**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFP AMENDMENT # 1 AND**

**RFP SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFP NUMBER AND TITLE:** | 202409163 – PFML Temporary Call Center Support |
| **RFP ISSUED BY:** | Department of Labor |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | September 23, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m. local time |
| **AMENDMENT AND QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | September 25, 2024 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | October 4, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m. local time |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |
| **Unless specifically addressed below, all other provisions and clauses of the RFP remain unchanged.** | |
| **DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES IN RFP (if any):**  **Updated Part III KEY RFP EVENTS – Subsection C. Proposal Submission – Subsection 3. Submission Format, to include File 3 as “Proposed Services” and clarify File 4 as “Cost Proposal”.** | |
| **REVISED LANGUAGE IN RFP (if any):**  **Part III, Subsection C.3. is amended to read:**   * 1. **Submission Format:**      1. Bidders are to insert the following into the subject line of their e-mail proposal submission: **“RFP# 202409163 Proposal Submission – [Bidder’s Name]”**      2. Bidder’s proposal submissions are to be broken down into multiple files, with each file named as it is titled in bold below, and include: * **File 1 [Bidder’s Name] – Preliminary Information:**   *PDF format preferred*  **Appendix A** (Proposal Cover Page)  **Appendix B** (Responsible Bidder Certification)  All required eligibility documentation stated in PART IV, Section I.   * **File 2 [Bidder’s Name] – Organization Qualifications and Experience:**   *PDF format preferred*  **Appendix C** (Organization Qualifications and Experience Form) and all required information and attachments stated in PART IV, Section II.   * **File 3 [Bidder’s Name] – Proposed Services:**   *PDF format preferred*  **Appendix D** (Technical Assessment Form) and all required information and attachments stated in PART IV, Section III.   * **File 4 [Bidder’s Name] – Cost Proposal:**   *Excel format preferred*  **Appendix E** (Cost Proposal Form) and all required information and attachments stated in PART IV, Section IV. | |

**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department’s answer.**

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| **1** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III - Key RFP Events- 3. Submission Format (Page #11)  Part IV - Proposal Submission Requirements (Page #12 and #13) | Refer to the “Part III - Key RFP Events- 3. Submission Format”, it is mentioned that vendors need to submit their proposal in 3 files. Whereas under “Part IV - Proposal Submission Requirements”, is asking for 4 files. Please confirm which is correct? |
| **Answer** | |
| 4 files is the correct information. Please see RFP amendment clarifying this. | |

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| **2** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV - Proposal Submission Requirements (Page #12 and #13) | Refer to “Part IV - Proposal Submission Requirements”, it is mentioned that the “Section III - Proposed Services (File #3)” it is mentioned that this needs to be answer under file #3 whereas as per “Part III - Key RFP Events- 3. Submission Format”, File #3 is the Cost Proposal. It is our understanding that “Section III – Proposed Services” needs to be addressed under File #2. Is it correct? |
| **Answer** | |
| RFP amendment clarifies that File 3 should be “Proposed Services”, and File 4 should be “Cost Proposal”. | |

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| **3** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| 4. Staffing and Forecasting (Page #9) | It is our understanding that the Department is expecting 40 Customer Service Agents may require to provide the services. Is it correct? |
| **Answer** | |
| To start the contract, we are requesting 40 agents, correct. This may change with forecasting either upwards or downwards as specified in the RFP. | |

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| **4** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Please specify the historical data of the call volume. |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and so there is no historical data on call volume. We are asking over 60,000 employers with Maine based employees to register for the online portal and provide necessary quarterly reports and premium payments. | |

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| **5** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Please specify the average call handling time. |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and new service, so there is no data on this. | |

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| **6** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | What is the current average wait time for phone calls? |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and new service, so there is no data on this. | |

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| **7** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | What is the current Average Speed to Answer? |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and new service, so there is no data on this. | |

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| **8** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | What is the current Average Time to Abandon? |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and new service, so there is no data on this. | |

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| **9** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Please specify the average monthly/weekly call volume. |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and new service, so there is no data on this. | |

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| **10** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | What time of day, days of the week, or times of the year do calls typically peak? |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and new service, so there is no data on this. | |

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| **11** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | How many agents are currently working under this contract? |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and new service, so there is no current contract. | |

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| **12** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | It is our understanding that the vendor can provide services remotely (anywhere in the U.S.). Is it correct? |
| **Answer** | |
| The RFP specifics that at least 50% of the staffing must be provided by Maine based employees, who can be working remotely within Maine. The other 50% of staffing can be provided from workers, including remote workers, from anywhere in the U.S.   Vendors who cannot provide the at least 50% staffing of Maine based employees will be considered ineligible. | |

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| **13** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Is this a new initiative or does the Department have an incumbent on this? |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and a new service for the program. There is no incumbent. | |

