

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ELDER AFFAIRS

1 ASHBURTON PLACE, BOSTON, MA 02108



Request for Response (RFR)

Document Title: Older Worker Remote Employment Case Management Services

January 19, 2021

Please Note: This is a single document associated with a complete Bid (also referred to as Solicitation) that can be found on [COMMBUYS](http://www.COMMBUYS.com) (www.COMMBUYS.com). All Bidders are responsible for reviewing and adhering to all information, forms and requirements for the entire Bid, which are all incorporated into the Bid. Bidders may also contact the COMMBUYS Helpdesk at COMMBUYS@state.ma.us or the COMMBUYS Helpline at 1-888-MA-STATE. The Helpline is staffed from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday Eastern Standard or Daylight time, as applicable, except on federal, state and Suffolk county holidays.

Table of Contents

1.	RFR INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION.....	5
1.1	Definitions.....	5
1.1	Applicable Procurement Law	6
1.2	Estimated Procurement Calendar	6
1.3	Number of Awards.....	7
1.4	Expected Duration (Initial Duration and any Options to Renew).....	7
1.5	Contract Compensation	7
1.6	Funding Source	7
1.7	Subcontracting and Licensing	7
1.8	Written questions via the Bid Q&A on COMMBUYS.....	8
1.9	Locating Bid Q&A.....	8
1.10	Amendment Deadline.....	8
2.	PROCUREMENT SCOPE AND DESCRIPTION	9
2.1	Background	9
2.2	Purpose of RFP	9
3.	PROGRAM DESIGN.....	10
3.1	Program Stakeholders	10
3.2	Customer Flow	11
3.3	Program Eligibility.....	12
3.4	In Demand Industries and Occupations	12
3.5	Preliminary Program Outcomes.....	12
3.6	Scope of Work	13
3.6.1	Quality Improvement and Evaluation Process	13
3.6.2	Participant Recruitment.....	14
3.6.3	Participant Assessment, Selection, and Enrollment	15
3.6.4	Acquisition, Distribution and Support for Technology	16
3.6.5	Peer Support Sessions and Individual Coaching and Counseling	17
3.6.6	Remote Work Training	18
3.6.7	Technical Job Training	18
3.6.8	Job Readiness Preparation.....	19
3.6.9	Placement in Unsubsidized Employment or an OJT	19
3.7	Preferred Bidder Qualifications	21
3.8	Geographic Location.....	21
4.	RESPONSES.....	21
4.1	Technical Proposal.....	22

4.1.1	Table of Contents (1 page, not scored)	22
4.1.2	Cover Letter (maximum 1 page, not scored)	22
4.1.3	Management Structure and Staffing (maximum 3 pages; 10 points)	22
4.1.4	Organizational Experience (maximum 5 pages; 10 points)	23
4.1.5	Service Delivery Requirements (maximum 20 pages; 60 points)	23
4.1.6	References (1 page, 5 points).....	25
4.1.7	Emergency Response Plan (1 page, not scored)	25
4.1.8	Financial Stability (2 pages; 5 points)	25
4.1.9	Attachments	26
4.2	Cost Proposal	26
5.	EVALUATION CRITERIA	26
6.	OTHER TERMS	26
6.1	Executive Order 515, Establishing an Environmental Purchasing Policy	26
6.2	Reporting	26
6.3	Security and confidentiality.....	27
6.4	Failure to perform contractual obligations	27
6.5	Audit	27
7.	HOW TO SUBMIT A QUOTE	27
7.1	Quote Submission Method	27
7.2	COMMBUYS Quote Submission Training and Instructions.....	27
7.3	COMMBUYS Support	28
7.4	Bid Opening Date/Time	28
7.5	Response Contents.....	28
7.6	Electronic Signatures.....	29
7.7	Ink Signatures.....	29
7.8	Prior to Bid Opening Date/Time	29
7.9	After Bid Opening Date/Time.....	29
8.	REQUIRED TERMS FOR ALL RFRS.....	30
8.1	General Procurement Information	30
8.1.1	Alterations	30
8.1.2	Ownership of Submitted Quotes	30
8.1.3	Prohibitions	30
8.2	Terms and Requirements Pertaining to Awarded Contracts.....	30
8.2.1	Commonwealth Tax Exemption	30
8.2.2	Contractor's Contact Information	30
9.	RFR REQUIRED SPECIFICATIONS	32

10. INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXECUTION AND SUBMISSION OF COMMONWEALTH STANDARD FORMS.....	39
10.1 Commonwealth Standard Contract Form.....	39
10.2 Commonwealth Terms and Conditions	39
10.3 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification (Mass. Substitute W9 Form)	39
10.4 Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing	40
10.5 Supplier Diversity Program Plan Form.....	40
10.6 Additional Environmentally Preferable Products / Practices	41
10.7 Prompt Payment Discount Form.....	41
10.8 Business Reference Form	41
11. INSTRUCTIONS FOR VENDORS RESPONDING TO BIDS ELECTRONICALLY THROUGH COMMBUYS	42
12. PROCUREMENT GLOSSARY	45

1. RFR INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION

1.1 Definitions

Figure 1. RFR Definitions

Term	Definition
Aging Services Access Point	Private non-profit regional agencies that facilitate the provision of services for people age 60 and older.
Councils on Aging	Municipal agencies that provide local outreach, social and health services, advocacy, information and referral for older adults, their families, and caregivers.
Community partners	The regional agencies with which EOEA will work with informally (i.e., without a contract) to implement this project, such as Councils on Aging, Aging Services Access Points, housing agencies, and other community based organizations.
Eligible Individual	Anyone who is at least 55 years old, unemployed, and who is a member of a family with an income that is not more than 125 percent of the of the established federal poverty income guidelines as established and periodically updated by the U.S. Department of Labor, and resides in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
Evaluator	EOEA contracted organization that will perform the grant evaluation and develop criteria and data for the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model.
EOEA/Executive Office of Elder Affairs	The Massachusetts state agency established pursuant to M.G.L. c. 19A that is responsible for promoting the independence, empowerment, and well-being of older people, individuals with disabilities, and their families..
Low income	Household income of no more than 125 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) established and periodically updated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
MassHire Department of Career Services	The Massachusetts employment support network that includes the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 29 MassHire Career Centers, and 16 regional Workforce Boards.
Independent Living Centers	A non-residential agency that is consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, is designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provides an array of independent living services.
OJT/on-the-job training	A contract with an employer in the public, private non-profit, or private sector. Through the OJT contract, occupational training is provided for the program participant in exchange for the reimbursement, typically up to 50 percent of the wage rate of the participant, for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and supervision related to the training. OJT contracts cannot exceed three (3) months. As part of an OJT contract, employers must commit to retaining the program participant as either a full time or part time employee after the training period has ended.
Participant	An Eligible Individual job seeker who is eligible for the program.

Term	Definition
MassHire Workforce Boards	Each of the 16 local workforce areas has a MassHire Workforce Board appointed by the local Chief Elected Official comprising business leaders and workforce partners. The boards are responsible for the policy and oversight of the workforce development activities in the local area.
Unsubsidized Employment	Full time (at least 35 hours/week) or part time (at least 18 hours/week) employment with a public, private, or non-profit employer in which the program participant's wages are not being offset by any public funds.

1.1 Applicable Procurement Law

This Bid is issued under MGL c. 7, § 22, § 22N; MGL c. 30, § 51, § 52; 801 CMR 21.00; 808 CMR 1.00 (Human and Social Services) and MGL c. 7A, § 7; St. 1986 c. 206, § 17; 815 CMR 2.00 (Grants).

1.2 Estimated Procurement Calendar

Figure 2. Estimated Procurement Calendar

Event	Date	Time
Bid Release Date	January 19, 2021	4:00 PM EST
Virtual Bidder's Conference (Optional)	January 27, 2021	10:00 AM EST
Deadline for Submission of Questions through COMMBUYS "Bid Q&A"	January 29, 2021	4:00 PM EST
Official Answers for Bid Q&A published (Estimated)	February 5, 2021	4:00 PM EST
Deadline for Quotes/Bid Responses ("Bid Opening Date/Time" in COMMBUYS)	February 12, 2021	4:00 PM EST
Notification of Apparent Successful Bidder(s) (Estimated)/Negotiations Begin	February 26, 2021	NA
Estimated Contract Start Date	March 19, 2021	NA
Estimated Contract End Date	December 31, 2022	N/A

Times are Eastern Standard/Daylight Savings (US), as displayed on the COMMBUYS system clock displayed to Bidders after logging in. If there is a conflict between the dates in this Procurement Calendar and dates in the Bid's Header, the dates in the Bid's Header on COMMBUYS shall prevail. Bidders are responsible for checking the Bid record, including Bid Q&A, on COMMBUYS for Procurement Calendar updates.

The Virtual Bidder's Conference will be held via Zoom. Bidders are responsible for ensuring they have adequate IT hardware and software capabilities, as well as internet access, in order to successfully attend the event. Bidders must register for this meeting in advance at the link below. After registering, bidders will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Bidders can register until the start time of the meeting: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYqf-qprDkuEtf0Y8_ifLGMrPx3aJ_58VWk.

1.3 Number of Awards

EOEA will award one (1) award to a qualified vendor for the services described in Section 3.6.

1.4 Expected Duration (Initial Duration and any Options to Renew)

The initial duration of the contract will be for up to two years. The estimated start date of the contracts is March 19, 2021. The end date will be December 31, 2022. At this time, there are no options to renew.

1.5 Contract Compensation

This RFR will result in a maximum obligation contract, which will be budgeted based on the total costs per cohort for the required services. Bidders should assume that the total budget is approximately \$590,000 over the lifetime of the contract, including the following expense categories:

- Approximately \$300,000 is available for **professional services**. This category includes all expenses other than those related to the costs for training services and the purchasing of IT equipment and software. Examples of professional services include payroll or other personnel expenses incurred to implement or manage the scope of work described in this RFR, travel costs, indirect costs, etc.
- Approximately \$50,000 is available for **technology for program participants**. This category includes expenses for IT hardware and software for use by program participants during this implementation.
- Approximately \$240,000 is available for **remote and technical job training**. This category includes expenses for training services, including tuition, fees, etc.

If additional funds become available, EOEA will work with the Case Management vendor to determine how those funds will be allocated.

1.6 Funding Source

This project and the contract resulting from this RFR will be 100% funded by a federal grant. The total grant award is \$889,286. The successful bidder will be responsible for complying with the terms and conditions of the grant award, and all relevant federal grant management requirements that apply to subrecipients as identified in 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 2900, and any other applicable regulation, statute, or other governing policy.

