

**AMENDMENT #1  
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) NO. 3160004490  
STRATEGIC PLANNING SERVICES**

Amendments to the IFB are as follows:

1. Last paragraph, 1<sup>st</sup> sentence of Section 2.3, Term, is amended as follows:  
“*Compensation for services will be in the form of a Firm Fixed Price ~~Adjustment.~~*”
2. Last paragraph, last sentence of Section 4.1.3.1, Staffing Plan, is amended as follows: “*As a separate attachment to bidder’s response, bidder shall provide supporting documentation demonstrating subcontractor’s ability to meet or exceed the Minimum Qualifications to be Deemed Responsible to this IFB as identified in, but not limited to, Sections 4.1.3.1; ~~4.2.3.2~~ 4.1.3.2; 4.1.3.3; ~~4.1.3.4~~ 4.1.4 (as applicable); and Section 4.1.11 when the subcontractor, rather than the contractor, will be relied upon to satisfy that minimum requirement.*”
3. Inclusion of Section 4.1.3.4, Narrative, under Section 4.1.3. Minimum Qualification to be Deemed Responsible:  
**4.1.3.4. Strategic Planning Narrative.** *Bidders shall provide a narrative addressing Section 2.2.*
4. Section 4.1.10. Bid Submission Format is amended to include Narrative as identified in Section 4.1.3.4.  
The bid package must be sealed and must contain the following:
  - Bid Cover Sheet (Attachment A)
  - Bid Form (Attachment B)
  - References (Attachment C)
  - Debarment Form (Attachment E)
  - Exception Summary Form (Attachment H)
  - *Strategic Planning Narrative (Section 2.2)*
  - Other (as required within specifications)
5. Please see attached Questions and Answers.

Please acknowledge receipt of Amendment #1 by returning it, along with your bid package, by September 10, 2021, at 9:00 AM. This acknowledgement should be enclosed in your bid package. **Failure to submit this acknowledgement may result in rejection of the bid package.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Company

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Official’s Typed Name/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Official  
(No stamped signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Should an amendment to the IFB be issued, it will be posted on the MDHS website ([www.mdhs.ms.gov](http://www.mdhs.ms.gov)) in a manner that all bidders will be able to view. Further, bidders must acknowledge receipt of any amendment to the solicitation by signing and returning the amendment with the bid package, by identifying the amendment number and date in the space provided for this purpose on this form, or by letter. The acknowledgment must be received by MDHS by the time and at the place specified for receipt of bids. It is the bidder’s sole responsibility to monitor the website for amendments to the IFB.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**IFB 3160004490  
STRATEGIC PLANNING SERVICES**

| Question Number | IFB Page Number | IFB Section Reference Number | Question & Answer  |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1               |                 |                              | <p>Is there an estimated budget for this project or a funding cap that cannot be exceeded for this project? If so, can DHS share this information?</p> <p><b>ANSWER: The budget must not exceed \$200,000.</b></p>   |
| 2               | Page 17         | Attachment A                 | <p>Can Attachment A Bid Cover Sheet be converted to a word document retaining all specific questions, so information can be inserted in response to each question?</p> <p><b>ANSWER: Forms from the IFB shall not be converted or replicated. Please utilize the forms as is; however, bidder may include an additional attachment that includes responses to Attachment A. Bidder shall insert "See attached" for each respective specification in Attachment A to direct MDHS to responses in which the bidder requires additional room than allowed on Attachment A. The attachment shall be placed directly behind the respective Attachment, as in this instance, Attachment A.</b></p> |
| 3               | Page 17         | Attachment A                 | <p>Are there page or character limits for Attachment A Bid Cover Sheet or any of the referenced attachments?</p> <p><b>ANSWER: No.</b></p>   |
| 4               | Page 14         | 4.1.10                       | <p>Can we provide a separate attachment that includes our detailed workplan, approach, and budget assumptions? Or is there another place to include this information in one of the required forms?</p> <p><b>ANSWER: Please refer to No. 3 of this Amendment and Section 1.3 of the IFB, wherein it states: All pricing must be submitted on the bid form.</b></p>   |
| 5               |                 |                              | <p>Can we provide a separate attachment that includes relevant project examples that may be used to answer more than one question relating to experience instead of restating the project examples for every question?</p> <p><b>ANSWER: Please see response to Question 2. Bidder will need to clearly state on the form the location within the bid package the attachment can be located.</b></p>   |

