



**ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
PURCHASING**

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Equal Opportunity Employer

March 26, 2014

**PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE
MINUTES**

**MARCH 21, 2014
10:00 A.M.**

**PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE
NO. 7038**

**EXCLUSIVE OPERATOR FOR EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICE AND SECONDARY
MEDICAL PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT**

FINANCIALS MUST BE SUBMITTED IN A SEPARATE ENVELOPE

Attendees:

Kim Nausin - Merced County Administrative Services – Purchasing
Kathleen Grassi - Merced County Public Health
Tom Ebersole – Merced County Counsel
Rick Keller – Fitch & Associates
Brian Hubbell – Falck
Myron Smith - Hall AMB
Cindy Woolstor – AMR
Michael Williams – Riggs Ambulance Service
Steve Melander – Riggs Ambulance Service
James Clark – Merced County EMS
Don Campbell- Mercy Air Services
Michael Johnson- Merced County Public Health
Ramona Giwargis- Merced Sun-Star

Introduction:

Kim Nausin of Merced County Administrative Services - Purchasing, opened up the meeting. Business cards were collected. The agenda and questions received to date were passed out. Everyone introduced themselves and the companies they represented.

The meeting was opened up for questions and turned over to County personnel.

General Overview of RFP Requirements:

The following RFP requirements were reviewed by Kim Nausin:

1. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RFP REQUIREMENTS

Oral answers at the conference will not be binding on the County.

- a. Pre-Proposal Conference (Mandatory) – Section II.E.2. – Page: 10
- b. Scheduled Activities – Appendix 6
- c. Deadline for written questions – March 14, 2014
- d. Closing Date – Cover Page: Tuesday, April 15, 2014 at 4:00 P.M.
- e. Questions must be submitted in writing – Section II.E.1. – Page 10
- f. Contact personnel for information – Cover Page
- g. Number of Copies – Hardcopy submittal (1 original, 10 copies) – Section II.E.3. – Page 10
- h. Financial Statement –Hardcopy submittal in a separate, sealed envelope.

Bidders are instructed to disregard any prospective oral representations it may have received prior to, and during, the solicitation process of the proposal.

- 2. Questions and Answers
- 3. Requirements/Specifications - questions and answers
 - a. **Questions must be in writing to be binding.**

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO DATE:

Question 1: Each of the response time priorities identifies that response time requests are measured within any consecutive 30-day period. This measuring period is in conflict with Section V (p. 36), which identifies that response times shall be calculated on a monthly basis to determine compliance. In addition, a rolling 30-day measurement effectively turns this contract into a daily compliance contract. Recently, several LEMSA’s have moved away from this measurement as daily compliance drives significant system costs. Is it the intent of the County to have a daily compliance measure? (Section IV.C.3.b. Response Time Performance Requirements)

Answer: It is not the intent of the LEMSA to establish a Daily Response Time Compliance Measure. The Response Time Compliance Requirement for ambulances as indicated in Table 6 titled “Response Time Compliance Requirements - All Merced County Emergency Response Zones,” page 36 of the RFP is the standard utilized to determine

ambulance Response Time Compliance. Ambulance Response Time Compliance is measured on a monthly basis, i.e., March, April, May, June, etc. The LEMSA will randomly review Contractor's response times during ANY 30-day period, e.g., April 15 – May 15, as a means to measure system efficacy, not for the purpose of establishing ambulance Response Time Compliance or for levying penalties.

Question 2: How many CCT trips should we assume? Are these trips included in the BLS Non-Emergency counts or in addition to them? (Section IV.C.3.b.5. Critical Care Transports (Priority 5))

Answer: The LEMSA does not track the numbers of requests for CCT services. The CCT responses are included in the 3-year (2011, 2012 & 2013) Historical Service Volume, but not differentiated from emergency and non-emergency call data. This data has been made available to the Merced County Department of Administrative Services for distribution to the bidders.