1.7 Subcontracting and Licensing

Bidders are encouraged to establish partnerships, as needed, in order to provide the best value to EOEA and the Participants served by the program. Bidders are permitted to subcontract with other organizations, and must disclose all known subcontracting relationships in their response. If any bidder proposes using material licensed or acquired from a third party, they must identify all such licensed material and disclose the source of the material and the license holder, if applicable.

1.8 Written questions via the Bid Q&A on COMMBUYS

The “Bid Q&A” provides the opportunity for Bidders to ask written questions and receive written answers from EOEA regarding this Bid. All Bidders’ questions must be submitted through the Bid Q&A found on COMMBUYS (see below for instructions). Questions may be asked only prior to the Deadline for Submission of Questions stated in the Estimated Procurement Calendar. EOEA reserves the right not to respond to questions submitted after this date. It is the Bidder’s responsibility to verify receipt of questions.

Please note that any questions submitted to EOEA using any other medium (including those that are sent by mail, fax, email or voicemail, etc.) will not be answered. To reduce the number of redundant or duplicate questions, Bidders are asked to review all questions previously submitted to determine whether the Bidder’s question has already been posted.

Bidders are responsible for entering content suitable for public viewing, since all of the questions are accessible to the public. Bidders must not include any information that could be considered personal, security sensitive, inflammatory, incorrect, otherwise objectionable, including information about the Bidder’s company or other companies.

EOEA reserves the right to edit or delete any submitted questions that raise any of these issues or that are not in the best interest of the Commonwealth or this Bid.

All answers are final when posted. Any subsequent revisions to previously provided answers will be dated.

It is the responsibility of the prospective Bidder and awarded Contractor to maintain an active registration in COMMBUYS and to keep current the email address of the Bidder’s contact person and prospective contract manager, if awarded a contract, and to monitor that email inbox for communications from the Purchasing Department, including requests for clarification. The Purchasing Department and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if a prospective Bidder’s/awarded Contractor’s designated email address is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the prospective Bidder’s/awarded Contractor’s computer, network or internet service provider (ISP) cause email communications sent to/from the prospective Bidder/Awarded contractor and the Purchasing Department to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

1.9 Locating Bid Q&A

Log into COMMBUYS, locate the Bid, acknowledge receipt of the Bid, and scroll down to the bottom of the Bid Header page. The “Bid Q&A” button allows Bidders access to the Bid Q&A page.

1.10 Amendment Deadline

EOEA reserves the right to make amendments to the Bid after initial publication. It is each Bidder’s responsibility to check COMMBUYS for any amendments, addenda or modifications to this Bid, and any Bid Q&A records related to this Bid. EOEA and the Commonwealth accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Bidders who submit a Quote based on an out-of-date Bid or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

2. PROCUREMENT SCOPE AND DESCRIPTION

2.1 Background

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs, established under M.G.L. c. 19A, is the Massachusetts state agency responsible for helping to support older people in the Commonwealth to live independently in the setting of their choice. EOEA's mission is to promote the independence, empowerment, and well-being of older people, their families, and caregivers. EOEA provides comprehensive information about healthy aging and options for long-term services and supports by planning, developing, implementing, and managing a full array of community-based health and social services and supports, and by delivering quality protective services for older people.

2.2 Purpose of RFP

EOEA received demonstration grant funding from the United States Department of Labor (DOL), which it is dedicating to responding to new employment challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic for older job seekers.

EOEA's vision is to develop, implement, and evaluate a holistic training and job readiness program designed to prepare older low-income workers for successful remote employment. This program is exclusively focused on helping older workers find **remote jobs**. A remote job is defined as an employment relationship where the primary work location is the older adult's home, versus a shared physical office location. EOEA believes that during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency, remote employment is a particularly important opportunity for older workers to remain in the workforce for longer, and will lead to increased economic security as they age. EOEA also believes that remote work requires enhanced skills, understanding, and behavior – beyond the normal work skills required for traditional employment – to be successful.

The program's goal is to help jobseekers find and succeed in long-term employment. Successful outcomes from this program include either Unsubsidized Employment or placement in an On the Job Training (OJT) program that will lead Unsubsidized Employment. The program will address known barriers to successful remote work for older adults by offering access to technology, technology support, intensive case management and peer support, training, and job search activities. EOEA believes that these interventions can make meaningful improvements to jobseekers' capacity (e.g., technical skills, soft skills, confidence, etc.) for remote work.

Many programs exist with select components of this program design nationally and in Massachusetts; however, this program combines these components with unique intensity and purpose. This is the first time the Commonwealth will be operating a program with the precise design components specified in this RFR. The intention of this program is not only to help its program participants find jobs, but is also to add to the national conversation about innovative ways to evolve the public workforce development system and aging network services for this population specifically. In addition to the other specific qualifications for eligible vendors, EOEA is seeking a vendor who will be a partner to EOEA in this important work and will be invested in this overarching goal.

EOEA's program design and implementation is built upon the following guiding priorities:

- **Develop a training program that responds to employer needs in Massachusetts.** EOEA believes that alignment with market demand, employer needs, and industry trajectory is critical to the program's success.

- **Implementation will include close and dynamic collaboration between the Case Management Vendor, EOEA, MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), and the project evaluator based on Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) model.** This approach will help the team to remain agile, and quickly build on lessons learned, iterate for future participants, and continue to act.
- **Leverage existing workforce development assets as much as possible.** Massachusetts has a rich network of workforce development assets already in place. EOEA's program model seeks to leverage those strengths to engage the best of what the Commonwealth has to offer.
- **Produce actionable data and resources** for the Commonwealth and other workforce development organizations to replicate and scale a remote employment preparation program. To achieve this goal, EOEA will contract with an academic public institution to perform a program evaluation outside of this RFR process. EOEA and contracted vendors will also create a program design toolkit, which will incorporate lessons learned from this program, to help other states or local workforce development regions plan and implement a program like this one.

3. PROGRAM DESIGN

EOEA's program design is intended to provide not only the technical skills that jobseekers need to be successful in the labor market generally, but also to provide comprehensive supports that older workers need to thrive in remote employment.

3.1 Program Stakeholders

Aligned with EOEA's stated priorities, this program includes the following stakeholders:

- **EOEA** – EOEA will serve as the lead agency overseeing the program and will be the program's sponsor.
- **Case Management Vendor** – The Case Management vendor will perform the scope of work defined in this RFR and will be the lead entity responsible for day to day operations of the program. The Case Management vendor will be responsible for working closely and effectively with all stakeholders throughout the lifetime of the project.
- **MDCS** – EOEA is engaging the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) as the business services lead on this program. MDCS will leverage its extensive network of business services professionals, at the state and local level, to promote remote work generally and create a pipeline of interested employers for this program specifically. MDCS will convey employer priorities and needs to the Case Management vendor on an ongoing basis and make recommendations for inclusion in all aspects of the Case Management vendor's scope of work. MDCS will liaise with employers directly, and will facilitate employer engagement in this program – including public or individualized employer information sessions, hiring events, interviews, etc.
- **Evaluator** – EOEA is engaging a public academic institution to perform an evaluation of this program. Evaluation activities will be ongoing for the lifetime of the project, and will seek to understand and document the effectiveness of all aspects of this program design.

3.2 Customer Flow

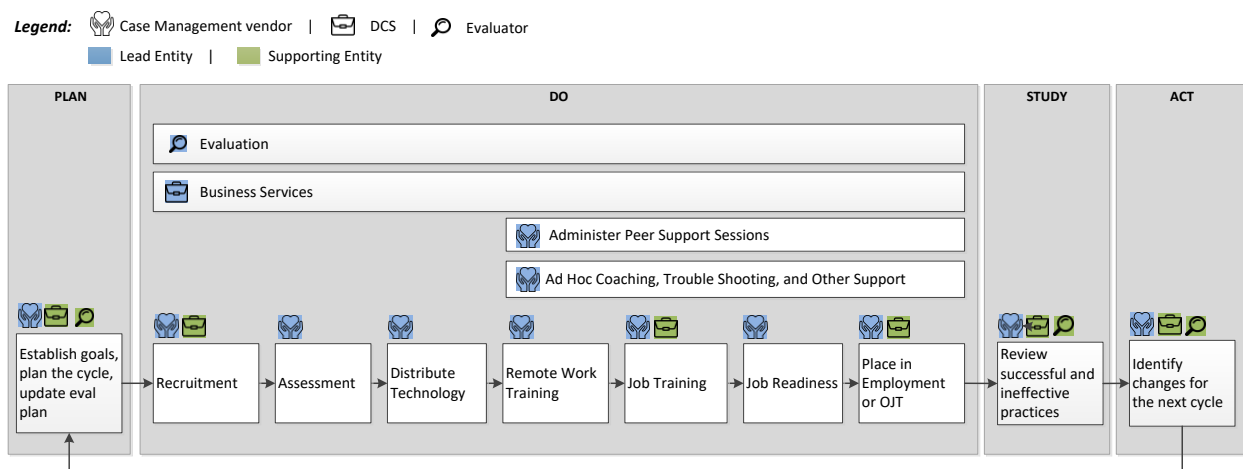
The program is designed to be implemented in a cyclical fashion. This program will provide the following services to a total of four (4) cohorts of fifteen (15) jobseekers, which will last for approximately five (5) months per cohort. At the beginning and end of each cohort, the stakeholder will collaborate in a rapid PDSA process to inform the subsequent cohort. The following table summarizes the estimated schedule for each cohort. These dates are estimates and are subject to change.

Figure 3. Estimated Cohort Implementation Dates

Cohort		Est. Start Date	Est. End Date
Cohort 1			
	Implement Cohort	5/1/2021	10/8/2021
●	Cohort 1 completed		10/8/2021
Cohort 2			
	Implement Cohort	9/13/2021	2/20/2022
●	Cohort 2 completed		2/20/2022
Cohort 3			
	Implement Cohort	2/21/2022	7/31/2022
●	Cohort 3 completed		7/31/2022
Cohort 4			
	Implement Cohort	2/21/2022	7/31/2022
●	Cohort 4 completed		7/31/2022

The following illustration depicts customer flow for each cohort, as well as the primary responsibility for each phase and service.

Figure 4. Customer Flow



While EOEA has assigned a primary lead entity for each phase of work, EOEA expects that the Case Management vendor will leverage its partnerships effectively with each stakeholder during this program. EOEA has identified specific supporting relationships that should take place within each phase.