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| **14** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | If there is an incumbent, please disclose their name(s) and if possible, provide their proposals along with their cost proposals to facilitate competitive pricing. |
| **Answer** | |
| There is no incumbent. | |

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| **15** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | What is the estimated budget of the contract? If unknown, please provide previous spending. |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new contract. Please provide a cost estimate using the instructions in the proposed services and cost proposal sections. | |

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| **16** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Please specify the issues that the Department is facing under the current contract. |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and a new service, and there is no current contract. | |

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| **17** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Over the past year, what is the percentage of calls received in English versus non-English? |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and new service, so there is no data on this. | |

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| **18** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Page 5, Purpose and Background | Can you please share the call volume of incoming calls? Monthly, weekly, and Daily if no past history, then your estimates. |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and so there is no historical data on call volume. We are asking over 60,000 employers with Maine based employees to register for the online portal and provide necessary quarterly reports and premium payments. | |

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| **19** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Maine Location | Do you have any office location preference within Maine? |
| **Answer** | |
| We do not have preference where the Maine based employees are located in Maine. The Department will not be providing any office space to the vendor. | |

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| **20** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| In-office/ Remote | Do you have any preference on our staff being in our office or working remote? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department does not have a preference. | |

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| **21** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Software | What CRM tool is planned to be used?  Is there any specific Contact Centre Tool preferred by the agency? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Customer Relations Management tool used by the PFML Program is being built currently by Fast Enterprises and the vendor for the call center will have access to this software to enter CRM notes.   The vendor must provide their own system to manage call queues, and the Department does not have a preference what specific tool that is. | |

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| **22** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | What technology and platform is the PFML solution? |
| **Answer** | |
| The online portal being built for the PFML Program is being built by FAST Enterprises. It is a COTS solution being built for Maine, from their base “FAST PL” system. | |

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| **23** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix F | Is the Appendix F (NDA) to be signed now or post-award? |
| **Answer** | |
| Post award. | |

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| **24** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Page 12, Part IV, Section I. 3 | If there is any relevant attestation template to be used for eligibility requirements. Please share the link or provide the template with us. |
| **Answer** | |
| No standard template. Please provide an attested statement that the vendor can meet the requirement to provide at least 50% of staffing from Maine based employees. | |

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| **25** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| NA | Do the agents need to physically be in the office, or can they work remotely? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department does not have a preference, but at least 50% of the vendor employees need to be Maine based employees. Vendors who cannot provide this will be considered ineligible. | |

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| **26** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| NA | Are there any target performance metrics for this program? |
| **Answer** | |
| These will be developed post award as part of contract negotiations with selected vendor. | |

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| **27** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| SCOPE OF SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED - pg. 8 | Could you please clarify the place of performance for this project? Specifically, are all 40 full-time equivalents (FTEs) required to report to the vendor's site, or is it permissible for 50% of the key personnel to work remotely? |
| **Answer** | |
| We do not have a preference if vendor workers are remote or in a vendor-provided office, but at least 50% of the vendor workers must be Maine based employees. | |

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| **28** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III page 10 | Would it be possible to provide weekly and/or expected call volume? |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and so there is no historical data on call volume. We are asking over 60,000 employers with Maine based employees to register for the online portal and provide necessary quarterly reports and premium payments. | |

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| **29** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III page 10 | Part III page 10 Will work from home agents be eligible to participate on this RFP? |
| **Answer** | |
| We do not have a preference if vendor workers are remote or in a vendor provided office, but at least 50% of the vendor workers must be Maine based employees. | |

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| **30** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.1.j, page 8 | Does the department currently have a preferred CSAT mechanism, or will the vendor be expected to develop one? |
| **Answer** | |
| Vendor should propose one. | |

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| **31** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III.C.3, page 11 | Part III.C.3 indicates that a complete submission will consist of three files. Part IV indicates that four files must be submitted. Please clarify how the department would like proposals to be organized when submitted. |
| **Answer** | |
| Check the RFP amendment which has clarified this – File 3 is now “Proposed Services”, and File 4 is “Cost Proposal”. | |

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| **32** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.1.d, page 8 | Is the CRM and/or knowledgebase cloud hosted? |
| **Answer** | |
| The CRM system is cloud based. The knowledge base has not been established yet and the vendor will work with the Department to develop materials for trainings and review by agents. | |

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| **33** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.1.d, page 8 | How are the authentications performed for remote agents/how are the CRM and knowledgebase secured? |
| **Answer** | |
| Agents will be provided sign in credentials to access CRM and will go through multi-factor authentication with their company email address or company provided phone. | |

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| **34** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III.C, page 10 | Would the department consider allowing vendors to submit a cover letter with their proposals? |
| **Answer** | |
| Companies can submit a cover letter in File 2 “Organizational Qualifications”. | |