Question 3: The RFP identifies annual rate increases based upon “the greater of three (3) percent or the increase of the CPI for any given year.” In the current payer mix, over 77% of payers are government funded and therefore unresponsive to rate increases. Given this scenario, a 3% rate increase will yield less than a 1% increase in net revenue (3% x .23 = .84%). A 1% increase in net revenue is insufficient to cover a 3% increase in costs of providing service. Has the County considered adjusting the rate increase based upon the margin collection rate (i.e., the percentage of responsive payers) in order to avoid frontloading of the price or financial instability of the system in future years? (Section IV.G.3.b. Fee Adjustment)

Answer: In the event changed circumstances substantially impact the Contractor's costs of providing services or there are substantial reductions in revenue caused by factors that are beyond the control of Contractor, the Contractor may request increases or decreases in charges to patients to mitigate the financial impact of such changed circumstances. (Ref: RFP, pg . 54)

Question 4: Is it a requirement that field personnel have *portable* radios to communicate with the hospitals, or will a radio located in the ambulance sufficiently meet this requirement? (Section V.B.1.a.1.)

Answer: Yes, in addition to the mobile radio located in the ambulance, it is a requirement that field personnel have portable radios to communicate with the hospitals. (Ref: RFP, pg. 75 “Contractor's communications system shall be capable of...”)

Question 5: Included in the map legend is a one-mile buffer. Will the County explain the intent and use of this buffer for bidding purposes? (Legend on pages 3-8)

Answer: The one mile buffer is included in the high density zone for calculating Response Time Compliance.

Question 6: The clinical section mentions quality improvement programs bidders need to have in place (with LEMSA). Could you describe the recommended PIT and PIM QI tools as well as the actual quality metric program? Will you share what you have? (Section V.A.3.a.-b. Dedicated Clinical Oversight Personnel)

Answer: Merced County EMS Policy #650.00 “EMS Quality Improvement Committee” and Policy #655.00 “Quality Improvement Program Approval” are the policies that establish EMS Quality Improvement programs. EMS Policy and procedures are available for download from the Merced County EMS website. The selected provider will be expected to work with the LEMSA to establish system-wide EMS Quality Improvement.

Question 7: Does the current contract holder provide a CCT Paramedic? Are CCT Paramedics required to meet the CCT requirement in this RFP? (Section IV.B.3.a. Ambulance Staffing Requirements)

Answer: (1) The current contract holder does not provide a CCT Paramedic. (2) The Contractor is accountable for providing or securing CCT services in accordance with the requirements of this RFP, LEMSA policies and procedures, and County regulations.

Question 8: It’s our understanding that a ring cycle is 6 seconds and that the standard pick-up time for contracts of a similar scope is 18 seconds (three 6-second rings). Does the County intend for the phone to be picked up in 2 or 3 rings? Will the County please confirm the time for a ring cycle? (V.B.1.a. Dispatch and Communications)

Answer: Staffing levels shall be such that electronic or telephonic notifications from the County designated public safety dispatch centers are answered or responded to within fifteen (15) seconds, 95% of the time. (Ref: RFP, pg. 74)

Question 9: With the exception of the Face Sheet (Appendix 8, Exhibit A), it appears that the other required forms are missing. Will the County please provide the remaining required forms? (Appendix 8 – Exhibits (Required Forms))

Answer: The Merced County Department of Administrative Services will make available to all Bidders the full volume of Required Forms contained in Appendix 8. An Amendment to the RFP will be posted on the website along with the updated Appendix 8.

Question 10: The County’s RFP states that bidders are able to obtain transport data from the County’s website. We are having difficulty locating this data on the website. We would like to use this data in the development of a customized deployment plan for the County. Will the County please help us locate the relevant information on the website? (Section I.G.1. Historical Service Volume)

Answer: Historical Service Volume will be available on the website for the years 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Question 11: Page 5, paragraph 2: Definition of when the response time clock begins is in conflict with page 36, paragraph a). Which definition will be used?