| Question Number | IFB Page Number | IFB Section Reference Number | Question & Answer  |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--|
| 6               | Page 7          | 2.2                          | <p>Can the state elaborate on expectations for where work on this project needs to be completed – specifically, are there specific activities for which DHS will require the selected contractor to be onsite?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> As stated in section 2.2. “In providing the scope of services outlined in Section 2.2, bidders shall plan to deliver services and provide deliverables to MDHS ‘in-person’ at a minimum of twice per month.” The activities for which MDHS will require the selected vendor to be on-site may vary dependent upon progress of the vendor.</p>   |
| 7               | Page 8          | 2.2.1.6<br>2.2.1.8           | <p>Are there specific stakeholders – internal (e.g., other state agencies) and/or external (e.g., Governor’s office, state legislators, specific providers, or provider associations) – with whom DHS expects the selected contractor to engage during the strategic plan development process? If so, can DHS provide details on who these stakeholders are and why they need to be engaged?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> Section 2.2.1.6 states: “Facilitate regular work sessions and listening sessions with members of the MDHS Senior Leadership Team, other agency leaders, and additional stakeholders as needed.” To clarify, the term “other agency leaders” refers to other agency leaders within MDHS who are not members of the MDHS Senior Leadership Team. Other necessary stakeholders may be determined during the strategic planning process or may be proposed. However, the primary participants in the strategic planning process are intended to be members of MDHS Senior Leadership.</p> |
| 8               | Page 8          | 2.2.1.6<br>2.2.1.8           | <p>How much external stakeholder input into the strategic planning process does MDHS expect or want? Does DHS anticipate certain stakeholders to be engaged both before and after a strategic plan draft has been developed?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> The primary participants in the development of the strategic plan will be members of the MDHS Senior Leadership Team.</p>   |
| 9               |                 |                              | <p>Will staff from every level of DHS be given time to participate in engagement activities?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> The primary participants in the development of the strategic plan will be members of the MDHS Senior Leadership Team.</p>   |
| 10              |                 |                              | <p>Does the agency or its partners currently produce any dashboards?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> Yes.</p>  |

| Question Number | IFB Page Number | IFB Section Reference Number | Question & Answer  |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--|
| 11              |                 |                              | <p>What priorities or deadlines are driving the timeline for completion by June 2022?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> The timeline is driven by allocated funding designated for this service.</p>   |
| 12              | Page 7          | 2                            | <p>How much latitude is available for completing all the component activities by June 2022?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> Components A, B, and C must be fully completed during the term of the contract. The capacity building plan described in Component D Deliverable 1 must be completed and may suggest activities to be completed after the contract term. However, the plan must include and the vendor must complete some capacity building activities during the term of the contract for agency staff. Note that funding for activities outside of the contract term is in no way guaranteed.</p> |
| 13              | Page 10         | 2.3                          | <p>Given the potential workload associated with partner/subgrantee capacity building would DHS entertain an approach to that activity that extends into state fiscal year 2022-2023?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> Please see the response to Question 12. Funding for activities planned beyond the term of this contract period is not guaranteed. Partner/subgrantee capacity building activities must begin within the contract term.</p>  |
| 14              |                 |                              | <p>Can bidders recommend different sequencing and completion dates for certain activities than what is outlined in the IFB RFP, if the bidder can articulate in its proposal bid why it believes the different sequencing and completion dates are in the best interest of DHS?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> Yes, this information may be placed in the Strategic Planning Narrative; however, the narrative is evaluated as Pass/Fail in minimum requirements and MDHS is not obligated to accept this approach.</p>   |
| 15              |                 |                              | <p>Will DHS provide a single point of contact for scheduling meetings with various internal and external stakeholders and helping with related logistics – for instance, securing meeting rooms/facilities for stakeholder engagement events?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> Yes. However, the contractor will be required to take primary responsibility for these tasks.</p>  |