3.3 Program Eligibility

Eligibility for enrollment in the program will be limited to individuals who: are aged 55 and over; earn 125% or less of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL); reside in Massachusetts, and want a remote job in a priority industry and occupation (as defined in Section 3.4). Participants are not required to have formal work history.

While remote work is inherently not bound by geography in the same way traditional employment is, EOEA will prioritize enrollment for jobseekers in certain economically disadvantaged communities. EOEA has established this priority in order to target communities that are most in need. A jobseeker's geographic location will not exclude them from the program, but the recruitment process will prioritize applicants who reside in EOEA communities designated as priority. EOEA is in the process of finalizing priority communities based on current unemployment data.

3.4 In Demand Industries and Occupations

This program will invest its resources in preparing jobseekers for in-demand industries and occupations for remote work specifically. The employment sectors with the most active job opportunities during COVID-19 include the Healthcare and the Professional Services industries. Within these areas, Customer Service Representatives, Project Coordinators, and Healthcare Clinical or Administrative Support are the roles with the highest demand. This program will focus its resources on developing the jobseeker pipeline for these, or other emerging, in-demand roles. EOEA will approve additional industries and occupations to be added to this list at its sole discretion.

Figure 5. Top Remote Roles in Healthcare and Professional Services Industries

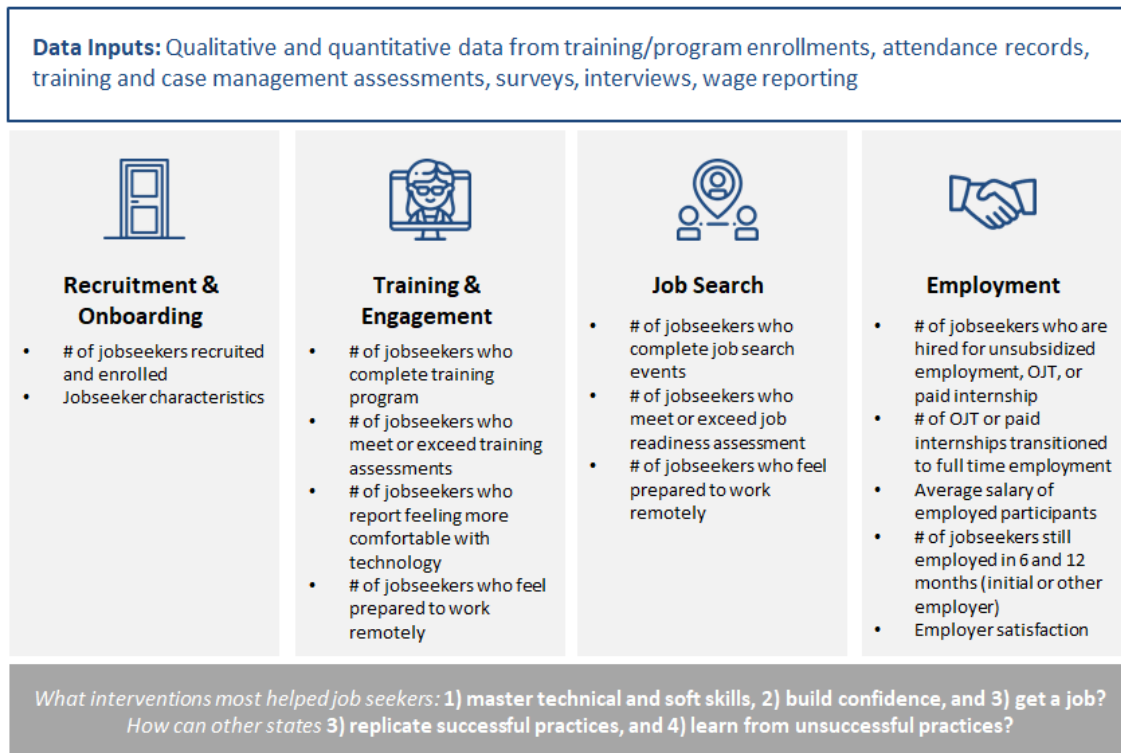
Role	Active Job Postings in JobQuest	Required Education
Customer Service Representative	70	High School Diploma or GED
Program or Project Coordinator	50	Ranges from High School Diploma or GED to Bachelor's Degree (depending on role)
Healthcare Clinical or Administrative Support	88	Ranges from High School Diploma or GED to Bachelor's Degree (depending on role)

3.5 Preliminary Program Outcomes

Compensation will be based on a maximum obligation amount for each cohort based on the accepted Bidder's cost proposal. Vendor compensation will not be based on satisfying established performance benchmarks. However, opportunities for improvement will be incorporated into program operations during the PDSA process. EOEA will closely monitor the Case Management vendor's performance in these areas and may require programmatic, operational, process, or other types of modifications in order to improve performance effectiveness.

EOEA is still in the process of defining the intended program outcomes but anticipates collecting and analyzing the types of information about this program described in the illustration below, which provides a representative sample of potential data points for evaluation. EOEA's hypothesis is that this program should be at least as effective as traditional workforce development programs, but the baseline performance benchmarks for the program are still being developed. EOEA will provide performance benchmarks before the start of the contract and work with the Bidder to develop potential improvements to the program prior to the commencement of each cohort.

Figure 6. Preliminary Program Evaluation Approach



3.6 Scope of Work

The Case Management vendor will run the day-to-day operations of the program. This vendor will have primary responsibility for the program's recruitment, assessment of program participants, acquisition and management of technology, remote work training, job training, job readiness, and job placement activities. They will also be responsible for providing one-on-one coaching, counseling, and other support for jobseekers as needed. Finally, the Case Management vendor will facilitate peer support sessions for program participants.

The responsibilities of the case management vendor will include:

3.6.1 Quality Improvement and Evaluation Process

The goal of the quality improvement process is to maintain an agile program design, which can quickly adapt from lessons learned, successes, experiences, and available quantitative performance data while implementing the program. The Case Management vendor will be the lead entity facilitating the rapid PDSA process. Due to the limited period of performance on the grant funding, the proposed cohort cycles must be able to transition very quickly from one to the next. As a result, the PDSA process needs to take place in 14 calendar days or less. This phase may need to run concurrently with the final phases and/or services being delivered to an ongoing cohort in order to prepare for the next cohort.

A representative example of the PDSA process can be found here on the [Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services website](#). Respondents are encouraged to use their own tools and templates, as long as they align with the general PDSA process and principles.

The Case Management vendor is responsible for creating a facilitation plan to run the PDSA process. This facilitation plan must effectively and efficiently engage all stakeholders in the process. EOEA expects that there will be some quantitative performance data available at the end of the cohort cycle, but there will be some data that will not yet be available. EOEA expects the Case Management vendor to leverage the data that they do have, as well as the qualitative feedback they collect during the cohort. The Case Management vendor must produce high level documentation of the PDSA process for each cohort, and provide any and all work products related to the PDSA process to EOEA and the program evaluator.

The Case Management vendor is also responsible for effectively working with EOEA's contracted program evaluator. This will include providing accurate data, maintaining data during each cohort, and complying with all data requests from EOEA or the evaluator. The Case Management vendor must also agree to allow the program evaluator access to any and all program activities, including trainings and peer support sessions. If the program evaluator requests to observe a private counseling or coaching session, the program Participant must be given the opportunity to voluntarily agree or not agree to allow the program evaluator to observe the session in advance, and must not be penalized in any way if they decline.

The Case Management vendor will also be required to participate in the information collection process as EOEA creates a design toolkit after the completion of the cohorts.

3.6.2 Participant Recruitment

The goal of the recruitment process is to identify and enroll eligible participants (as defined in Section 3.3) who are most likely to succeed in the program. The Case Management vendor will be responsible for leading the recruitment of participants.

As part of this phase of work, the Case Management vendor will be responsible for creating and implementing a marketing plan, which will identify relevant recruitment channels and stakeholders. The plan will identify the most effective means to reach potentially eligible jobseekers, and may include options such as posting marketing materials on state websites, direct email communications to unemployed individuals, and social media. One recruitment channel that must be included in the marketing plan is holding public information sessions for jobseekers to hear more about the program in detail, and determine if they want to apply. Based on the marketing plan, the Case Management vendor will be required to produce digital and printable marketing material to publicize the program and reach targeted jobseekers. The marketing materials must provide representative examples of the in-demand industries and occupations that the program will prepare jobseekers for (as described in Section 3.4), and explain that program participants must pursue jobs and industries that can be done remotely.

The Case Management vendor will be required to partner with MDCS during this phase to leverage the Commonwealth's Unemployment Information (UI) database for direct email and phone marketing of the program. This partnership will also leverage the statewide network of MassHire Career Centers. As part of this phase, the Case Management vendor must provide marketing materials to Career Counselors and hold a virtual information session for Career Counselors to learn about this program. The Career Counselors will be encouraged to refer candidates they believe will be a good fit for the program.

The Case Management vendor is responsible for establishing a program application process and a secure electronic application form. These deliverables must align with EOEA's program policies established in this RFR, and any subsequent policies established by EOEA. The application process and tool should be as short as possible and only collect the following information from applicants: demographic information; income; current engagement with other public systems; information about the applicant's education level; previous work experience (if any); and, a personality assessment. Research indicates that there are certain personality traits that indicate a person's potential success in a remote work environment (e.g., resilience, emotional regulation, conscientiousness, focus, etc.). EOEA intends for the application process to gather some preliminary information about these types of personality traits in order to inform the screening process.

The case management vendor will screen applicants to determine whether they meet the minimum eligibility requirements (as defined in Section 3.3). In addition, the Case Management vendor must assess each application to determine whether they may be a good fit for the program based on the applicant's personality information. The Case Manager must advance all applications that meet the minimum eligibility requirements for the program to the Assessment Phase, and must identify specific applicants that identify as having the greatest number or most significant personality traits that indicate the greatest likelihood of success in a remote job as "Priority" applications.

The Case Management vendor should establish their own process and methods to manage the screening process for all received applications and identify "Priority" applications, in accordance with the requirements of this RFR. The Case Management vendor must establish an effective, efficient, and secure database ("Program Database") to track all applications received for the program and the disposition of all applications. As a holder of personal data, the vendor must comply with M.G.L. c. 66A, TEGL 39-11, and with 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164 (HIPAA) if protected health information is collected. The Case Management vendor will be required to maintain all necessary and appropriate IT security protocols to maintain the confidentiality and security of program data, including jobseeker data (for applicants and enrolled individuals). The Program Database must also be used for subsequent assessment, selection, enrollment, and case management activities.