Answer: The paragraph on Page 5, #2 that reads: *“The Contractor’s response time clock begins when the call is time stamped as passed from the PSAP and received by the contractor’s dispatch center.”* is to be deleted from the RFP. The Contractor’s Response Time clock begins at “Call Receipt” which is defined as when the Contractor’s dispatch center receives adequate information to identify the location of the call and the priority level, or 60 seconds after the call is answered, whichever is less.

Question 12: Page 11, paragraph 6: Provides no date here or in appendix 6. What will be the date of the notice of intent to award?

Answer: The LEMSA Director will authorize the issuance of the Notice of Intent to Award as soon as possible following the Review Panel’s recommendation which will then be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for their review and recommendation. If there are any delays in the Procurement Timeline, all bidders will be notified by the Merced County Department of Administrative Services.

Question 13: Page 34, b), (1): Does 89.5 – 89.9% round up to 90%?

Answer: No.

Question 14: Page 34, b), (2): Is any 30 day period based on calendar 30 days or ANY 30 day period?

Answer: It is not the intent of the LEMSA to establish a Daily Response Time Compliance Measure. The Response Time Compliance Requirement for ambulances as indicated in Table 6 titled “Response Time Compliance Requirements - All Merced County Emergency Response Zones,” page 36 of the RFP is the standard utilized to determine ambulance Response Time Compliance. Ambulance Response Time Compliance is measured on a monthly basis, i.e., March, April, May, June, etc. The LEMSA will randomly review Contractor’s response times during ANY 30-day period, e.g., April 15 – May 15, as a means to measure system efficacy, not for the purpose of establishing ambulance Response Time Compliance or for levying penalties.

Question 15: Page 36, Table 6: “Remote” is mentioned in the RFP on page 39, b), third paragraph and elsewhere but, is not on the chart. Can you resolve this conflict and identify what the response times will be in “remote” areas?

Answer: “Remote” calls are defined as when the patients’ locations are greater than ten (10) road miles from the nearest boundary of the High-Density zones. Therefore, “Remote” calls will be located in the Low-Density ERZ. Remote calls will have the Low-Density ERZ Response Time Standard of ≤ 19:59 for Priority 1 and 2 calls and ≤ 29:59 for Priority 3 calls. The Contract Administrator may allow exceptions to the Response Time Standards for good cause as determined at his or her sole discretion. Remote calls are one of those allowable good cause exceptions.

Question 16: Page 39, b), second paragraph: Does the 200% unusual overload rule apply to all calls?

Answer: Yes.

Question 17: Page 42, (3), Paragraph 3 and table 7: CCT is measured quarterly but no 100-call rule applies. If a single CCT resource is already on a call and a second request comes in, will a penalty exception or exclusion be granted?

Answer: Upon Contractor's request to the Contract Administrator, the circumstances surrounding the sequence of events will be reviewed and decisions regarding penalty exception or exclusion will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Question 18: Appendix 3: It is difficult to determine response borders with the maps provided. Will larger/more detailed maps be provided?

Answer: Yes.

Question 19: Appendix 1, Section VIII: The required forms, other than the face sheet, are not included in Appendix 8. Can you provide these forms at your earliest convenience?

Answer: The Merced County Department of Administrative Services will make available to all Bidders the full volume of Required Forms contained in Appendix 8. An Amendment to the RFP will be posted on the website along with the updated Appendix 8.

Question 20: The secondary PSAP regarding the contract does that have to be in County?

Answer: The LEMSA retracts the response given at the Bidders' Conference and reissues a corrected response here: No, there is no requirement for the secondary PSAP to be located in the County. However, Proposers should review the provisions in the Core Requirements that state that a "New Contractor is expected to offer qualified non-supervisory employees (dispatchers, EMTs and paramedics) employment..." (Ref: RFP Pg. 45.) and the examples of Higher Levels of Commitment – Dispatch and Communications where an example of a higher level of service includes "Contractor may collaborate with existing PSAPs and dispatch centers to co-locate or consolidate PSAP/Dispatch operations". (Ref: RFP Pg 76)

Question 21: With the First Responders, is there any help with compliance with them responding or are response times response times?