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| **35** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Page 9 Part II Section 3 | Can you share a handbook or other items that covers the depth/scope of knowledge the agents will be required to have in order to provide the services outlined in the RFP? If none are available, do you have an estimated amount of time it will take to train an agent on the scope of services, questions and answers they will provide? |
| **Answer** | |
| There is no current handbook, and we refer vendor to review the current statute and proposed rules for the PFML program. We expect training to be provided in 5 business days for new vendor agents. | |

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| **36** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Page 9, Part II Section C | Is it acceptable for agents to work remotely from home offices, on equipment we provide? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, provided at least 50% of the workers are Maine based employees. | |

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| **37** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Has a budget already been established for these services? If yes, can you share the amount(s)? |
| **Answer** | |
| A budget is not being provided in this RFP, please provide a cost estimate that covers Proposed Services using the instructions in the Cost Proposal. | |

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| **38** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| III-Scope of Services, Section 3 Training, Page 9 | What “train the trainer" sessions will the State provide? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department will provide up to 5 business day training on how to navigate the online contributions portal, and program information that is pertinent for agents to respond to calls. | |

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| **39** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| III-Scope of Services, Section 3 Training, Page 9 | What is the State's anticipated timeline for initial and ongoing training? |
| **Answer** | |
| The up to 5-day business training will be scheduled in December. On-going trainings will be discussed after award on on-going basis. | |

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| **40** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| III-Scope of Services, Section 4 Staffing & Forecasting, Page 9 | Is it the expectation of the State that the vendor has 40 agents available for calls at all times? |
| **Answer** | |
| We are expecting an initial staffing level of 40 agents, understanding some may not be on at the same time. Staffing levels may need to be adjusted up and down with forecasting as discussed in the RFP. | |

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| **41** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E, Cost, Page 24 | Is the State looking for one annual cost or a breakdown of hourly rate by position or a breakdown of both? |
| **Answer** | |
| Please review the cost proposal instructions which ask for a fully burdened hourly rate for each vendor staff role type, any fixed costs at implementation or otherwise, and a total estimate of the 1-year initial period of performance total cost. | |

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| **42** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| III-Scope of Services, Section 4 Staffing & Forecasting, Page n/a | Please confirm training is billable for new hires. |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, training is billable and should be included when completing cost proposal. | |

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| **43** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| III-Scope of Services, Section 4 Staffing & Forecasting, Page n/a | What is the State's expected average talk time per contact? |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and new service, so there is no data on this. | |

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| **44** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| III-Scope of Services, Section 4 Staffing & Forecasting, Page n/a | What is the State's expected abandon rate? |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and new service, so there is no data on this. | |

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| **45** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| III-Scope of Services, Section 4 Staffing & Forecasting, Page n/a | Do all phone calls need to be recorded? |
| **Answer** | |
| Not required for all calls but recommended at least randomly for quality assurance and training needs. | |

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| **46** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| III-Scope of Services, Section 4 Staffing & Forecasting, Page n/a | If phone calls are recorded, how long will the call recordings need to be stored? |
| **Answer** | |
| Current digital record retention rate for the program is 10 years. | |

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| **47** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part 1, A. Purpose, Page 5 | Does the State anticipate the vendor taking calls from claimants once they start? |
| **Answer** | |
| Potentially, but not expected in the initial period of performance which is before claims start. | |

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| **48** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III, Section C Proposal Submission, Item 3 Submission Format, Page 11 | Part III, Key RFP Events, subsection 3. Submission Format indicates bidders are to submit 3 submission files; however, Part IV, Proposal Submission Requirements, pages 12-14, indicates 4 submission files. Please confirm 4 files are expected from bidders. |
| **Answer** | |
| This was clarified in the RFP amendment. File 3 is now “Proposed Services”, and File 4 is “Cost Proposal”. | |

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| **49** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I, Section A, Purpose & Background, Page 5 | What has the State Budgeted for this project? |
| **Answer** | |
| A budget is not being provided in this RFP, please provide a cost estimate that covers Proposed Services using the instructions in the Cost Proposal. | |

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| **50** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part III, Section 1, Call Center Support, Item 1d | What CRM is currently used by the State? |
| **Answer** | |
| The online portal being built for the PFML Program is being built by FAST Enterprises and includes the CRM module. It is a COTS solution being built for Maine, from their base “FAST PL” system. | |

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| **51** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV, Proposal Submission Requirements, Page12 | Please confirm Bidders can submit a cover letter as part of the submission package. |
| **Answer** | |
| Cover letters can be included in File 2 “Organizational Qualifications”. | |

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| **52** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV, Proposal Submission Requirements, Page12 | Please confirm Bidders can submit an Executive Summary as part of the submission package. |
| **Answer** | |
| Executive summaries can be included in File 2 “Organizational Qualifications”. | |