3.6.3 Participant Assessment, Selection, and Enrollment

The Case Management vendor will perform a detailed review of all "Priority" applications. This review will include a phone or videoconference interview with the applicant to share more information about the program, ask clarifying questions, and collect any additional information that is necessary to determine whether the applicant should be enrolled in the program.

Through this process, the Case Management vendor will select up to 15 applicants to fill each cohort. If there are not 15 individuals to enroll in the program from the "Priority" applications, the Case Management vendor will review remaining applications in the following order: 1) applications that were not designated as a "Priority" application but where the applicant resides in a high opportunity geographic areas, and 2) all other applications. EOEA will establish a definition for high opportunity geographic areas, by city or town, for use in this phase of the project. EOEA expects there to be an inclusive and diverse cohort of participants.

The Case Management vendor will be required to submit the applications of the selected applicants with EOEA and MDCS for review and reference. The Case Management vendor will

be required to submit the proposed candidates for each cohort to EOEA for approval prior to enrollment.

In the event that an enrolled program participant is eligible for services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and is not already enrolled in a WIOA program, MDCS will complete the WIOA enrollment process. The Case Management vendor will assist the program participant during the WIOA enrollment process as necessary and appropriate. The program participant will be required to cooperate with the WIOA enrollment process. In the event that the program participant is unable to comply with the WIOA enrollment process, EOEA may waive this requirement for individual program participants. Waivers will be provided on a limited basis, and will be at EOEA's sole discretion.

Once individuals have been enrolled in the program, the Case Management vendor will create an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP) for each person. The IEP will document the program participant's career goals, skill gaps, assistive technology needs, and any barriers to employment that need to be addressed to help the individual become job ready. If the jobseeker does not have a clear preference or is unsure about which of the in-demand remote jobs (as defined in Section 3.4) is best suited for them, the Case Management vendor will counsel them on how to move forward and make a selection.

3.6.4 Acquisition, Distribution and Support for Technology

The Case Management vendor will procure and distribute a set of standard-issue IT resources to each program participant. This will include the following equipment:

- **Laptop Computer** – The Case Management vendor will procure a total of fifteen (15) laptop computers for use by each program participant, and EOEA may approve the procurement of up to five (5) additional machines for specific needs in advance. The laptops will be loaned to participants and reused for each cohort, and program participants will need to return the equipment upon completion of the program for use by the next cohort. EOEA will work with the Case Management vendor to mobilize additional IT resources for the 3rd and 4th cohorts. The laptops should be procured with adequate technological capabilities to support the program's needs, and should be purchased through a best-value approach. The Case Management vendor will be responsible for configuring the laptops prior to distribution, and must include Office 365 and any other applications that are needed to successfully complete the program. The Case Management vendor will be responsible for establishing processes and tools to track and manage the inventory, subject to EOEA approval.
- **Miscellaneous Equipment** – The Case Management vendor is responsible for providing any other miscellaneous equipment that is needed by the program participant to be successful in the program. This may include a cell phone, mouse, monitor, connective cables, a keyboard, or other adaptive technology. Program participants may not receive duplicate miscellaneous equipment without advanced written approval from EOEA. Miscellaneous equipment will be reused as needed for each cohort, and will need to be returned by program participants upon completion of the program for use by the next cohort.
- **Hotspot** – The Case Management vendor is responsible for providing an internet connected hotspot to program participants if they do not have adequate access to

internet, in order to successfully complete the program. Hotspots will be reused as needed for each cohort, and will need to be returned by program participants upon completion of the program for use by the next cohort.

Upon enrollment in the program and after completion of the IEP, the Case Management vendor must personally deliver the necessary technology to program participants. The Case Management can deliver the equipment to the participant's home or establish a centralized distribution site that is within a reasonable distance from the participant's home and is accessible by car and public transportation. If traveling to the centralized location would cause the jobseeker financial or personal hardship, the Case Management vendor must deliver the equipment or compensate the participant for travel. The Case Management vendor is responsible for following any and all applicable COVID-19 public health guidance during the equipment delivery appointment.

During the delivery of the equipment, the Case Management vendor must turn on and provide a high level demonstration of the equipment. This must include demonstrating how to turn on the devices, plug in any necessary cables, connect to the internet, and connect to the videoconferencing service that will be used during the program. In addition to the live demonstration during the equipment delivery, the Case Management vendor must also provide written or video based instructions for how to join the videoconferencing platform that will be used for program activities.

The Case Management vendor will also be responsible for providing IT helpdesk services to program participants throughout the program. The helpdesk must include a phone number and email address that program participants can contact for IT support for activities related to this program. IT support needs may include support resolving error messages, connecting to the internet, using relevant videoconferencing platforms, or other IT support related needs. IT helpdesk services must be available between 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM EST from Monday to Friday, with the exception of state and federal holidays.

EOEA has established the requirement that each cohort returns the technology to the Case Management vendor upon completion of the program because it is assumed that employers will provide this equipment upon hire. If this is not the case, or there is another reason why the program participant needs to retain any of the equipment in order to succeed in remote employment, the Case Management vendor may submit a written request to EOEA to permanently assign the equipment to that participant and get additional funding to replace the inventory. Written permission must be granted before the inventory is permanently assigned to the program participant, and the Case Management vendor must update its tracking information accordingly if permanent assignments are made.

The Case Management vendor must comply with the equipment management and disposal requirements defined in applicable federal and state regulations and requirements, including but not limited to 2 CFR 200.313.

3.6.5 Peer Support Sessions and Individual Coaching and Counseling

The Case Management vendor will be responsible for convening the cohort on a regular basis in peer support sessions. These sessions will take place from the start of the training program through the job search and placement phase. This time may be used for facilitated discussions, skill building, or group discussions. The Case Management vendor will be required to have regular one on one check ins with

program participants to hear about their experience in the program, gauge how they are doing, and help them problem solve issues they are experiencing. The Case Management vendor will also be required to identify appropriate ancillary supports that may benefit the jobseeker, and initiate a referral to those programs.

3.6.6 Remote Work Training

EOEA believes that specific knowledge, skills, and abilities are necessary to successfully work remotely. The Case Management vendor is responsible for providing training specifically focused on how to work successfully in a remote environment. EOEA intends for the entire cohort to go through a standardized remote work training curriculum together as a single group. The training curriculum must build the following core knowledge, skills, and abilities at a minimum:

- Time management and organizational skills,
- How to set up a workspace at home,
- How to manage challenges of working from home (e.g. family, roommates, noise, distractions, etc.),
- How to manage work/home life balance,
- How to work with teams and communicate effectively while working remotely,
- How to use common Microsoft Office applications,
- How to use common phone and videoconferencing platforms (e.g. Webex, Zoom, Skype, etc.),
- How to effectively use other communication tools (e.g. chat, E-mail, Slack, etc.) and select which is most effective in different work contexts,
- Overview useful hardware for remote employment, and
- Data management and internet safety.

The Case Management vendor can either provide this training through using internal staff and curriculum, or may propose an alternate approach. Example alternative approaches may include leveraging external trainers or licensed training curriculum and materials. If the Case Management vendor uses web-based or computer based training resources, there must be an instructor led component of the training for group discussions and reflections.

Responses that propose using a fully autonomous training process, without any facilitated components by a live trainer (via videoconference), will be considered not responsive for this requirement.

3.6.7 Technical Job Training

Based on each program participant's assessment and IEP, the Case Management vendor will identify an appropriate job training program to provide the technical training needed to pursue one of the jobs identified in Section 3.4.

If any individual program participant is eligible for and has been successfully enrolled in WIOA, the Case Management vendor is required to review MDCS' Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to determine if an approved training program is an appropriate fit based on the program participant's employment goals as defined in their IEP. Appropriateness will be based on the extent to which its curriculum includes content that is relevant and necessary for successful employment, the duration of the training, past performance and success of the training provider, and whether the training can be done remotely or not. The Case Management vendor must consult with the assigned point of contact at MDCS to confirm the appropriateness of any identified training programs. The Case Management vendor is required to share

all application, assessment, enrollment, and case management documentation with MDCS as necessary during the training selection process. The current ETPL can be access online here: <https://jobquest.dcs.eol.mass.gov/jobquest/Training.aspx>.

If an ETPL program is selected, the Case Management vendor is responsible for managing all aspects of enrollment, payment, and oversight. The Case Management vendor is responsible for keeping regular contact with the program participant for coaching and counseling sessions, as well as for engagement in peer support sessions, while the program participant is in training.

In the event that the program participant is not eligible for a training program on the ETPL, or no ETPL training program is an appropriate fit, the Case Management vendor may enroll the program participant in another training program. The Case Management vendor can enroll program participants in training programs that they operate internally, or through a contracted partnership with a local training institution (e.g. vocational training center, community college, etc.). If the Case Management vendor enrolls a program participant in an internally operated or contracted training program, the Case Management vendor is responsible for managing all aspects of enrollment, payment, and oversight.

If the Case Management vendor enrolls any training participant in a training program that is not operated internally and is not on the ETPL, they must conduct reasonable and appropriate due diligence to ensure that the training program is legitimate and meets industry standards for training quality. Quality will be determined by indicators of financial stability and capacity, programmatic capacity, verifiable performance history, and ability to meet customer needs. The Case Management vendor must retain documentation of this review, and must provide it to EOEA upon request.

3.6.8 Job Readiness Preparation

Either concurrently or after program participants have completed their technical job training programs, the Case Management vendor will implement a structured process to help the program participants prepare for job search and employment. This phase may be conducted through formal trainings, workshops, peer support sessions, mock interviews, one on one coaching, or other processes. Job readiness activities may include topics such as:

- Effective job search methods,
- Cover letter and resume building,
- Thank you letters,
- Remote interview skills and etiquette,
- Workplace expectations,
- LinkedIn or other social media use,
- Behavior on the job, and
- Dressing for work in a remote job.

3.6.9 Placement in Unsubsidized Employment or an OJT

In this final phase of each cohort, the Case Management vendor is responsible for working with MDCS to help the program participant successfully obtain either Unsubsidized Employment or placement in an OJT program. Unsubsidized Employment is EOEA's preferred outcome from this program. OJTs should be limited in number, and will require pre-approval from EOEA. The Case Management vendor is responsible for managing the participant's experience during this phase, and MDCS is the lead entity responsible for all employer-facing business services activities.

MDCS' employer facing business services activities include marketing the program to potential employers, identifying employers who are interested in hiring from this program for remote jobs, developing and maintaining a pipeline of interested employers who are actively hiring, managing communication with employers, and holding formal hiring events. The pipeline will be cultivated on a schedule that coincides with the conclusion of the technical job training programs and completion of job readiness activities. The Case Management vendor is responsible for supporting MDCS' business services activities by reviewing information, providing information, cooperating in planning efforts, and providing any other support requested.

