

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
PROJECT NO. RFQ 16-15
ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES POOL

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS NO. 1

Date: January 15, 2016

To: Prospective Respondents

From: Procurement Operations Department, Houston Community College

Subject: Questions and Answers Responses

1. In reviewing the RFQ –Exhibit 1 it has Electrical and Mechanical/Plumbing separated. As an MEP firm is it acceptable to submit as one firm in lieu of providing two submissions?

Answer: Yes.

2. It appears this RFQ has a 35% small business participation goal, it was stated in the pre-proposal meeting that you do not want any teams for this contract and would prefer SBE's to submit on their own. If this is the case, how would you like us to handle the SBE requirement for this RFQ including the SBE forms?

Answer: This is not the case. We encourage SBE to submit independently. We encourage Non-SBE to seek small business participation as sub-contractor for a minimum of 35%. HCC will follow its small business program described in the procedure ([http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-\(Revised-11-26-2013\).pdf](http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-(Revised-11-26-2013).pdf)).

3. As a full service A/E firm, [potential respondent] would like to submit proposals on four disciplines including b) Architectural, e) Engineering, Civil, h) Engineering, Structural, and r) Other related A&E services as needed (Construction Administration). Is it acceptable to submit one proposal that contains all four disciplines?

Answer: Yes.

4. [Potential respondent] would like a clarification regarding the 35% Small Business commitment. [Potential respondent] is a Small Business according to SBA standards. [Do we] need a small business sub-consultant to fulfill this requirement even though we are a 100% small business?

Answer: Yes, refer to HCC's Small Business Program ([http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-\(Revised-11-26-2013\).pdf](http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-(Revised-11-26-2013).pdf)).

5. The RFQ states that the firm must provide a certification stating that they are a small business. SBA does not furnish certifications. How would you like us to prove that we are a Small Business?

Answer: HCC recognizes certification by the following governmental and private agencies: Port of Houston Authority SBE Certification, Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) SBE Certification, City of Houston SBE Certification, Texas Department of Transportation SBE Certification,

City of Austin SBE Certification, South Central Texas Regional Certification Agency SBE Certification, Small Business Administration 8(a). HCC has the right to revoke acceptance of a business as a certified or qualifying small business and to conduct certification reviews. This is noted on page 15 of 32 of the solicitation.

6. I am a small business that is new to the Houston area about 7 months ago. My company has been in existence for almost 3 years, I have only been in business for about a year now working with local small architects, after leaving my previous employer of 9+ years. I know from working at my previous employer that when pursuing these types of jobs one would typically try to get on a team with a larger MEP firm as the HUB/Small business participant. My question to you is as a small business could I apply for this RFQ or should I try and team up with a larger MEP firm as there HUB/Small Business participant?

Answer: Yes, HCC encourages all small business participation through the method or mechanism that best suits your company model as an individual independent firm or by teaming with another firm.

7. Is a license required for these disciplines?

Answer: The State of Texas has statutory requirements for certain professions and professional services. HCC adheres to all legal requirements and directives set forth in Texas law.

8. Provide clarification on SBE form 3&4.

Answer: HCC encourages small business participation. These forms are intended to ensure good faith effort by respondent to contract with SBEs. Please refer to HCC's Small Business Procedure ([http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-\(Revised-11-26-2013\).pdf](http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-(Revised-11-26-2013).pdf)).

9. Per Exhibit 1, how do we put our submittal together?

Answer: Please refer to page 8 of 32: Section 3 – Instructions to Proposers.

10. If I am an SBE in a team environment, do I provide a separate package for the sub?

Answer: Please refer to page 8 of 32: Section 3 – Instructions to Proposers.

11. Can SBE's receive all SBE points?

Answer: No, Please see HCC's Small Business Procedure ([http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-\(Revised-11-26-2013\).pdf](http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-(Revised-11-26-2013).pdf)).

12. Is teaming up encouraged or discouraged?

Answer: HCC encourages teaming per HCC's Producedure ([http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-\(Revised-11-26-2013\).pdf](http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-(Revised-11-26-2013).pdf)).

13. In reference to RFQ No.:16-15 Architectural & Engineering Services Pool, do we need to include a written letter for each project included in Tab 4- Past Performance and References?

Answer: HCC encourages all respondents to respond in the manner that best articulates your company's capability.

14. The third paragraph on page 15 of 32 under Paragraph 14 titled Small Business Development

Program (SBDP) states the HCC policy for SBDP: *“Good Faith Efforts: HCC will make a good faith effort to utilize small businesses in all contracts. **The Annual program goals may be met by contracting directly with small businesses** or indirectly through subcontracting opportunities.”* Then, the following sentence inaccurately deducts from the above HCC Policy statement the following: *“Therefore, any business that contracts with HCC will be required to make a good faith effort to award subcontracts to small businesses. The subcontracting goal applies to all vendors regardless of their status.....”* We deduct from the HCC Policy that for this RFQ 16-15, the SBDP goals can be met directly if the Prime Contractor is a certified SBE by METRO and no subcontracting is necessary. Please confirm.

