud-computing/index.html*](https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/health-information-technology/cloud-computing/index.html)

**Q30. Can we have a copy of the HL7 request and all fields required?**

*A30. Bidders may review the California Reportable Disease Information Exchange (CalREDIE) website at* [*https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/CalREDIE-ELR.aspx*](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/CalREDIE-ELR.aspx)*.*

**Q31. In RFP C. Scope Item 7, requires testing data and patient demographics through HL-7 messaging to CALREDIE, shouldn’t this include CSV files as CALREDIE accept this as well?**

*A31. Please see A30 above.*

**Q32. Will contractor provide swabs and tubes?**

*A32. These costs may be included in the bidder’s proposed budget.*

**Q33. What is the turnaround time to deploy mobile testing or outbreak response testing/ collections?**

*A33. Ideal deployment turnaround time is 24-48 hours from notification.*

**Q34. What vendors are currently being used for transportation of COVID-19 tests to the existing labs?**

*A34. Testing sites use a variety of transportation vendors based on cost, accessibility, flexibility and their own preference.*

**Q35. Is the contractor required to collect the samples in Alameda County? Or just processing the lab testing after receiving the samples?**

*A35. Awarded Bidder(s) is responsible to collect testing samples via courier or other transportation conducted by testing vendors.*

**Q36. Does the scope of work require the laboratory to collect the specimens in the field, or is the scope of work primarily for courier management, in-lab PCR test processing, and test result reporting (with the specimen collection performed by others)?**

*A36. No, the scope of work does not require awarded bidder (s) to collect specimens in the field. Awarded Bidder(s) will use courier or other transportation mediums to receive testing samples conducted by County COVID-19 testing providers.*

**Q37. Can you provide an approximate number of test sites throughout the County will be participating so we can plan on the approximate number of courier pick-up points we will be gathering per day for transport of test materials to the lab for PCR processing?**

*A37. The number of participating test sites will vary over time. The current estimate is approximately 5-10 sites per week and subject to change. Additionally, see A7 above.*

**Q38. Will the PCR processing lab be supplying swabs, collection tubes, barcode labels and bio-bags; or are such supplies the responsibility of the “testing providers working on behalf of the County”?**

*A38. Awarded Bidder(s) from this RFP would provide these supplies, not the testing providers.*

**Q39. Will the bidder be responsible for collecting the appropriate consent and waivers from each testing subject? Or will that be the responsibility of the testing site?**

*A39. Awarded Bidder(s) will work with the testing vendor and ACPHD to develop and disseminate appropriate materials.*

**Q40. What kind of support will the County be providing?**

*A40. The County will provide financial reimbursement for lab processing services, as well as guidance and coordination with testing providers.*

**Q41. Will the bidder be allowed to deliver supplies to each individual testing location? Or will Alameda County maintain a central location with testing supply inventory that can then be distributed to the testing sites?**

*A41. Awarded Bidder(s) will be required to deliver supplies directly to assigned testing vendors located in a variety location in Alameda County. The County will not maintain a central location with testing supply inventory that can be distributed to the testing sites. As per Addendum No.1, Awarded Bidder(s) shall provide molecular lab processing services for approximately 50-500 COVID-19 molecular tests (non-point of care) submitted by ACPHD’s Laboratory, ACPHD-designated facilities, and/or County contracted testing vendors at costs not-to -exceed the contracted allocation, including provision of test collection kits and all required materials to administer tests, transportation medium and courier fees as necessary.*

**Q42. Will any contracts be for full service, to include providing collection services? If not, will Alameda County provide the collection services?**

*A42. Per Addendum No.1, Awarded Bidder (s) will be expected to provide test collection kits and all required materials to administer tests, process the testing sample, and send the test results to the individual tested as well as report results back to ACPHD Testing Team, ACPHD COVID Division, ACPHD Laboratory, and/or the ACPHD- designated facility or testing vendor that submitted the tests. Awarded Bidder (s) must also provide registration and results platform, test accessibility, and test registration/results information in accessible ways to individuals tested who may have limited English proficiency, lack of access to technology or phones, low literacy, and/or other access barriers. See also A35 and A36 above.*

**Q43. Will Alameda County provide the ordering healthcare provide(s)?**

*A43. The ordering provider varies based on population tested and relevant Health Orders.*

**Q44. Will you want all samples to get sequenced, and will the reporting be on the HL7 or another file?**

*A44. If possible, sequencing would be welcomed.*

**Q45. What are the TATs for mobile testing site deployment/setup and outbreak?**

*A45. The turnaround time for deployment should be 24-48 hours.*

**Q46. What hours and requirements are needed for a stationary site?**

*A46. Hours and requirements for a stationary testing site vary by site.*

**Q47. Can the County please confirm that a requisition would accompany each patient specimen in order for the Contractor to perform testing?**

*A47. These lab services are for COVID-19 community testing; requisition forms may not be included.*

**Q48. As a clinical testing laboratory, we have standard methods for ordering procedures. Can the County please clarify what type of changes to these methods may be required?**