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| **53** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part 3, Section C.3, Page 11 | RFP Section III. C.3 States that three files are required for proposal submission while Part IV Proposal Format and Contents lists four files for submission. Please confirm that bidders should follow the instructions listed in Part IV Proposal Format and Contents. |
| **Answer** | |
| This was clarified in the RFP amendment. File 3 is now “Proposed Services”, and File 4 is “Cost Proposal”. | |

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| **54** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part 1, Section C, Page 6 | Eligibility to Submit Bids:  The requirement is for 50% of call center employees be Maine based. Can these employees be remote workers if they are based in Maine? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, remote workers based in Maine is fine. | |

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| **55** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General Question | Please confirm that a secure, 100% remote contact center model meeting all security requirements is acceptable. |
| **Answer** | |
| Fully remote workers acceptable, as long as at least 50% are Maine based employees and the rest are within the United States. | |

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| **56** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General Question | Please confirm that all agents and support staff must conduct call center work from within the United States and its Territories. |
| **Answer** | |
| Correct – all workers must be within United States and at least 50% must be Maine based employees. | |

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| **57** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part 2, Section 3b, Training, Page 9 | Given the existing materials and processes, how long does the State anticipate the training process will take for this initiative? |
| **Answer** | |
| Up to 5 business days for initial training for new agents. | |

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| **58** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E | Could the State specify the number of annual working hours it expects each bidder to use when calculating the total proposed cost for 40 FTEs? |
| **Answer** | |
| For the purposes of the estimate for the cost proposal please use 2,080 annual hours per FTE, so 40x 2080 = 83,200 hours. | |

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| **59** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Cover page  I.D, page 6  VI.A.2-3, page 17 | What is the State’s target award date for this opportunity? |
| **Answer** | |
| Anticipated award made by 11/1/24. Contract signed by 12/1/24. | |

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| **60** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| II.1.d, page 8 | What is the technology platform that the CRM and the Knowledge Base utilizes? |
| **Answer** | |
| FAST enterprises COTS solution being built for Maine from base “FAST PL” system, includes a CRM module. Knowledge base has not been established yet. | |

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| **61** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| II.1.h, page 8 | The RFP states: “The awarded Bidder will provide on-going quality assurance monitoring of agent performance.” Is it the Department’s expectation that calls are recorded and, if so, what percentage of the calls should be recorded? |
| **Answer** | |
| Recommended at least randomly for quality assurance and training. No expectation of a certain percentage. | |

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| **62** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| II.1.h, page 8 | If call recording is required, how long (in months/years) should the awarded Bidder retain and store the recordings? |
| **Answer** | |
| Current retention schedule for digital files for the program is 10 years. | |

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| **63** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| II.2.a, page 9 | The RFP states: “The awarded Bidder will provide their own call management system to which calls to a designated phone number will be routed and managed in the workflow.” Is this designated phone number customer facing or utilized only for internal call routing? |
| **Answer** | |
| There will be a public facing number that should route to vendor’s call management system. | |

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| **64** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| II.2.a, page 9 | How many separate phone queues will be routed to the designated phone number? |
| **Answer** | |
| One public facing customer service number will be routed to vendor’s call management system. | |

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| **65** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| II.3.a, page 9 | Will the Department provide access to training environments for the CRM and MPL Portal? If so, how many weeks before go-live will access be made available? |
| **Answer** | |
| Vendor agents will be given limited access to MPL back-end portal functionality within a week of contract signing. | |

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| **66** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| II.3.a, page 9 | The RFP states: “The Department will ensure that all necessary materials, processes and technology are available to the vendor.” How much in advance of the Call Center Support go-live date will the vendor receive access to these materials, processes and systems? |
| **Answer** | |
| Training up to 5 days will be provided in December. Development of supportive materials will be on-going in conversations with the vendor during period of performance. | |

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| **67** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| II.3.b, page 9 | What is the anticipated duration of the PFML Program-specific training the awarded Bidder will provide? |
| **Answer** | |
| Up to 5 business days for initial training of agents. | |

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| **68** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| III.C.3.b, page 11 IV.II, page 13  V.B.1, page 15 | RFP Part III, Section C, item 3.b lists three files to be submitted. However, RFP Part IV lists four files, as does the scoring weights table in RFP Part V, Section B, item 1. Please confirm that Bidders must submit the following four files as part of our proposal:  File 1 [Bidder’s Name] – Preliminary Information  File 2 [Bidder’s Name] – Organization Qualifications and Experience  File 3 [Bidder’s Name] – Proposed Services  File 4 [Bidder’s Name] – Cost Proposal |
| **Answer** | |
| This was clarified in RFP amendment. File 3 is now “Proposed Service”, and File 4 is “Cost Proposal”. | |