| Question Number | IFB Page Number | IFB Section Reference Number | Question & Answer   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|---|
| 16              |                 |                              | <p>Does MDHS have a budget range for this engagement?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> Please see response to Question 1.</p>  |
| 17              |                 |                              | <p>Is there a strategic plan that has been guiding their work to date?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> Yes.</p>   |
| 18              |                 |                              | <p>Does MDHS have outcomes they are currently using to guide their work?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> Yes.</p>   |
| 19              |                 |                              | <p>Do they have an existing data dashboard upon which this initiative will build?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> No.</p>   |
| 20              | Page 17         | Attachment A                 | <p>Due to the level of information required in this Attachment, may bidders provide a replicated copy of Attachment A in our bid proposal, with all instructions /questions completely restated? We would like to create more room to provide our answers to the prompts, so that they are sufficiently legible.</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> For Bidder’s bid, please see response to Question 2.</p>   |
| 21              | Pages 23        | Attachment C                 | <p>May bidders replicate Attachment C in its entirety but add additional lines for the “Summary of Project / Contract”?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> Please see response to Question 2.</p>  |
| 22              | Page 23         | Attachment C                 | <p>In addition to the three required references for the prime contractor, does MDHS require three or more references for each subcontractor?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> Yes. Please see Attachment C, page 24:<br/> <i>“Bidder may submit as many references as desired by submitting as many additional copies of Attachment C, References, as deemed necessary. References will be contacted in order listed until two (2) references have been interviewed and Reference Score Sheets completed for each of the two (2) references. No further references will be contacted; however, bidders are encouraged to submit additional references to ensure that at least two (2) references are available for interview. MDHS must be able to contact two (2) references within two (2) business days of bid opening to be considered responsive.</i></p> <p><b><i>For any subcontractors identified in bidder’s response and in addition to bidder’s own Attachment C, bidder must submit a subcontractor Attachment C reference sheet that is clearly labeled in the subcontractor organization’s name. Subcontractor reference</i></b></p> |

| Question Number | IFB Page Number | IFB Section Reference Number | Question & Answer  |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--|
|                 |                 |                              | <i>information will be evaluated by MDHS pursuant to Section 4.1.11 utilizing Attachment D.”</i>   |
| 23              | Page 7          | 2.2                          | <p>This section states that the “Bidder shall describe in detail its ability to provide the following Components and Deliverables:” Please confirm that bidders fulfill this requirement by responding to the items requested in Attachment A.</p> <p><b>ANSWER: No. Please refer to No. 3 of this Amendment.</b></p>  |
| 24              | Page 15         | 4.3                          | <p>Can you please confirm that the provision in this section means that MDHS intends to award the contract to the lowest priced bidder (i.e., “lowest responsible bidder”) whose bid meets the requirements and criteria set forth in the IFB?</p> <p><b>ANSWER: Intent to Award will function in accordance with Section 4.3.</b></p>   |
| 25              |                 |                              | <p>What is the budget that has been approved or allocated for this effort?</p> <p><b>ANSWER: Please see response to Question 1.</b></p>  |
| 26              |                 |                              | <p>Can you provide a list of vendors that submitted questions for this IFB?</p> <p><b>ANSWER: MDHS will not provide this information at this time; however, vendors may submit a Public Records Request via e-mail to <a href="mailto:public.records@mdhs.ms.gov">public.records@mdhs.ms.gov</a>.</b></p>  |
| 27              |                 |                              | <p>Our review and understanding of this Invitation for Bids (IFB) is that its primary purpose is to facilitate the development and initial implementation of an outcome focused five year strategic plan for MDHS. We also understand that MDHS is currently moving forward with a parallel assessment project to determine the feasibility, cost benefit, and alternatives available related to the potential replacement of its aging legacy systems that support the SNAP, TANF, Child Support, and Child Care programs.</p> <p>Can MDHS provide confirmation that this IFB is limited only to the programmatic assessments, staff capacity building, and metrics developed necessary in the creation of the five year strategic plan and that the vendor selected to complete the IFB scope of work would not be precluded from any upcoming RFPs related to MDHS system</p> |