Answer: Response time calculations are solely based on the arrival of the transporting ambulance and are not affected by the arrival of first responder or other non-transport units or personnel.

Question 22: Are you aware of any First Responders wanting to go to ALS at all or is everybody staying as a BLS service?

Answer: For the purposes of the Bid consider all first responders are to remain at the BLS Level.

Question 23: Regarding the one mile buffer zone in the high density, what is the purpose of the buffer zone? So we then assume it still needs to meet the response time of the call density?

Answer: The actual call density, doesn't correspond exactly to the jurisdictional lines. The one mile buffer is considered to be within the high call density area.

Question 24: As far as the oral presentations, what will the process be? Who is the audience and who is allowed to be in the audience.

Answer: The Review Panel will convene to determine: 1) that the Proposers meet minimum qualifications and 2) have attested to the Core Requirements. The Reviewers will then rate the Competitive Criteria for which scores will be calculated. The final day will begin with Proposer presentations and questioning by the Review Panel. After the presentations, the Review Panel reconvenes to go through all the competitive criteria to determine if answers to their questions or information received during the presentation causes them to want to review or modify their scores. The Presentations by the Proposers are open only to the Review Panel and County staff.

Question 25: Are there a limited number of participants that are able to represent each agency.

Answer: Proposers shall limit their representatives to no more than six for their presentations.

Question 26: How many do you expect to be on the review panel?

Answer: The Review Panel will have five professional representatives.

Question 27: On page 52 of the RFP regarding dispatch centers in or outside the county, which one?

Answer: See response to Question 20.

Question 28: Are there any expectations of the County to have any types of major capital purchases or is that up to us?

Answer: The Competitive Criteria considers Proposer offerings for vehicles, equipment, and other capital items that will be considered in scoring of the proposals.

Question 29: In regards to the number of CCT trips and the call data, there is nothing that signifies specific CCT, are we to assume they are in the Historical Service Volume?

Answer: The CCT calls are included in the call data but are not differentiated from the emergency and non-emergency calls. Each Bidder is responsible for their own due diligence to estimate of CCT call volume.

Question 30: In regards to WestSide Ambulance, we are to contract with them and to provide service and be responsible for their performance. If they do not meet compliance in that particular zone, or they have late responses, would that provider pay the fines or would the provider that holds the contract for the entire County pay the fines?

Answer: The RFP will result in a countywide contract awarded to a single entity. The successful Contractor is responsible for the performance of all sub-contractors and any penalties.

Question 31: According to the process you talked about at the last EMCC meeting, is that process consist with the RFP in terms of information and scoring?

Answer: The process is what was described at the July 24, 2013 EMCC meeting.

Question 32: Once a Proposal is submitted to Purchasing is a number assigned before it is submitted to the review committee or blinded so that only Purchasing is aware?

Answer: The proposals will not be blinded and are required to include company-specific information for the Reviewer's evaluation.

Question 33: On page 53 under First Responder fee, it states that the provider will bill \$125.00 for First Responder fees, and that money collected will be passed onto the Fire Departments. If that money is not collected is the provider still responsible to pay that provider fee?

Answer: The Contractor is required to "pass the net collected amount per event (less billing costs) to the First Responder agency." (Ref: RFP Pg. 53). Proposers should consider the Higher Level of Service that encourages the Proposer to define, "A fixed amount to be provided to First Responder agencies for the Contractor's billing of first responder fees rather than the amount actually collected from the individual invoices." (Ref: RFP Pg. 86)

Question 34: On page 15, about the final review process, and this has been forwarded to the Director or Board of Supervisors. Is it based on the highest score? What is the final expectation?

Answer: Yes, the design of the process is to identify the Proposer with the highest score.

End of questions
Meeting Adjourned at 10:30 a.m.
KN/sh