MDCS will be responsible for organizing and facilitating formal hiring events with the recruited employers and program participants, with support from the Case Management vendor. These hiring events may include job fairs, interviews, networking sessions, and other methods for each cohort. EOEA anticipates that multiple hiring events will likely be required for each cohort.

During this phase, the Case Management vendor is responsible for managing program participant activities. This includes:

1. **Continuing job readiness activities** – During the job search phase, the Case Management vendor is responsible for keeping program participants engaged and maintaining the skills acquired through previous phases of the program. Activities may include continued peer support sessions, job readiness activities, information sessions, guest speakers, etc.
2. **Independent job search** – The Case Management vendor will structure independent job search activities for program participants. The Case Management vendor will counsel program participants on best practice independent job search methods and resources. Program participants will conduct their job search activities online (through JobQuest and traditional job boards), attend appropriate networking sessions outside the program, and carry out other independent activities.
3. **Supplementary business services** – As an optional service, the Case Management vendor may propose carrying out their own business services activities, in addition to the primary responsibilities that have been contracted to MDCS. The Case Management vendor's activities in this area can only supplement, not supplant, MDCS' role. If the Case Management vendor proposes supplemental business services and the services are approved by EOEA, the Case Management vendor must inform MDCS ahead of any supplementary activities, and must coordinate all activities with MDCS to ensure that there is no overlap, duplication of services, conflicting communication, or other inefficiencies related to this work. Note the special instructions in Section 4 for how respondents need to structure their technical and cost proposals for this supplemental work. **EOEA is not obligated to award these optional services. EOEA may include these services in an award under this RFR with the option to utilize, expand, or otherwise change these services at any time upon mutual agreement with the successful bidder. If EOEA exercises its option to utilize, expand, or otherwise change these services, EOEA will fund the services using the information proposed in the bidder's response. Bidders are not required to offer these optional services, and will not be penalized for not doing so.**

In the event that Unsubsidized Employment is not possible, the Case Management vendor may propose an OJT. Due to the significant cost associated with an OJT placement, the Case Management vendor must get approval from EOEA before initiating an OJT. The Case Management vendor will be responsible

for establishing the contract, managing the administrative aspects of the placement, and working with EOEA to transfer grant funding to pay for the placement if necessary.

When a program participant is successfully hired in either Unsubsidized Employment or an OJT, the Case Management vendor will record certain information about the hire in the Program Database. This will include information about the employer, the role the jobseeker is being hired for, starting annual compensation, the average number of working hours per week, and other critical data to be able to inform the program's evaluation activities.

For both Unsubsidized Employment and OJTs, the program evaluator will be responsible for aggregating the immediate placement information from the Case Management vendor and other contracted partners.

3.7 Preferred Bidder Qualifications

EOEA's preferred bidder qualifications include respondents with:

- Experience providing workforce development services for adults.
- Experience working with older low-income job seekers, including those with barriers to employment.
- Experience coaching and counseling job seekers related to professional and personal challenges.
- Experience facilitating virtual group sessions or training.
- Experience working collaboratively with multiple state agencies and other community partners.
- Proven ability to provide statewide services.
- Passion for and interest in helping older adults thrive at work and maintain economic security.
- Experience managing similar projects.

3.8 Geographic Location

Bidders must be located within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Given that this program design is dedicated to helping older workers find remote jobs, EOEA is not requiring that bidders have a physical office location in any particular part of the state and believes that the vast majority of the case management work can be done virtually. However, bidders must have the capacity to travel statewide on a limited basis to meet the requirements of this RFP. At a minimum, this will include delivery of IT resources to program participants and to fulfill any other needs of the program.

4. RESPONSES

Respondents are required to prepare their responses to this RFR in two sections:

- **Technical Proposal** – The Technical Proposal must include the content described below. No cost information may be provided in the Technical Proposal. The Technical Proposal must be provided in its own PDF file, which must be named using following naming convention: “[RFR Number] [Vendor Name] [Technical Proposal].”
 - **Attachments** - Bidders may provide limited supplementary information that they believe is material to evaluating their capabilities related to this scope of work, as an attachment. Attachments, other than the required attachments and appendices, must not be used to extend, enhance, or replace any component required by this RFP. Forms identified in Appendices may not be altered. Failure to abide by these instructions will result in disqualification.

- **Cost Proposal** – The Cost Proposal must include the budget, budget narrative, and other required financial information. The Cost Proposal must be provided using the established Excel template, which must be named using the following naming convention: “[RFR Number] [Vendor Name] [Cost Proposal].” The budget narrative must provide a detailed explanation of proposed costs, budgeting methods, and assumptions used to prepare the budget; this document must be submitted as a separate PDF. This file must use the following naming convention: “[RFR Number] [Vendor Name] [Cost Proposal Narrative].”

Submitted proposals must conform to the following specifications:

Figure 7. Proposal Specifications

Proposal Component	Requirements
Document Name	The Legal Name of the Bidder, and the RFR Number must be displayed in the header of each page
Paper Size	8½” x 11”, portrait orientation
File Format	Technical proposal; cost proposal narrative, and attachments as PDF files; cost proposal and Supplier Diversity Plan as Excel files
Font Size	Minimum of 10-point
Margins	All margins shall be 1”
Page Limit	See below for a page limit for each section. Page limits below do not include attachments.
Line Spacing	Single-spaced
Pagination	All pages, from the Cover Sheet through the required Appendices and Forms, must be numbered consecutively in the footer.

All responses are to be clearly labeled with the specific section numbers as identified below. Maximum pages and points assigned to each section appear next to each section heading. Additional required terms appear in the Appendices to this RFR.

4.1 Technical Proposal

4.1.1 Table of Contents (1 page, not scored)

All proposals must include a Table of Contents that conform to the required proposal outline.

4.1.2 Cover Letter (maximum 1 page, not scored)

Bidders must include a cover letter on the organization's letterhead summarizing the most important information from the response and identifying a point of contact at the organization for follow up. The cover letter must provide the point of contact's name, title, email address, and phone number.

4.1.3 Management Structure and Staffing (maximum 3 pages; 10 points)

Bidders must describe their ownership and management structure.

Bidders must identify any subcontractor relationships that are proposed as part of their project team. If the bidder is subcontracting with another entity, the bidder must identify the number of previous engagements they have completed together and over what time period.

Bidders must describe their staffing plan for this project, and provide an organizational chart of the project team. Bidders must identify proposed individuals and/or positions that are currently part of their organization, as well as individuals and/or positions that are to be hired upon award for this project. For each position and individual team members, bidders must identify which of the nine (9) phases of the scope of work they would have a significant role in. Bidders must identify whether each proposed individual is an employee or a subcontractor for the organization, and whether they are a full time or part time employee.

Bidders must include a short biography for each proposed individual describing their relevant education, training, and experience. For individuals who will be engaging with program participants directly, the bidder must describe their experience providing peer support, career counseling, skill building, group facilitation services.

Bidders must explain their staff supervision and quality management practices that will be used on this project.

Bidders must describe their cultural and language capacities to serve diverse populations.

Bidders must attach job descriptions and resumes for all proposed individuals. This attachment will not be included in the page count for this section, and must be attached as “Attachment A – Job Descriptions and Resumes.”

4.1.4 Organizational Experience (maximum 5 pages; 10 points)

The bidder must describe its experience related to the Preferred Bidder Qualifications in Section 3.7. If the bidder does not have experience working with older adults, they must detail their willingness to work with EOEA to develop a broader understanding of the challenges and assets of working with older adults.

Bidders must identify and describe a minimum of two (2) and a maximum of five (5) previous engagements that demonstrate the respondent's experience, capacity, and ability to complete this scope of work. Bidders must identify the following information for each engagement:

- Client name,
- Client organization type (e.g. public, private, non-profit),
- Project location,
- Contract start and end date,
- Project description,
- Identify staff that are being proposed in the bidder's response to this RFR that worked on the project being described, and
- Relevant quantitative performance indicators demonstrating the bidder's accomplishments in the project.

4.1.5 Service Delivery Requirements (maximum 20 pages; 60 points)

Bidders should describe how they will meet the scope of work requirements established in Section 3.6. This section should identify the work steps proposed to meet the program requirements and the methodology or approach the bidder will use to carry out the work. Bidders must respond separately to

each section below, using the bulleted titles as the section headers, and must respond to all requirements identified in Section 3.6.

For every phase of work identified in Section 3.6, within the response outline below, the bidder must describe their ability to provide culturally and linguistically sensitive outreach and services. If any bidder proposes using material licensed or acquired from a third party, they must identify all such licensed material and disclose the source of the material and the license holder, if applicable.

- **Quality Improvement and Evaluation Process (Section 3.6.1)**
- **Participant Recruitment (Section 3.6.2)** – In addition to the requirements outlined in Section 3.6.2, the bidder must also:
 - Describe proposed or existing outreach and recruitment tools and plans, including current or proposed collaborations with regional entities such as Councils on Aging, senior housing, community action programs, Veterans Services Officers and other visible, trusted community resources to identify older adults who are seeking remote working opportunities.
 - Describe capacity to target activity to areas of greatest need, including Gateways Cities and areas have seen greater rates of unemployment due the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Participant Assessment, Selection, and Enrollment (Section 3.6.3)**
- **Acquisition, Distribution, and Support of Technology (Section 3.6.4)** – In addition to the requirements outlined in Section 3.6.4, the bidder must also:
 - Describe proposed or existing Individual Employment and Training Plans (IEPs). Attach a sample IEP if available.
 - Describe plans to work directly with enrolled participants to determine and address needs for computers and tablets, cell phone, and internet connectivity. Include any experience in this area.
 - Describe capacity to leverage in-house or community resources to facilitate access to equipment or internet service for the program.
- **Peer Support Sessions and Individual Coaching and Counseling (Section 3.6.5)** – In addition to the requirements outlined in Section 3.6.5, the bidder must also:
 - Describe experience or proposed protocols for the development of peer support sessions.
 - Describe proposed or existing protocols for on-going support and job development services, including protocols for ensuring that intensive or one-on-one remote training and case management is available for any extreme cases of discomfort or unfamiliarity with technology, poor time management skills, and unsuitable work-from-home conditions. Include descriptions of relationships with any human service providers, such as Aging Services Access Points, Independent Living Centers and Councils on Aging that could potentially address these barriers.
- **Remote Work Training (Section 3.6.6)** – In addition to the requirements outlined in Section 3.6.6, the bidder must also:
 - Describe any proposed or existing remote work training curriculum, including experience with or knowledge regarding adult-learning models for technology and remote work skills.
 - Describe proposed or existing job training programs, either in-house or contracted that

may be used in this program. List current training resources that have proven success in Unsubsidized Employment job placement. Give specific examples of training curricula or certificate programs used.