Answer: No, the program is both an SBE and SBE Subcontracting Program. See HCC’s Small Business Procedure ([http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-\(Revised-11-26-2013\).pdf](http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-(Revised-11-26-2013).pdf)).

15. If the firm has a current contract with HCC, will it preclude us for submitting qualifications on this one?

Answer: No, the firm is not precluded from submitting.

16. When the changes to the SBDP and teaming requirements, discussed at the pre-bid meeting, are expected to be published?

Answer: No changes. See HCC procedure ([http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-\(Revised-11-26-2013\).pdf](http://www.hccs.edu/media/houston-community-college/district/pdf/HCC-SBDP---Policy--Procedures-(Revised-11-26-2013).pdf)).

17. In regards to RFQ NO: 16-15, we assume some projects under the IDIQ will require sub-consultants under the prime consultant’s contract or oversight. Do you want us to submit only our qualifications as prime for design work prepared directly by our company, or should we include sub-consultants customarily a part of our team such as structural, MEP or other engineers, either one per discipline or a list of frequently utilized sub-consultants in each discipline?

Answer: Include sub-consultants (preferably small business) such as structural, MEP, or other engineers. Provide information on your complete team.

18. The RFQ requests a binder in 8.5"x11" format with tabs. Is this meant to be a standard 3-ring binder? Are other bound methods acceptable?

Answer: 3-ring binder.

19. If a firm is applying as a Prime for this solicitation, may they also apply as a sub-consultant on another firm’s team?

Answer: Yes.

20. In the pre-proposal meeting HCCS noted that it wanted each firm to submit only for the services that they offer in-house and discouraged firms from submitting with a team/sub-consultants. We understand that the SBE goal is 35% for any proposed project and are capable of meeting that goal if awarded. As requested, our commitment will be outlined in the Small Business Participation section of the SOQ. However, how would HCCS like Prime firms to fill out the SBE/Subcontractor forms that are required if we are not to include sub-consultants on this submittal? Would simply putting N/A and signing/notarizing as required suffice?

Answer: Submitting with a team/sub-consultant is encouraged. Therefore submit forms as required.

21. In reference to the above RFQ it lists in Section 14 on page 15 what certifications HCC recognizes for

your SBE goal. While we are in the process of putting together our team one of our SBE partners let us know that as of December 8, 2015 the City of Houston's SBE certification is no longer for Architectural or Engineering firms. The certification is reserved for construction firms exclusively. https://www.houstontx.gov/obo/certification_apps_and_forms.html. With that being said will HCC also accept Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) certifications in addition to the City of Houston's SBE certification?

Answer: This is correct; however, HCC does not recognize HUB certifications in lieu of SBE.

22. May the date of submission be pushed back to a later date? I ask this because some of the questions that we have asked drastically change our submission.

Answer: Yes, see Solicitation Amendment No. 1.

23. Our company is City of Houston certified MBE, State of Texas HUB firm. Can we consider ourselves as a small business and perform the services 100% with our own resources? Is that acceptable or do we need to meet the small business goal of 35%.

Answer: HCC does not recognize HUB or MBE certifications in lieu of SBE. Respondents are expected to meet the small business goal of 35%.

24. On Tab 5 Small Business Practices part v, it says to provide a reference list of all customers noted in tab 4. Provide the contact person and representative who served as the Small Business Development liaison. Is this the client SBE liaison or is this the SBE representative of the sub-consultants? If this is the client, can you please provide the SBE liaison for HCC?

Answer: This would be the client's SBE liaison.

25. Our company specialized in rendering graphics. Could we submit a qualification statement to this RFQ?

Answer: HCC will accept all responsive submittals prior to the submittal deadline.

26. The RFQ states "a separate Statement of Qualifications is required for each proposed discipline you select." (Pg. 5 of 32, Exhibit 1, #1). If a firm is submitting on three separate disciplines (mechanical, electrical, commissioning), is HCCS expecting to receive three separate Statement of Qualifications from that firm? Or, is the intent to simply address the three disciplines within one Statement of Qualifications?

Answer: The intent is to allow the respondents to fully address all relevant qualifications for the Evaluation Committee's most comprehensive understanding of the possible awardees.

27. The RFQ states "a small business participation goal of 35%." (Pg 10 of 32, g. Tab 5-Small Business Practice). In addition to the narrative requested for the firm's response, are we to submit Attachments 2-4 in our Statement of Qualifications?

Answer: Yes.

28. What types of projects will be awarded from this contract?

Answer: Successful respondents can expect to be awarded projects of the nature generally associated with the qualifications requirements expressed in the solicitation.

29. Our firm anticipates using sub-consultants to provide the necessary support such as civil, structural,

MEP engineering, data, accessibility, etc. We have strong relationships with our consultants and have always exceeded our small business participation goals. Will you need qualifications from our selected sub-consultants as well as part of our qualification package?

Answer: Yes. For any member of your team you must provide the appropriate qualification statements.

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