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| **69** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| IV.1.a | Based on the instructions in RFP Part IV.1.a and Appendix E, year 1 pricing is being provided. The RFP doesn’t appear to describe any specific process for exercising the option year renewals. Can the State confirm the awarded Bidder’s ability to negotiate option year pricing and the timeline to be notified of the State’s intent to renew? |
| **Answer** | |
| Pricing for future renewals will be discussed with awarded vendor if contract is decided to be renewed. | |

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| **70** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| IV.III.2, page 13 | On what date will the temporary call center begin answering calls from employers? |
| **Answer** | |
| Anticipated to be 12/30/24. | |

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| **71** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| IV.III.2, page 13 | Can the Department clarify if a Microsoft Project Plan is considered an acceptable “work plan displayed in a time chart”? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. | |

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| **72** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| VI.A.1, page 17 | Regarding the ability of Bidders to submit exceptions, RFP Part VI.A.1. states, “[*a]ll exceptions will be negotiated between the awarded Bidder(s) and the State,*” but then continues on to say, “*[t]he State will not accept any proposed exceptions as part of this RFP process. The State is not obligated to accept, negotiate, or compromise of any proposed exceptions*.”  Please clarify how Bidders should communicate their intent to negotiate changes to existing terms and/or the addition of contractual terms? |
| **Answer** | |
| Vendors may list exceptions to the IT-SC Rider B if they wish, but these will not be negotiated until after a vendor is selected. It should be noted that Rider B is standard contract language for all State of Maine Contracts, and no exceptions are guaranteed to be granted. | |

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| **73** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix C, pages 22-23 | Will the individuals listed as Client Contact Person for projects in Appendix C be contacted as references for this proposal? |
| **Answer** | |
| Potentially. | |

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| **74** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix F, pages 25-30 | Please confirm that Appendix F, Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement, is provided for information and will be completed by the awarded Bidder and therefore does not need to be returned as part of the proposal. |
| **Answer** | |
| Correct – will be signed post award. | |

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| **75** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Is it acceptable for Bidders to provide a cover letter? |
| **Answer** | |
| Cover letters can be included in File 2 “Organizational Qualifications”. | |

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| **76** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Is the Department able to provide estimated daily, weekly, or monthly call volumes and average call length? |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and a new service – there is no data on this. | |

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| **77** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Would the State of Maine Department of Labor be interested in exploring an alternative approach that included standing up the call center technology for Maine Department of Labor if the same January 1, 2025, readiness date could be met? |
| **Answer** | |
| No. | |

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| **78** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Would you be willing to grant a two-week extension to the RFP deadline? |
| **Answer** | |
| No. | |

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| **79** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Does Maine Department of Labor currently have any of their own call center staff that will support this in addition to the 40 temporary staff desired? Is Maine Department of Labor planning to stand up an internal call center specific to PFML in the future? If so, when? |
| **Answer** | |
| There will be internal Department staff as well, but the Temporary Call Center will handle all first level calls before triaging to State Department staff. Projects beyond the scope of this RFP are not decided and out of scope for this RFP. | |

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| **80** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | What is the long-term vision for the PFML Call Center in its service of both payers and beneficiaries? Do you anticipate that Maine Department of Labor PFML will take over call center operations at some point in the future? |
| **Answer** | |
| Future projects not mentioned in this RFP are not decided and vendors should focus responses to current RFP. | |

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| **81** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Does Maine Department of Labor intend, either now or in the future, to integrate the call management system with the PFML Customer Relations Management database? |
| **Answer** | |
| Currently the vendor should have their own call management system. There are no plans to integrate that system with existing CRM system at this time. | |

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| **82** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Will the technology provided by the temporary call center team need to integrate with the current PFML vendor application? |
| **Answer** | |
| No. | |

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| **83** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II - Scope of Services, Call Center Support, Page 9 | What information would the Department like to see in the daily reports? |
| **Answer** | |
| At a minimum – call volume, any major issues from prior day. | |

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| **84** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II - Scope of Services, Call Center Support, Page 9 | Is the Department providing a customer satisfaction survey to track customer satisfaction? |
| **Answer** | |
| No – the vendor should propose one. | |

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| **85** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II - Scope of Services, Call Center Support, Page 9 | Would the Department consider allowing the vendor to provide language services? |
| **Answer** | |
| No – there is a separate state contract for this, and it is outside the scope of this RFP. | |

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| **84** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I - A. Purpose and Background, Page 5 | Who is the technology vendor? |
| **Answer** | |
| FAST Enterprises, LLC. | |