- **Technical Job Training (Section 3.6.7)**
- **Job Readiness Preparation (Section 3.6.8)** – In addition to the requirements outlined in Section 3.6.8, the bidder must also:
 - Describe proposed or existing job readiness preparation programs and supports.
- **Placement in Unsubsidized Employment or OJT (Section 3.6.9)** - If the bidder proposes the optional business services as described in Section 3.6.9, they must clearly delineate between their proposal for the required scope of work and the optional services. Bidders must acknowledge and confirm their understanding of EOEA's stated rights regarding these optional services. If the bidder proposes the optional business services, they must identify the work steps proposed to meet the program requirements and the methodology or approach the bidder will use to carry out the work. If bidding on the optional services, the bidder must also:
 - Describe any relationships with agencies such as MassHire workforce development system, including Workforce Boards and One Stop Career Centers, community colleges, and other programs to identify potential employers.
 - Describe experience or capacity to develop relationships with employers. List any local employers that hire participants and types of jobs participants obtain.

4.1.6 References (1 page, 5 points)

Bidders must provide a minimum of three (3) relevant references from current or former clients, business partners, or funders. For each reference, the bidder must include the organization's name; the reference person's name, email, and phone number; and a brief summary of the nature of their relationship with the reference. EOEA will contact references.

4.1.7 Emergency Response Plan (1 page, not scored)

The bidder must indicate whether there is a written Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) that describes how the organization will continue to do business in case of an emergency. The successful bidder will be responsible for providing a COOP and emergency contact information including name, position/title, phone, email and cell phone number upon contract execution. The vendor should not include this information at the time of proposal submission.

4.1.8 Financial Stability (2 pages; 5 points)

Bidders must provide the following information:

1. Indicate if the most current audited annual financial statements for the bidder's organization are posted on OSD's UFR website. If not, attach as "Attachment # – Audited Financial Statements."
2. Disclose any recent organizational changes within the last 24 months, including changes in ownership, senior management (Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operating Officer or comparable positions), or other material changes to organization structure (e.g. bankruptcy, acquisition, etc.). Bidders must also disclose all pending litigation against the respondent or its subcontractors from this time period.

4.1.9 Attachments

In addition to any required or optional attachments identified in this RFR, Bidders must submit the Supplier Diversity Form described in Section 10.5.

4.2 Cost Proposal

Bidders should prepare technical and cost proposals that reflect the resources needed to implement this scope of work, up to the total available budget amount listed in Section 1.5 Contract Compensation. The Cost Proposal must include the budget, budget narrative, and other required financial information. The budget narrative must provide a detailed explanation of proposed costs, budgeting methods, and assumptions used to prepare the budget.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Bidder responses will be evaluated and ranked to determine which Bidders will proceed to subsequent stages of the evaluation and/or enter into negotiations with the Commonwealth to receive a Contract award. EOEA will assign points to each scored section of the response based on responsiveness to the required services, overall quality, alignment with best practices, and value. The maximum available point amounts described in Section 4.1 reflect the relative weight of each technical proposal component. In addition, EOEA will assign a maximum of 10 points (10% of the total available points) to the Supplier Diversity Plan, according to the Commonwealth's procurement requirements.

When evaluating responses, EOEA will also note any leveraged funding or existing resources (i.e. existing training curriculum, existing technology, effective online training).

A response that fails to meet any material term or condition of the Bid, including the submission of required attachments, may lose points or be deemed unresponsive and be disqualified. EOEA retains the sole right to determine the responsiveness of a proposal.

6. OTHER TERMS

6.1 Executive Order 515, Establishing an Environmental Purchasing Policy

Products and services purchased by state agencies must be in compliance with Executive Order 515, issued October 27, 2009. Under this Executive Order, Executive Departments are required to reduce their impact on the environment and enhance public health by procuring environmentally preferable products and services (EPPs) whenever such products and services perform to satisfactory standards and represent best value, consistent with 801 CMR 21.00. In line with this directive, all contracts, whether departmental or statewide, must comply with the specifications and guidelines established by OSD and the EPP Program. EPPs are considered to be products and services that help to conserve natural resources, reduce waste, protect public health and the environment, and promote the use of clean technologies, recycled materials, and less toxic products. Questions concerning the EO or the appropriate specifications may be directed to OSD's EPP Procurement Program, www.mass.gov/epp. The Order can be seen at http://www.mass.gov/Agov3/docs/Executive%20Orders/executive_order_515.pdf.

6.2 Reporting

Contractors are responsible for compliance with all other contract reporting requirements including, but not limited to, Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) and other contract reports, as required by this contract.

6.3 Security and confidentiality

The Contractor shall comply fully with all security procedures of the Commonwealth and Commonwealth Agencies in performance of the Contract. The Contractor shall not divulge to third parties any confidential information obtained by the Contractor or its agents, distributors, resellers, subcontractors, officers or employees in the course of performing Contract work, including, but not limited to, security procedures, business operations information, personally identifiable information, or commercial proprietary information in the possession of the Commonwealth.

6.4 Failure to perform contractual obligations

As outlined in the Standard Contract Form, Terms and Conditions, failure to perform may result in Termination, Suspension or Adding Additional Contractors.

6.5 Audit

During the term of this Agreement and for a period of six years thereafter, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA), its auditors, the Operational Services Division, the Office of the Inspector General or other authorized representatives shall be afforded access at reasonable times to Contractor's accounting records, including sales information on any system, reports or files, in order to audit all records relating to goods sold or services performed pursuant to this Agreement. If such an audit indicates that Contractor has materially overcharged EOEA then the Contractor shall remit the overcharged amount and be responsible for payment of any costs associated with the audit.

7. How to Submit a Quote

All Bidders may begin creating and compiling Quote materials as soon as the Bid with all attachments is in the Sent document status. Bidders are instructed not to submit Quotes before the Bid Amendment Deadline has been reached (see Estimated Procurement Calendar).

7.1 Quote Submission Method

Online Quote Submission via COMMBUYS is required.

All Bidders must submit Quotes online using tools available only to Sellers registered in COMMBUYS. COMMBUYS provides Seller registration functionality at no charge. To register, go to www.COMMBUYS.com and click on the "Register" link on the front page. All Bidders who are awarded a contract resulting from this Bid, if any, will be required to maintain an active account during the duration of the Contract, by reviewing their registration information regularly and maintaining its accuracy.

7.2 COMMBUYS Quote Submission Training and Instructions

The following resources are provided to assist Bidders in submitting Responses:

- **Appendix 4, Instructions for Vendors Responding to Bids Electronically through COMMBUYS, which is part of this document;**
- Training sessions focused on online Response submission, if offered, are noted in the Estimated Procurement Calendar;

- An online job aid on [How to Create a Quote](#);
- Webcast video on [How to Find Bids \(Solicitations\) and Submit Quotes \(Responses\) through COMMBUYS](#).

7.3 COMMBUYS Support

Technical assistance is available during the procurement process. Every effort is made to respond to inquiries within one business day.

Website: Go to www.mass.gov/osd/commbuys and select the COMMBUYS Resource Center link offered under Key Resources.

Email: Send inquiries to the COMMBUYS Helpdesk at COMMBUYS@state.ma.us

Telephone: Call the COMMBUYS Help Desk at 1-888-MA-STATE (1-888-627-8283). The Help Desk is staffed from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday Eastern Standard or Daylight time, as applicable, except on federal and state holidays.

Bidders are advised that COMMBUYS will be unavailable during regularly scheduled maintenance hours of which all users will be notified.

7.4 Bid Opening Date/Time

All Bids must be received by the Operational Services Division before the specified date, month, year and time displayed as the Bid Opening Date/Time in the Header Information section of the Bid in COMMBUYS. Times are Eastern Standard/Daylight Savings (US), as applicable. All Bidders are advised to allow adequate time for submission by considering potential online submission impediments like Internet traffic, Internet connection speed, file size, and file volume. OSD is not responsible for delays encountered by Bidders or their agents, or for a Bidder's local hardware failures, such as computers or related networks, associated with bid compilation or submission. Bids submitted via COMMBUYS are time stamped by the COMMBUYS system clock which is considered the official time of record.

7.5 Response Contents

Bidders must comply with the requirements outlined in this RFR.

7.6 Electronic Signatures

Quotes submitted via COMMBUYS must be signed electronically by the Bidder or the Bidder's Agent by accepting the terms and conditions of the bid on the "Terms & Conditions" tab of the Bid in COMMBUYS. By selecting "Save & Continue" on the "Terms and Conditions" tab after accepting the terms and conditions of the bid, the submitter attests that s/he is an agent of the Bidder with authority to sign on the Bidder's behalf, and that s/he has read and assented to each document's terms.

7.7 Ink Signatures

Original ink signatures are required only after contracts have been awarded. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires Contractors to submit original ink-signature versions of the following forms:

- Standard Contract Form
- Commonwealth Terms and Conditions
- Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing
- Request for Taxpayer Identification and Verification (Mass. Substitute W9 Form)
- Electronic Funds Transfer Sign Up Form

Successful Bidders who agreed to the terms and conditions of these forms electronically via COMMBUYS online Quote submission tool must still submit the above forms with ink signatures. Bidders who have previous contract(s) with the Commonwealth and have up-to-date, ink-signature versions of the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions and Request for Taxpayer Identification and Verification (Mass. Substitute W9 Form) on file with the Office of the State Comptroller may submit copies of the signed forms. However, a new Standard Contract Form and Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing with original ink signatures must be submitted for each new contract with the Commonwealth.

7.8 Prior to Bid Opening Date/Time

Quotes may be withdrawn using the "Withdraw Quote" button offered under the Summary tab of a submitted Quote.

7.9 After Bid Opening Date/Time

No Quote can be withdrawn after the Bid Opening Date/Time. If the Bidder wants to remove a Quote from consideration, contact the Strategic Sourcing Services Lead for guidance.

8. REQUIRED TERMS FOR ALL RFRS

8.1 General Procurement Information

8.1.1 Alterations

Bidders may not alter (manually or electronically) the Bid language or any Bid component files, except as directed in the RFR. Modifications to the body of the Bid, specifications, terms and conditions, or which change the intent of this Bid are prohibited and may disqualify a Quote.

