



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

July 12, 2022

ADDENDUM # 1

**Local Agency Special Supplemental Nutrition Education
Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and Family
Visiting Program (RIFVP)**

RFP # 2022RIDOH006

NOTICE TO VENDORS:

Attached are questions and answers for the above-mentioned RFP.

1. This is an extremely important RFP that impacts the neediest children and families in the State. The timetable, particularly with the July 4th holiday, means there are very few business days to respond. We respectfully request a deadline extension of at least another week (Wednesday, July 27).

Answer: Proposals received after the due date and time will not be considered.

2. If an applicant chooses to do two Family Visiting Programs, would that be two separate applications?

Answer: One application

3. Are letters of support allowed?

Answer: Please do not include letters of support.

4. Can you share with us any information or guidance available for what the Medicaid billing guidelines are for the PAT? What is reimbursable through RI Medicaid for that particular model?

Answer: Rates for PAT are in the development stage. Per visit rates will be established for all three evidence-based models. The capacity to bill Medicaid will begin with HFA and NFP and expand to PAT. We expect the rates to be available by December 2022.

5. The "Application Sequence" is different on page 31, 32, and page 35. Could you clarify?

Answer: An abstract is not required, although it was listed on page 35.

6. Appendix A - Proposal Checklist (page 35) seems to indicate that the Proposal Checklist is the first page before the Applicant Information Form. Is it?

Answer: It is not.

7. Is an abstract required? If so, what are the parameters (word limits, details to be included, etc.)?

Answer: Abstract is not required.

8. Looking at the total award (\$6,150,000) the total number of families/slots served (1,395 families/slots), it appears that the average award per family/slot is, roughly, \$4,400. Is this how the Department sees it?

Answer: Cost per family differs by model. \$6,150,000 is the total award that the State is making available.

9. With a minimum hourly rate of \$22 and adjusting this upwards for employees with more experience, will the total funding be adequate to cover all required expenses (salaries plus taxes, fringe, supervision, telephones, office supplies, etc.)?

Answer: Yes, we expect the funding to be adequate.

10. The RFP provides minimum hourly rates for two positions - Family Visitor and Supervisor. Are other positions (e.g., Project Director) allowed? If so, are these rates unrestricted?

Answer: Yes other positions are allowed and rates are unrestricted.

11. If the abstract is required, is it counted as part of the narrative section? If so, which section? In other words, does it count towards the page limits given to the sections or is it considered separate?

Answer: Abstract is not required.

12. HFA Services are part of a continuum of care with other family visiting programs (such as Early Intervention, First Connections, Safe Care) to provide a range of services ensuring the health and wellbeing of at-risk families with children. These staff are similarly qualified and experienced in providing comparable levels of care. In this unprecedented labor market, unbalanced rate structures among similarly qualified professionals will cause service disruptions and the potential exiting of these professionals from the programs and/or the state. How are RIDOH and EOHHS actively coordinating together to create rate structures to retain professionals across these braided programs? What specific measures have been or will be taken to ensure parity for these professionals and to avoid disruptions in care for vulnerable families?

Answer: Be assured RIDOH and EOHHS are coordinating.

13. Given that the scoring requires a description of a variety of program/agency policies, will appendices/attachments be accepted for those, or must that content be included in the 12 pages of the work plan?

Answer: In WIC and Family Visiting, a brief description is allowed, and attachments are acceptable if the bidder thinks it is necessary.

14. In Appendix B we are asked to submit the names of the Executive Director, Finance/Accounting Director, and Project Manager. North Kingstown Parents As Teachers is affiliated with the North Kingstown School Department. Would these positions be from the school department or are you looking for the people directly involved with this proposal?

Answer: RIDOH cannot answer this question for specific LIAs.

15. Is the applicant name the North Kingstown Parents As Teachers or a particular person?

Answer: RIDOH cannot answer this question for specific LIAs.