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| **86** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I - A. Purpose and Background, Page 5 | How long will employers have to get registered once the portal is live (January 2025)? Or does registration remain open year-round? |
| **Answer** | |
| Registration remains open year-round. Employers will start filling wage reports 4/1/2025 so should register prior to that date. | |

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| **87** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I - A. Purpose and Background, Page 5 | What is the anticipated seasonality to incoming volumes? |
| **Answer** | |
| Likely highest call volume during initial registrations. | |

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| **88** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I - A. Purpose and Background, Page 5 | What is the estimated handle time per call? |
| **Answer** | |
| This is a new program and new service, so no data on this. | |

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| **89** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I - A. Purpose and Background, Page 5 | Starting April 2025, how often will employers need to submit wage reporting, premium payments, and private plan applications, is it annual? |
| **Answer** | |
| Wage reporting and premium payment is quarterly. Private plan substitution applications can occur on a rolling basis, beginning 4/1/20205 | |

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| **90** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I - A. Purpose and Background, Page 5 | How many internal Department staff will be supporting the call center? We understand the vendor estimate is 40 agents. |
| **Answer** | |
| Department’s customer support unit will have 9 State staff. | |

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| **91** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I - C. Eligibility to Submit Bids, Page 6 | Are remote employees allowed? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. Provided that at least 50% are Maine based employees. | |

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| **92** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II - 1. Call Center Support, Page 8 | What type of outbound calls and support does the Department require? (i.e., callbacks, registration reminders) |
| **Answer** | |
| Call backs to provide more information and registration reminders both likely. | |

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| **93** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II - 1. Call Center Support, Page 8 | What is the estimated time agents will spend logging customer interactions in the PFML’s Customer Relations Management database? |
| **Answer** | |
| These will be entering short case notes around call details. We would anticipate less than a minute or two per call if it is not a complex case. | |

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| **94** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix F, page 25 | Is Appendix F required to be submitted with our proposal? If so what section? |
| **Answer** | |
| This is completed post award. | |

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| **95** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E, page 24 | Should the form the proposed cost box include the fully burdened hourly rate? Or should this box be the total project inclusive of labor and line items ? |
| **Answer** | |
| Please refer to the cost proposal instructions which ask for fully burdened hourly rate plus implementation and static costs. | |

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| **96** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E, page 24 | Should the total proposed cost only include our hourly rate for 40 agents for 12 months? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, plus static implementation costs. It should be a total estimate for the full period of performance costs. | |

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| **97** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E, page 24 | Is there a separate excel cost template the department would like us to use? |
| **Answer** | |
| No – please enter the information into an Excel spreadsheet and provide with the proposal. | |

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| **98** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E, page 24 | Aside from a one-time implementation cost are there any other line items we are required to include in the excel format? |
| **Answer** | |
| Any static costs that are not included in the hourly rates need to be listed to provide the total cost estimate for the full year period of performance. | |

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| **99** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope item 4a page 9: | The RFP states that the CSR staffing baseline is for 40 agents. How did the Department arrive at this conclusion? |
| **Answer** | |
| Looking towards a similar but more complex roll-out of the Maine Tax Portal, 40 is the best estimate the Department can arrive at based on many unknown factors that can be expected with a new service for a new program. | |

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| **100** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section II Organization Qualifications and Experience page 12 | In the project organizational chart, where would the Department like to see the job descriptions? In the org chart with the position title? Would it be acceptable to have a table with positions and their personnel job description in the chart? |
| **Answer** | |
| Position titles are sufficient. Table also acceptable. | |

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| **101** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section III Proposed Services item 2 Implementation Work Plan | Would an implementation schedule in MS Project be acceptable for this requirement? If not, what format would the Department prefer? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, MS project schedule is acceptable. | |

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| **102** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| PART II Scope of Services 1k page 8. | The RFP mentions that all non English calls are to use the Department’s supplied language line. Would the Department allow our bilingual CSRs to conduct calls in the callers native language, or is it a requirement to use the translation line? |
| **Answer** | |
| Would need to be discussed and negotiated post award. | |

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| **103** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I Introduction A page 1: | Will members of the public be made aware of this call center? Or should we expect that only employers will be contacting the call center? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department has discussed this need in public meetings and has released the RFP which is public. Otherwise, the public will see the customer service line listed as an employer services support line on the website and all calls made to that line will be routed to the call center for first level calls. | |

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| **104** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General | Can the Department confirm the IT Service contract is not required with proposal submission but must be completed after contract award? |
| **Answer** | |
| The IT-SC is included only for review at this time. This is signed with the awarded vendor after contract development and negotiations. | |

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| **105** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Staffing and Forecasting page 9 | Can the Department please confirm that billable hours will include agreed upon staffing levels and their cost, regardless of the actual number of calls received in the call center |
| **Answer** | |
| Unclear what the question is asking. Any time spent towards work devoted towards this Program would be billable. This is not solely time spent on phone. Staffing levels may be adjusted upwards or downwards based on call volumes, as indicated in the RFP. | |