8.1.2 Ownership of Submitted Quotes

The EOEA shall be under no obligation to return any Quotes or materials submitted by a Bidder in response to this Bid. All materials submitted by Bidders become the property of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and will not be returned to the Bidder. The Commonwealth reserves the right to use any ideas, concepts, or configurations that are presented in a Bidder's Quote, whether or not the Quote is selected for Contract award.

Quotes stored on COMMBUYS in the encrypted lock-box are the file of record. Bidders retain access to a read-only copy of this submission via COMMBUYS, as long as their account is active. Bidders may also retain a traditional paper copy or electronic copy on a separate computer or network drive or separate media, such as CD or DVD, as a backup.

8.1.3 Prohibitions

Bidders are prohibited from communicating directly with any employee of the procuring Department or any member of the EOEA regarding this RFR except as specified in this RFR, and no other individual Commonwealth employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any question or inquiry concerning this RFR. Bidders may contact the contact person using the contact information provided in the Header Information this Bid in the event that this RFR is incomplete or information is missing. Bidders experiencing technical problems accessing information or attachments stored on COMMBUYS should contact the [COMMBUYS Helpdesk](#) (see the document cover page for contact information).

In addition to the certifications found in the Commonwealth's Standard Contract Form, by submitting a Quote, the Bidder certifies that the Quote has been arrived at independently and has been submitted without any communication, collaboration, or without any agreement, understanding or planned common course or action with, any other Bidder of the commodities and/or services described in the RFR.

8.2 Terms and Requirements Pertaining to Awarded Contracts

8.2.1 Commonwealth Tax Exemption

Invoices or invoices submitted to Massachusetts government entities must not include sales tax.

8.2.2 Contractor's Contact Information


It is the Contractor's responsibility to keep the Contractor's Contract Manager information current. If this information changes, the Contractor must notify the Contract Manager by email immediately, using the address located in the Header Information of the Purchase Order or Master Blanket Purchase Order on COMMBUYS.

The Commonwealth assumes no responsibility if a Contractor's designated email address is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the Contractor's computer, network or internet service provider (ISP), cause e-mail communications between the Bidder and the EOEA to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering. Any Contractor awarded a contract under this Bid is prohibited from selling or distributing any information collected or derived from the Contract, including lists of participating Eligible Entities, Commonwealth employee names, telephone numbers or addresses, or any other information except as specifically authorized by the EOEA.

9. RFR Required Specifications

In general, most of the required contractual stipulations are referenced in the *Standard Contract Form and Instructions* and the *Commonwealth Terms and Conditions* (either version). However, the following RFR provisions must appear in all Commonwealth competitive procurements conducted under 801 CMR 21.00:

The terms of *801 CMR 21.00: Procurement of Commodities and Services* (and *808 CMR 1.00: Compliance, Reporting and Auditing for Human and Social Services*, if applicable) are incorporated by reference into this RFR. Words used in this RFR shall have the meanings defined in 801 CMR 21.00 (and 808 CMR 1.00, if applicable). Additional definitions may also be identified in this RFR. Other terms not defined elsewhere in this document may be defined in OSD's [Glossary of Terms](#). Unless otherwise specified in this RFR, all communications, responses, and documentation must be in English, all measurements must be provided in feet, inches, and pounds and all cost proposals or figures in U.S. currency. All responses must be submitted in accordance with the specific terms of this RFR.

Items with the text, " Required for POS Only" specify a requirement for Purchase of Service (POS) human and social services procured under *801 CMR 21.00, Procurement of Commodities or Services, Including Human and Social Services* and *808 CMR 1.00, Compliance, Reporting and Auditing for Human and Social Service*.

COMMBUYS Market Center. COMMBUYS is the official source of information for this Bid and is publicly accessible at no charge at www.commbuys.com. Information contained in this document and in COMMBUYS, including file attachments, and information contained in the related Bid Questions and Answers (Q&A), are all components of the Bid, as referenced in COMMBUYS, and are incorporated into the Bid and any resulting contract.

Bidders are solely responsible for obtaining all information distributed for this Bid via COMMBUYS. Bid Q&A supports Bidder submission of written questions associated with a Bid and publication of official answers.

It is each Bidder's responsibility to check COMMBUYS for:

- Any amendments, addenda or modifications to this Bid, and
- Any Bid Q&A records related to this Bid.

The Commonwealth accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Bidders who submit a Quote based on an out-of-date Bid or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

COMMBUYS Registration. Bidders may elect to obtain a free COMMBUYS Seller registration which provides value-added features, including automated email notification associated with postings and modifications to COMMBUYS records. However, in order to respond to a Bid, Bidders must register and maintain an active COMMBUYS Seller account.

All Bidders submitting a Quote (previously referred to as Response) in response to this Bid (previously referred to as Solicitation) agree that, if awarded a contract: (1) they will maintain an active seller account in COMMBUYS; (2) they will, when directed to do so by the procuring entity, activate and maintain a COMMBUYS-enabled catalog using Commonwealth Commodity Codes; (3) they will comply with all requests by the procuring entity to utilize COMMBUYS for the purposes of conducting all aspects of purchasing and invoicing with the Commonwealth, as added functionality for the COMMBUYS system is activated; (4) Bidder understands and acknowledges that all references to the Comm-PASS website or

related requirements throughout this RFR, shall be superseded by comparable requirements pertaining to the COMMBUYS website; and (6) in the event the Commonwealth adopts an alternate market center system, successful Bidders will be required to utilize such system, as directed by the procuring entity. Commonwealth Commodity Codes are based on the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC).

The COMMBUYS system introduces new terminology, which bidders must be familiar with in order to conduct business with the Commonwealth. To view this terminology and to learn more about the COMMBUYS system, please visit the [COMMBUYS Resource Center](#).

Multiple Quotes. Bidders may not submit Multiple Quotes in response to a Bid unless the RFR authorizes them to do so. If a Bidder submits multiple quotes in response to an RFR that does not authorize multiple responses, only the latest dated quote submitted prior to the bid opening date will be evaluated.

Quote Content. Bid specifications for delivery, shipping, billing and payment will prevail over any proposed Bidder terms entered as part of the Quote, unless otherwise specified in the Bid.

Supplier Diversity Program (SDP). Massachusetts Executive Order 524 established a policy to promote the award of state contracts in a manner that develops and strengthens Minority and Women Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) that resulted in the Supplier Diversity Program in Public Contracting. M/WBEs are strongly encouraged to submit responses to this RFR, either as prime vendors, joint venture partners or other type of business partnerships. Similarly, Executive Order 546 established the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE) Program to encourage the participation of businesses owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans in all areas of state procurement and contracting, thereby including them in the SDP. All bidders must follow the requirements set forth in the SDP section of the RFR, which will detail the specific requirements relating to the prime vendor's inclusion of M/WBEs and/or SDVOBEs. Bidders are required to develop creative initiatives to help foster new business relationships with M/WBEs and/or SDVOBEs within the primary industries affected by this RFR. In order to satisfy the compliance of this section and encourage bidder's participation of SDP objectives, the Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan for large procurements greater than \$150,000 will be evaluated at 10% or more of the total evaluation. Once an SDP commitment, expressed as a percentage of contract revenues, is approved, the EOEA will then monitor the contractor's performance, and use actual expenditures with SDO certified M/WBE contractors and the Center for Veterans Enterprise certified SDVOBEs to fulfill their own SDP expenditure benchmarks. M/WBE and SDVOBE participation must be incorporated into and monitored for all types of procurements regardless of size; however, submission of an SDP Plan is mandated only for large procurements over \$150,000.

Unless otherwise specified in the RFR, the following SDP forms are required to be submitted by the deadlines noted below in order to meet the mandatory participation requirements of the SDP:

SDP Plan Form #/Name	Submitted By	When Submitted
SDP Plan Form #1 – SDP Plan Commitment	All Bidders	With Bid Response
SDP Plan Form #2 – Declaration of SDP Partners	Newly Awarded Contractors	Within 30 days of contract execution
SDP Plan Form #3 – SDP Spending Report	Contractors	Within 45 days of the end of each quarter

Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Resources:

- Resources available to assist Prime Bidders in finding potential **Minority Business Enterprises (MBE)** and **Women Business Enterprises (WBE)** partners can be found at: <https://www.sdo.osd.state.ma.us/BusinessDirectory/BusinessDirectory.aspx>.
- Resources available to assist Prime Bidders in finding potential **Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE)** partners can be found on the Operational Services Division's SDO webpage at: <https://www.sdo.osd.state.ma.us/BusinessDirectory/BusinessDirectory.aspx>.
- The Operational Services Division's Supplier Diversity Program offers training on the SDP Plan requirements.
- In addition, the SDP Webinar can be located on the SDP website at <https://www.mass.gov/supplier-diversity-program-sdp>.

Supplier Diversity Program Subcontracting Policies. In addition to the Subcontracting Policies (See Subcontracting Policies section below and see Section 9, Subcontracting By Contractor, in the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions) that apply to all subcontracted services, agencies may define specific required deliverables for a contractor's SDP Plan, including, but not limited to, documentation necessary to verify subcontractor commitments and expenditures with Minority- or Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprises (SDVOBE) for the purpose of monitoring and enforcing commitments made in a contractor's Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan.

Agricultural Products Preference (only applicable if this is a procurement for Agricultural Products) - Chapter 123 of the Acts of 2006 directs the State Purchasing Agent to grant a preference to products of agriculture grown or produced using locally grown products. Such locally grown or produced products shall be purchased unless the price of the goods exceeds the price of products of agriculture from outside the Commonwealth by more than 10%. For purposes of this preference, products of agriculture are defined to include any agricultural, aquacultural, floricultural or horticultural commodities, the growing and harvesting of forest products, the raising of livestock, including horses, raising of domesticated animals, bees, fur-bearing animals and any forestry or lumbering operations.

Best Value Selection and Negotiation. The Strategic Sourcing Team or EOEA (formerly referred to as Procurement Management Team) may select the response(s) which demonstrates the best value overall, including proposed alternatives that will achieve the procurement goals of the department. The EOEA and a selected bidder, or a contractor, may negotiate a change in any element of contract performance or cost identified in the original RFR or the selected bidder's or contractor's response which results in lower costs or a more cost effective or better value than was presented in the selected bidder's or contractor's original response.