*A48. The County cannot clarify without knowing what methods labs utilize.*

**Q49. Will the County be providing an authorized provider for test ordering?**

*A49. See A43 above.*

**Q50. Will the vendor provide staff training?**

*A50. Awarded Bidder(s) is responsible for training staff.*

**Q51. For surveillance testing, will non-EUA approved Antigen kits, and for confirmatory testing will EUA approved rtPCR kits suffice?**

*A51. No. The County will utilize Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) approved COVID-19 tests.*

**Q52. RFP have said the County need non-English language assistance. Will a vendor employee who can assist non-English speaking patients, suffice?**

*A52. Language support should be available in accessible ways, including non-digital interfaces, phone, in-person translation, etc.*

**Q53. The testing services take place in a variety of settings, including but not limited to stationary community testing sites, mobile testing sites, mobile/response testing in congregate living and working facilities. Is there any information on how many of each will be needed or is it just something that needs to be offered at this time?**

*A53. These lab services will be prioritized at mobile, and response-driven COVID-19 testing events. See also A7 and A37.*

**Q54. If the bidder can provide staff at the testing sites access to test results, can bidder reply upon them to provide results to patients who otherwise cannot be contacted via phone, email, etc.? To clarify, can we inform individuals that they can return to the testing site the following day to retrieve their results from a staff member there?**

*A54. Bidder(s) may propose their best practices employed to reach individuals tested with barriers to follow up communication.*

**Q55. It was unclear whether there is a requirement for the laboratory to communicate directly with the patient for registration and resulting, or is it sufficient to communicate with physicians who oversee these patients?**

*A55. Awarded Bidder(s) must communicate test result information, including isolation & quarantine information directly to the individual(s) tested.*

**Budget Questions**

**Q56. RFP says to provide services at a cost within “the allocation”. What is that allocation?**

*A56. The allocation is the total budget approved by the County for the initial 2.5-month contract.*

**Q57. RFP states that the bidder should provide “all required materials to administer tests”. Does that include PPE, or internet-connected devices for entering orders?**

*A57. Bidders should use their discretion when preparing a lab processing per test fee. As stated in Exhibit B -Budget Form of the RFP, page 1, the budget information presented in the budget table and budget narrative combined shall include only the following allowable costs: Lab processing per test fee (may include shipping to and from site, test kit, lab processing, portal development & management). Disallowed costs include start-up costs, insurance fees, indirect, incentives, food, and vehicles.*

**Q58. For the Budget Table, do we break out all the allowable costs? Per site type and collection type requirements (outbreak, mobile, stationary site, and sequencing per all those options)? What about mobile testing vehicles?**

*A58. Please see A57 above.*

**Q59. Will the bidder be responsible for all costs associated with transporting the samples from the collection site to the laboratory? Is so, does the bidder have the option to select the courier, or are those selected by the collection sites? Does the delivery location need to be within Alameda County?**

*A59. Bidder may include transport/shipping fees to and from the site within their lab processing per test fee. There are no delivery location requirements.*

**Q60. What does the County consider to be acceptable proof of delivery? Would receipt of test results by the County be acceptable proof of delivery?**

*A60. Yes, a receipt of test results would suffice as proof of delivery.*

**Q61. If Contractor has their own standardized invoice, would the County request that a different invoice be used?**

*A61. Subject to the County’s prior approval, Awarded Bidder(s) may be allowed to use their invoice template.*

**Q62. Can the lab processing cost be broken down into subcomponents (shipping, lab processing, software costs)?**

*A62. Yes, please see Exhibit B -Budget Form of the RFP, page 1.*

**Q63. Do you only want a price per test for stationary testing site, mobile, outbreak and sequencing with no other cost or price associated?**

*A63. Bidders should use their discretion when preparing the proposed budget. Additionally, see A57 above.*

**Q64. Whether billing mode is insurance-based billing or cash billing?**

*A64. See A27 above.*

**Questions and Answers newly added in Q&A V2**

**Q65. Would county prefer testing each sample individually or as pooled samples, say 10-20 samples pooled in a single tube.**

*A65. The County requires testing each sample individually.*

**Q66. Would it be possible to see previous proposal of the successful bidders?**

*A66. This is a new RFP for new contract award(s). Public Records from other previous procurements are available to the public in accordance with the California Public Records Act (CPRA). A record may be withheld if it is exempt under applicable laws. Copies of previous successful bids may be requested by filling out the online Public Records Request Form:* [*https://gsa.acgov.org/about-gsa/contact-us/public-records-request/*](https://gsa.acgov.org/about-gsa/contact-us/public-records-request/)

**Q67. Would the clinical lab be only responsible for COVID-19 molecular testing but not sample collecting?**

*A67. See A35 above.*

**Q68. If it's possible to tell the price range per case that county may consider as a good bid?**

*A68. The County Selection Committee will evaluate each proposal meeting the qualifications set forth in this RFP. Cost and Budget Narrative is one of the evaluation criteria. Please refer to the RFP, Section III.H. COUNTY PROCEDURES, TERMS AND CONDITIONS, EVALUATION CRITERIA/SELECTION COMMITTEE for all evaluation criteria and their respective weights.*