16. PAT services are free of charge. Do we need to have the ability to bill Medicaid?

Answer: Agencies will be expected to bill Medicaid. If LIAs are currently unable to bill Medicaid currently, they must begin the process to be able to bill Medicaid. Any costs will not be passed onto families.

17. Will there be an opportunity to explain our staff turnover? Prior to two years ago, we had no staff turnover for 10 years. It would be misleading to simply check a box indicating a percentage of turnover which is an anomaly.

Answer: Yes, you can provide an explanation.

18. We currently service 73 families in various cities throughout Rhode Island. Due to the pandemic, we conducted virtual visits in 9 cities that are not highlighted as targeted cities in the RFP. What will happen with our families outside of the 11 identified cities?

Answer: You will still be able to serve those families.

19. Are MOUs required for submission?

Answer: No.

20. How much can our site apply for within this grant?

Answer: In WIC, there is not a limit and must be reasonable for forecasted caseload. For Family Visiting, please apply for a specific number of slots in communities. Applications should be based on the number of slots an agency is applying to provide.

21. What does Washington County mean? Why is Washington County listed this way in the RFP while the other towns and cities are listed individually?

Answer: In WIC this area is under served, around the Narragansett area. For the Family Visiting Program, Washington County was designated a community of need in the 2020 MIECHV Needs Assessment.

22. There are 350 family slots with an additional 140 PAT slots to be awarded to 6 agencies. How will these slots be distributed?

Answer: Please see the table on page 18. 350 PAT slots are available for up to five contract periods through this procurement process. An additional 140 PAT slots are available from October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023 only.

23. What assistance will there be to build capacity within each agency?

Answer: The State Agency provides technical assistance to local programs in all areas of the WIC Program and Family Visiting.

24. When we attach the Proposal Checklist (Appendix A), is this form to be left blank for DOH to check off? Or should we check off the boxes to indicate the items are attached?

Answer: The form is for the bidder to check off.

25. Is it okay to reproduce the Applicant Entity Information Form and the Budget Table Form when submitting with our proposal? If we reproduce, it will not have the DOH logo on it.

Answer: Yes.

26. Any chance that the due date get changed at all? Normally, we get the RFP in March which gives us plenty of time. This time we didn't get it until June which only gives us 1 month to complete it.

Answer: No, we cannot change the date.

27. In looking through the RFP, it doesn't appear that we need to get letters of support. Is this correct?

Answer: You do not need letters of support.

28. Are we assuming if we are an agency that currently has the program that we are asking for the same amount of money considering the huge increase in salaries being required?

Answer: Submit a budget that the agency is reasonable to support the program(s) the agency is applying for.

29. Are we assuming the same number of slots - due to the rate increase for staff salary if my amount is the same, I can't afford as many staff and can't then have as many slots?

Answer: For Family Visiting, please see the family slot allocation by model and community on pp 18-19.

30. How is the role out of salary increases working? Will it be collaborated with timing of EI increases being given? This will create a huge inequity in pay for some staff and we want to ensure we are not causing a higher turnover in some of our other programs so timing is important.

Answer: Family Visiting agencies will have to implement the wage requirements in contracts starting October 1, 2022.

31. If an agency is applying for both the WIC and RI Family Home Visiting Program, should the narrative and budgets be developed separately for each program or jointly?

Answer: Yes separately, but they can reference each other.

32. How are "surrounding areas" defined? Is it by the agency's catchment area or by the location of adjacent city/town boundary lines? Specifically, which of the 11 identified high-need communities would serve the cities and towns of East Providence, Bristol, Warren, Barrington, Little Compton, Tiverton, Portsmouth, Middletown and Jamestown?

Answer: There is no defined list of "surrounding areas" for the family visiting program. Applicants may list the surrounding communities that they would like to serve. RIDOH will work with awarded agencies to ensure that all communities have family visiting services.

33. What is the definition of "qualified vendor" in the 11 high risk communities? Does it mean the vendor has a physical location in that community or has programs already serving clients in that community?

Answer: The applicant must be located in at least one of the communities in which it is applying to provide services. Community-based, public, non-profit organizations or public, not-for-profit school districts are eligible to apply to provide Family Visiting programs.