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| **106** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General | What potential pain points has the Department identified for this project? |
| **Answer** | |
| This would be discussion during implementation with an awarded vendor, please have the proposal speak to the scope of work as described. | |

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| **107** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| PART III Key RFP Events Questions and Answers | Can the Department please confirm that if answers to questions are delayed, that respondents will have at least 7 days to review answers to questions prior to the submission deadline via proposal extension? |
| **Answer** | |
| We do not anticipate the answers being delayed. Vendors will have at least 7 days from answers being posted to proposal deadline of 10/4/2024. | |

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| **108** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV B 2 page 15 Scoring Process | Can the Department please expound upon a consensus evaluation approach, without individual section scoring? |
| **Answer** | |
| Please refer to the State of Maine Procurement website for questions related to procurement rules and regulations. Part V, B of the RFP describes the scoring process | |

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| **109** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General/Schedule | When does the Department anticipate to award a contract? |
| **Answer** | |
| Anticipated award by 11/1/2024 with contract signed anticipated by 12/1/2024. | |

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| **110** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| General/Schedule | When is the anticipated go live milestone for the call center? |
| **Answer** | |
| Anticipated 12/30/2024. | |

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| **111** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV B 2 page 15 Scoring Process | Will meeting minutes of the collaborative evaluation review be kept? |
| **Answer** | |
| The consensus scoring forms are posted in accordance with State of Maine Procurement procedures. Please refer to their website. | |

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| **112** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| PART III Key RFP Events | Would the Department consider a week proposal extension to allow respondents to fully and completely prepare their submission and review answers to questions? |
| **Answer** | |
| No. | |

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| **113** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part 1 Introduction; C. Eligibility to Submit Bids; Page 6 | Is it acceptable for the awarded Bidder to deploy a remote staff as long as at least 50% of the staff are Maine residents? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. | |

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| **114** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part 1 Introduction; C. Eligibility to Submit Bids; Page 6 | Is there a requirement for the < 50% of non-Maine based staff to work within the United States? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. | |

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| **115** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services to be Provided; 1. Call Center Support; Page 8 | Is the Department interested in leveraging other modes of communication (e.g., email, chat, etc.) in addition to voice? |
| **Answer** | |
| Can be considered as an option, but the primary focus of the RFP is voice support for phone calls. | |

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| **116** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services to be Provided; 1. Call Center Support; Page 8 | What is the desired call sampling methodology to be used for evaluating and scoring call quality? |
| **Answer** | |
| Vendor should make a proposal on method used. | |

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| **117** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services to be Provided; 2. Technology; Page 9 | How are the Department-provided systems accessed (e.g., VPN, web-based, etc.)? |
| **Answer** | |
| Access to the Department contributions portal through cloud-hosted, web-based access with provided credentials. | |

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| **118** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services to be Provided; 2. Technology; Page 9 | Assuming the appropriate security protocols are in place (e.g., VDI into awarded Bidder’s network), can Agents use their own computers to perform their tasks? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. | |

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| **119** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services to be Provided; 2. Technology; Page 9 | Will the awarded Bidder’s Agents will have access to a Department knowledge base that contains the content needed to assist callers? |
| **Answer** | |
| Knowledge base has not been established yet. Will be developed jointly with awarded bidder. | |

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| **120** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services to be Provided; 2. Technology; Page 9 | Does the Department require access to the Bidder’s call management system? |
| **Answer** | |
| No. | |

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| **121** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services to be Provided; 3. Training; Page 9 | Is it expected that the awarded Bidder’s training department develop all training materials? If yes, please confirm what materials the Department will provide to assist with this effort. |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department will provide up to 5 business days of training on how to navigate contributions portal system and program information that agents may need to respond to. The rest of the training should be developed and provided by vendors for their agents. | |

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| **122** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services to be Provided; 4. Staffing and Forecasting; Page 9 | Can the Department describe the methodology used to determine that the program will need to launch with 40 Agents? |
| **Answer** | |
| A similar, but more complex roll out of the Maine Tax Portal was looked at to come up with initial staffing estimate for call center support. | |

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| **123** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II Scope of Services to be Provided; 4. Staffing and Forecasting; Page 9 | Is the 40-agent assumption based on a gross team count of 40 Agents or does the Department believe that they will need 40 Agents on desk for go live? |
| **Answer** | |
| Gross 40 agents to start, with staffing adjusted upwards or downwards based on forecasting described in the RFP. | |

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| **124** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| 1.a., page 8 | Are staff expected to work if the State of Maine closes offices due to unexpected closures (e.g. weather)? |
| **Answer** | |
| No, unless communicated in advance by the Department. | |