| Question Number | IFB Page Number | IFB Section Reference Number | Question & Answer   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|---|
|                 |                 |                              | <p>replacements that result from the System Assessments Project currently underway at MDHS?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> MDHS can confirm that the vendor selected to complete the IFB scope of work would not be precluded from bidding on any upcoming RFPs related to MDHS system replacement on the basis of having been selected for the strategic planning project outlined in this IFB.</p>   |
| 28              | Page 9          | 2.2.2.3-4                    | <p>In the "initial baseline assessment" and subsequent "detailed report", is the agency looking to simply provide historical baseline performance, or is there a desire to do further analysis to identify root causes of performance or to generate recommendations to inform strategic decision making?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> MDHS is open to either approach. Providing historical baseline performance would be sufficient for our purposes.</p>  |
| 29              | Page 10         | 2.2.4.1                      | <p>Would "training, coaching, and capacity building" include performance improvement methodologies such as lean, agile, or six-sigma training to better enable MDHS to not only "use data collection and monitoring tools" but also build capacity for key staff to analyze and improve MDHS systems and processes.</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> The bidder may propose any types of performance improvement methodologies they believe will best support the agency's goals. Section 2.2.4.1 states: "Provide training, coaching, and capacity building support to agency staff and agency partners <i>to support the use of the data collection and monitoring tools developed in Component B.</i>" It is unnecessary but not prohibited for the bidder to include training, coaching and capacity building around performance improvement methodologies to better enable MDHS to not only "use data collection and monitoring tools" but also build capacity for key staff to analyze and improve MDHS systems and processes.</p> |

| Question Number | IFB Page Number | IFB Section Reference Number | Question & Answer  |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|--|
| 30              | Page 11         | 2.2.1.9                      | <p>Deliverable one states "Approved strategic planning framework due December 17, 2021". What does the approval process look like and who approves? Same for Component B - what is the approval process for tools and Component C, approval process for capacity building plan?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> The agency expects the vendor to work collaboratively with members of the MDHS Senior Leadership team to arrive at an agreed upon strategic planning framework. Senior Leadership team members will be given the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the tools designed as part of Component B and the capacity building plan developed as part of Component C. We anticipate that this feedback will be incorporated into the final deliverables by the vendor.</p> |
| 31              | Page 4          | 1.1.1                        | <p>"Bid Package Submission Deadline: September 10, 2021, 9:00 AM CT". Due to the quick turnaround, would the state consider extending the due date 2 weeks to September 24, 2021?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> No.</p>  |
| 32              | Page 4          | 1.1                          | <p>"One (1) hard copy of the original signed bid package in a binder; and One (1) USB flash drive containing an electronic copy of the original signed bid package in searchable Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format." Due to these unprecedented times, would the state consider email submissions or only USB electronic submission as opposed to paper copies?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> Please refer to Section 1.1 of the IFB, wherein it states, "mailed or hand-delivered".</p>  |
| 33              |                 |                              | <p>Are e-signatures acceptable for all forms submitted with the bid package?</p> <p><b>ANSWER:</b> Yes, if the signatures can be authenticated through time and date stamp.</p>  |