34. On Page 7, it says "Should Medicaid funds not be available, RIDOH may need to reduce contract awards and reduce family slots." Page 17 says additional funding to support LIAs will come from Medicaid. Do the estimated slots by community on page 17 already presume the use of Medicaid funding?

Answer: The estimated slots by community consider Medicaid funding and will be in addition to the funding offered by RIDOH to offset cost of providing family visiting services.

35. In the past, due to pandemic, we needed to make an appointment to enter the RIDOH building. Should we make an appointment to drop off the documents in person or will the building be accessible?

Answer: You may drop applications off with the Capitol Police located on the 1st floor of the RI Department of Health, 3 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI. Applications must be received by the submission deadline. Late submissions will not be considered.

36. Language in the document describing a Family Visitor's role is similar to language describing a Community Health Worker's position. Will Family Visiting staff be required to become certified Community Health Workers?

Answer: Not at time of application. RIDOH reserves the right to work with family visiting agencies to support appropriate family visitors in becoming certified community health workers.

37. What will happen to families we currently serve in an area if that area does to another provider? Will we be allowed to complete services, or will the family need to transfer?

Answer: Awarded LIAs will be able to continue to serve families currently enrolled in any community.

38. Due to the reallocation of slots as a result of the new needs assessment, some communities are no longer represented in the allotted slots. If a program is funded for X number of slots, applies, and is awarded the reduced number, they will be over-enrolled with no staff capacity to serve the over-enrolled families. Is there a plan to redistribute the caseloads in a way that will not significantly impact service delivery for families?

Answer: Funding will be provided with an appropriate family to family visitor ratio and considers families currently enrolled in communities not identified as a high-need community in the 2020 MIECHV Needs Assessment. RIDOH will work with awarded LIAs to serve families in current programs and/or link them to similar supportive services.

39. What is the funding source for the additional PAT slots from 10/1/22 to 12/31/23? Is it a Preschool Development Grant?

Answer: Yes.

40. If your program is scheduled for an HFA model, re-accreditation site visit there is a cost that is normally included in the budget year that the visit is scheduled. Should this cost be included in the RFP budget as a one-time cost if your program has a visit scheduled for 2023?

Answer: Yes.

41. Does an agency applying for both programs (WIC, one or more FV type programs?) need to complete two/three applications (in their entirety) or just one?

Answer: No, common agency responsibilities can be shared. Each program application must be separate do to the scope of work and Federal requirements of each program. Budgets must be separate.

42. Depending on the above, 20 pages per application? (If one RFP response/packet, and the agency is applying for WIC and FV, that's only 20 pages for the whole packet, yes?)

Answer: Agencies bidding for both WIC and FV, may have up to 40 pages.

43. Related to the above, is it one budget and one budget narrative with both WIC and FV program listed if applicant is applying for WIC and FV program?

Answer: WIC and FV program budgets must be kept separate.

44. Is an abstract required? This is NOT noted in pages 30-31, proposal content but it IS noted on Appendix A - Proposal Checklist. If it is required, length of abstract and further content instructions?

Answer: Abstract is not required

45. On Page 7, it says "Should Medicaid funds not be available, RIDOH may need to reduce contract awards and reduce family slots." Page 17 says additional funding to support LIAs will come from Medicaid. Do the estimated slots by community on page 17 already presume the use of Medicaid funding?

Answer: The estimated slots by community consider Medicaid funding and will be in addition to the funding offered by RIDOH to offset cost of providing family visiting services.

46. Does RIDOH want copies of existing program's policy manuals so reviewers can see adherence to RIDOH and model guidelines? Should we include in the attachments?

Answer: This is not needed for the proposals

47. Please confirm assumption/interpretation. On page 18, PAT model slots are listed. I assume that non MEICHV funded slots are covered by state dollars. If accurate, when we refer to number of families seen, etc., within the scope's narrative, we should then refer to the total number of slots (both MIECHV and PAT)? As an example, Warwick's numbers would be a total of 25 slots (20 MIECHV funded and 5 RIDOH/state funded). Yes? Am wanting to confirm that "PAT Slots" are additional slots for the community.