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| **125** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| 2.c., page 9 | Is bring your own computer device acceptable as long as the device/computer meets security requirements? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. | |

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| **126** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| 2.c., page 9 | Is a virtual work environment acceptable? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, provided that at least 50% of the employees are Maine based. | |

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| **127** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix E, page 24 | Would you please define a “fully burdened hourly rate”, listing what costs should be included in each staff role? |
| **Answer** | |
| Fully burdened hourly rates should include all personnel costs and overhead costs associated with personnel worked into the rates. Any static costs related to implementation should be listed as separate line items. | |

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| **128** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| 4., page 13 | Based on our analysis of the RFP, the exact template of the response should be structured by the bidder following the order, numbering, section, and sub-section headings dictated in Part IV, Section II. How shall forms shall be included which do not have labeled sections in the appendices provided such as Section II, sub-section 5- Financial Viability? |
| **Answer** | |
| They should be provided in the requested file format discussed in Part III, Subsection C3, as clarified in the RFP amendment. | |

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| **129** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | May bidders submit proposals on their own letterhead using the same language, order, numbering, section and sub-section headings dictated in Part IV? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. | |

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| **130** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Cover Page | We respectfully request an extension to the posted due date of October 4 to allow for answers to be incorporated to our proposal responses. |
| **Answer** | |
| There will not be an extension. Answers are posted at least 7 days prior to the proposal due date. | |

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| **131** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| NA | Will local firms receive any preference during evaluations? |
| **Answer** | |
| No however bidder must provide at least 50% of staffing must be provided with Maine based employees to be eligible to submit the proposal, please see Part I, C of the RFP. | |

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| **132** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I.D & App E | Part 1D suggests a three-year contract term. Should the Appendix E cost proposal provide rates for each of the three years? |
| **Answer** | |
| No. Cost proposal should only cover the 1st year period of initial performance. | |

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| **133** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part I.D & App E | Part 1D suggests a three-year contract term. Is the total evaluated price calculated for the first year only or the sum of three years? |
| **Answer** | |
| The first year only. | |

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| **134** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.1 & App E | Part II.1 indicates that the hours of operation of the call center will be 8am to 5pm (9 hours a day) Monday through Friday except holidays (of which there are 13 listed). Appendix E states that the “total proposed cost must be provided with the assumption of 40 customer service agents are provided full time for 12 months…). While the hourly rates are to be provided, total proposed costs are to be calculated and provided. Such that all proposals use a consistent baseline formula for the buildup of total cost, would you please provided the total hours per year to be bid for the customer service agent rate? (Is it, for example: ((40 agents X 9 hours a day X 5 days a week X 52 weeks) minus (40 agents X 13 holidays X 8 hours a day)) = 89,440?; or perhaps it’s not 9 hours a day but 8 per agent?; etc.) |
| **Answer** | |
| Assume 2,080 hours per agent per year – so 40x2080 = 83,200 staffing hours plus any line-item static costs for total cost proposal. | |

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| **135** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.1 & Part II.2 | Are the calls to be recorded? If so, must the awarded Bidder provide access to call recordings to the Department? What retention/protection requirements might be required? |
| **Answer** | |
| Recommend at least recording random call sampling for quality assurance and training purposes. Department would need access to these and digital file retention schedule for the program is currently 10 years. | |

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| **136** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II 1 d. | States that all customer interactions must be entered in the PFML’s CRM database. What is the CRM? |
| **Answer** | |
| Customer Relations Management System - the technology platform to enter case notes about calls made. | |

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| **137** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II 2 c. | The awarded Bidder will provide all computer equipment, phone equipment, and office space for their own staff. Please clarify if these roles can be fully remote. |
| **Answer** | |
| They may, provided at least 50% of the employees are Maine based. | |

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| **138** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II.3 | Please confirm that all approved training hours are billable. |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, training hours are billable. | |

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| **139** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| PART III.C.3 & Part IV | There is inconsistency between the file numbering instructions in these too parts. For example, Part IV indicates that the Cost Proposal is File #4, while III.C.3 indicates the Cost Proposal is File #3. Please clarify the proposal/file submission structure requirements. (“Proposed Services” is omitted in III.C.3). |
| **Answer** | |
| The RFP amendment has clarified that File 3 is “Proposed Services”, and File 4 is “Cost Proposal”. | |

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| **140** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part IV | Are there any page limitations or guidelines for the proposals? |
| **Answer** | |
| There are no page limitations but please refer to opening narrative of Part IV that answers should be “detailed yet succinct”. | |

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| **141** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| NA | Will the MPL portal vendor provide initial training on the portal? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. | |

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| **142** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| NA | Is the technology vendor responsible for the Maine Paid Leave Portal precluded from competing for this contract? |
| **Answer** | |
| No. | |