Answer: Please see the table on page 18. 350 PAT slots are available for up to five contract periods through this procurement process. An additional 140 PAT slots are available from October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023 only.

48. Some existing FV agencies took on / agreed to an increased number of families without increasing staffing, yet proposed slots do not seem to include this number. What that will mean if funded for stated slots/families is a decrease in current families for the future. Is that what RIDOH is anticipating? Not sure if this is unintended or if your funding is less than previous years. Please clarify.

Answer: For the Family Visiting Program, up to \$6,150,000 is available for the first year of this project (October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023). An additional \$950,000 will be made available for Parents as Teachers only for a 12-month period, October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023. This amount may be increased or decreased based upon federal awards received through federal and/or state funding. During recent contract periods, no Family Visiting LIAs have been asked to expand contracted capacity without additional staffed capacity.

49. For existing WIC programs that can demonstrate increased growth (participation, enrollment) and have developed outreach plans for further growth, would it be appropriate during this RFP process to add staffing to the budget? (or is this done during budget negotiations) awarded?

Answer: Budget should be based on current caseload/participation. The narrative can identify agency's projected growth and costs and during budget negotiations modifications can be discussed.

50. Is there an opportunity to request an extension for the submission of this RFP?

Answer: Extensions are not permissible.

51. Are you able to share with us any information or guidance available for what the Medicaid billing guidelines are for PAT? What is reimbursable through RI Medicaid for that particular model?

Answer: Guidelines for HFA, NFP and PAT Medicaid billing are in the development stage. Per visit rates will be established for all three evidence-based models. The capacity to bill Medicaid will begin with HFA and NFP and expand to PAT.

52. Do you have the dollar amount set aside for us so we can prepare the budget?

Answer: For the Family Visiting Program, up to \$6,150,000 is available for the first year of this project (October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023). An additional \$950,000 will be made available for Parents as Teachers only for a 12-month period, October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023. This amount may be increased or decreased based upon federal awards received through federal and/or state funding. For reference from the 2021-22 contract budget process, the WIC Program started the budget base with reimbursing \$12.70 per participant/month. Adding to the budget total will be peer counselling program costs for each agency. WIC is a cost reimbursement program, where agencies have cost allocations and must incur the expense to be reimbursed. This is a general guideline as once budgets are submitted with the RFP the State Agency will meet to negotiate a reasonable budget specific to each agency.

53. Do you have a copy of the most recent previously submitted RFP from Women and Infants that you could send along?

Answer: No.

54. Is this RFP a requirement for every WIC office? Is this a requirement for the WIC Office to fill out a proposal?

Answer: Yes, to be a WIC Provider all agencies must re-apply to be a vendor.

55. The RFP lists the target area of Washington County. Is there a specific targeted community within Washington County? Is North Kingstown still eligible to apply?

Answer: For the Family Visiting Program, Washington County was designated a community of need in the 2020 MIECHV Needs Assessment. The applicant must be located in at least one of the communities in which it is applying to provide services. Community-based, public, non-profit organizations or public, not-for-profit school districts are eligible to apply to provide Family Visiting programs.

56. Please confirm that the Affirmative Action Plan, related certificates and contracts are not required as part of the proposal submission but if awarded, then will have time to respond? If it is expected to be part of submission, please note that affirmatively.

Answer: Affirmative Action Plans and other, related EEO documents are required after the issuance of a tentative award. They are not required to be submitted within the application.

Note: The Application due date deadline remains **4:00 p.m.** on **Wednesday, July 20, 2022.** Proposals are to be submitted to:

**Rhode Island Department of Health
Perinatal and Early Childhood Health
WIC and Family Visiting Program
c/o Ann Barone/Sara Remington
3 Capitol Hill, Room 302
Providence, RI 02908**