Bidder Communication. Bidders are prohibited from communicating directly with any employee of the procuring department or any member of the EOEA regarding this RFR except as specified in this RFR, and no other individual Commonwealth employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any question or inquiry concerning this RFR. Bidders may contact the contact person for this RFR in the event this RFR is incomplete or the bidder is having trouble obtaining any required attachments electronically through COMMBUYS.

Contract Expansion. If additional funds become available during the contract duration period, the department reserves the right to increase the maximum obligation to some or all contracts executed as a result of this RFR or to execute contracts with contractors not funded in the initial selection process, subject to available funding, satisfactory contract performance and service or commodity need.

Costs. Costs which are not specifically identified in the bidder's response, and accepted by a department as part of a contract, will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this RFR. The Commonwealth will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders responding to this RFR.

Debriefing. ☞ *Required for POS Only. This is an optional specification for non-POS RFRs.* Non-successful bidders may request a debriefing from the department that issued the RFR. Department debriefing procedures may be found in the RFR. Non-successful POS bidders aggrieved by the decision of a department must participate in a debriefing as a prerequisite to an administrative appeal.

Debriefing/Appeals: Administrative Appeals to Departments. ☞ *Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* Non-successful bidders who participate in the debriefing process and remain aggrieved with the decision of the department may appeal that decision to the department head. Department appeal procedures may be found in the RFR.

Debriefing/Appeals: Administrative Appeals to OSD. ☞ *Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* Non-successful bidders who participate in the department appeal process and remain aggrieved by the selection decision of the department may appeal the department decision to the Operational Services Division. The basis for an appeal to OSD is limited to the following grounds:

- The competitive procurement conducted by the department failed to comply with applicable regulations and guidelines. These would be limited to the requirements of 801 CMR 21.00 or any successor regulations, the policies in the OSD Procurement Information Center, subsequent policies and procedures issued by OSD and the specifications of the RFR; or
2. There was a fundamental unfairness in the procurement process. The allegation of unfairness or bias is one that is easier to allege than prove, consequently, the burden of proof rests with the bidder to provide sufficient and specific evidence in support of its claim. OSD will presume that departments conducted a fair procurement absent documentation to the contrary.

Requests for an appeal must be sent to the attention of the Operational Services Division, Legal, Policy and Compliance Office, Room 1017, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108 and be received within fourteen (14) calendar days of the postmark of the notice of the department head's decision on appeal. Appeal requests must specify in sufficient detail the basis for the appeal. Sufficient detail requires a description of the published policy or procedure which was applied and forms the basis for the appeal and presentation of all information that supports the claim under paragraphs 1 or 2 above. OSD reserves the right to reject appeal requests based on grounds other than those stated above or those submitted without sufficient detail on the basis for the appeal.

The decision of the Operational Services Division shall be rendered, in writing, setting forth the grounds for the decision within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of the appeal request. Pending appeals to the Operational Services Division shall not prohibit the department from proceeding with executing contracts.

Electronic Communication/Update of Bidder's/Contractor's Contact Information. It is the responsibility of the prospective bidder and awarded contractor to keep current on COMMBUYS the email address of the bidder's contact person and prospective contract manager, if awarded a contract, and to monitor that email inbox for communications from the EOEA, including requests for clarification. The EOEA and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if a prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's designated email address is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's computer, network or internet service provider (ISP) cause email communications sent

to/from the prospective bidder/awarded contractor and the EOEA to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). All bidders responding to this RFR must agree to participate in the Commonwealth Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) program for receiving payments, unless the bidder can provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. EFT is a benefit to both contractors and the Commonwealth because it ensures fast, safe and reliable payment directly to contractors and saves both parties the cost of processing checks. Contractors are able to track and verify payments made electronically through the Comptroller's Vendor Web system. A link to the EFT application can be found on the [OSD Forms](http://www.mass.gov/osd) page (www.mass.gov/osd). Additional information about EFT is available on the [VendorWeb](http://www.mass.gov/osc) site (www.mass.gov/osc). Click on MASSfinance.

Successful bidders, upon notification of contract award, will be required to enroll in EFT as a contract requirement by completing and submitting the *Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form* to this department for review, approval and forwarding to the Office of the Comptroller. If the bidder is already enrolled in the program, it may so indicate in its response. Because the *Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form* contains banking information, this form, and all information contained on this form, shall not be considered a public record and shall not be subject to public disclosure through a public records request.

The requirement to use EFT may be waived by the EOEA on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the bidder. If a bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in its response. The EOEA will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis and communicate the findings with the bidder.

Environmental Response Submission Compliance. In the event that paper submissions are required and in an effort to promote greater use of recycled and environmentally preferable products and minimize waste, all required paper responses that are submitted should comply with the following guidelines:

- All copies should be printed double sided.
- All submittals and copies should be printed on recycled paper with a minimum post-consumer content of 30% or on tree-free paper (i.e. paper made from raw materials other than trees, such as kenaf). To document the use of such paper, a photocopy of the ream cover/wrapper should be included with the response.
- Unless absolutely necessary, all responses and copies should minimize or eliminate use of non-recyclable or non re-usable materials such as plastic report covers, plastic dividers, vinyl sleeves and GBC binding. Three ringed binders, glued materials, paper clips and staples are acceptable.
- Bidders should submit materials in a format which allows for easy removal and recycling of paper materials.
- Bidders are encouraged to use other products which contain recycled content in their response documents. Such products may include, but are not limited to, folders, binders, paper clips, diskettes, envelopes, boxes, etc. Where appropriate, bidders should note which products in their responses are made with recycled materials.
- Unnecessary samples, attachments or documents not specifically asked for should not be submitted.

Executive Order 509, *Establishing Nutrition Standards for Food Purchased and Served by State Agencies*. Food purchased and served by state agencies must be in compliance with Executive Order 509, issued in January 2009. Under this Executive Order, all contracts resulting from procurements posted after July 1, 2009 that involve the purchase and provision of food must comply with nutrition guidelines established by the Department of Public Health (DPH). The nutrition guidelines are available at the Department's website: [Executive Order # 509 Guidance](http://www.mass.gov/509).

Filing Requirements. *☞ Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* Successful bidders must have filed their Uniform Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report (UFR), as required for current contractors, with the Operational Services Division via the Internet using the UFR eFiling application for the most recently completed fiscal year before a contract can be executed and services may begin. Other contractor qualification/risk management reporting requirements and non-filing consequences promulgated by secretariats or departments pursuant to 808 CMR 1.04(3) may also apply. In the event immediate services are required by a department, a contract may be executed and services may begin with the approval of OSD and the appropriate secretariat. However, unless authorized by OSD and the appropriate secretariat, the contractor will not be paid for any such services rendered until the UFR has been filed.

HIPAA: Business Associate Contractual Obligations. Bidders are notified that any department meeting the definition of a Covered Entity under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) will include in the RFR and resulting contract sufficient language establishing the successful bidder's contractual obligations, if any, that the department will require in order for the department to comply with HIPAA and the privacy and security regulations promulgated thereunder (45 CFR Parts 160, 162, and 164) (the Privacy and Security Rules). For example, if the department determines that the successful bidder is a business associate performing functions or activities involving protected health information, as such terms are used in the Privacy and Security Rules, then the department will include in the RFR and resulting contract a sufficient description of business associate's contractual obligations regarding the privacy and security of the protected health information, as listed in 45 CFR 164.314 and 164.504 (e), including, but not limited to, the bidder's obligation to: implement administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that reasonably and appropriately protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the protected health information (in whatever form it is maintained or used, including verbal communications); provide individuals access to their records; and strictly limit use and disclosure of the protected health information for only those purposes approved by the department. Further, the department reserves the right to add any requirement during the course of the contract that it determines it must include in the contract in order for the department to comply with the Privacy and Security Rules. Please see other sections of the RFR for any further HIPAA details, if applicable.

Minimum Quote (Bid Response) Duration. Bidders Quotes made in response to this Bid must remain in effect for at least 90 days from the date of quote submission.

Prompt Payment Discounts (PPD). All bidders responding to this procurement must agree to offer discounts through participation in the Commonwealth Prompt Payment Discount (PPD) initiative for receiving early and/or on-time payments, unless the bidder can provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. PPD benefits both contractors and the Commonwealth. Contractors benefit by increased, usable cash flow as a result of fast and efficient payments for commodities or services rendered. Participation in the Electronic Funds Transfer initiative further maximizes the benefits with payments directed to designated accounts, thus eliminating the impact of check clearance policies and traditional mail lead time or delays. The Commonwealth benefits because contractors reduce the cost of products and services through the applied discount. Payments that are processed electronically can be tracked and verified through the Comptroller's Vendor Web system. The PPD form can be found as an attachment for this Bid on [COMMBUYS](#).

Bidders must submit agreeable terms for Prompt Payment Discount using the PPD form within their proposal, unless otherwise specified by the EOEA. The EOEA will review, negotiate or reject the offering as deemed in the best interest of the Commonwealth.

The requirement to use PPD offerings may be waived by the EOEa on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the bidder. If a bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in or attached to the PPD form.

Provider Data Management. ☞ *Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) has established a Provider Data Management (PDM) business service that is integrated into the Virtual Gateway. PDM is accessible by providers with current POS contracts. Departments may require that bidders with current POS contracts submit certain RFR-required documents through PDM. These documents have been specified in the RFR. When submitting documents via PDM, bidders are required to print and sign a PDM Documentation Summary. PDM users should verify that all information is accurate and current in PDM. Bidders are required to include the signed PDM Documentation Summary in their RFR response.

Public Records. All responses and information submitted in response to this RFR are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L., c. 66, s. 10, and to c. 4, s. 7, ss. 26. Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes shall be disregarded.

Reasonable Accommodation. Bidders with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of RFR information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the contact person. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case by case basis. A bidder requesting accommodation must submit a written statement which describes the bidder's disability and the requested accommodation to the contact person for the RFR. The EOEa reserves the right to reject unreasonable requests.

Restriction on the Use of the Commonwealth Seal. Bidders and contractors are not allowed to display the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Seal in their bid package or subsequent marketing materials if they are awarded a contract because use of the coat of arms and the Great Seal of the Commonwealth for advertising or commercial purposes is prohibited by law.

Subcontracting Policies. Prior approval of the department is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Human and social service subcontractors are also required to meet the same state and federal financial and program reporting requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as contractors.

Workplace Violence and Prevention and Crisis Response Plan. ☞ *Required for POS Only. Not applicable to non-POS bidders.* 101 CMR 19.00, Workplace Violence and Prevention and Crisis Response Plan, governs the procedures and criteria for workplace violence prevention and response plans for programs that provide direct services to clients that are operated, licensed, certified or funded by a department, commission, office, board, division, institution or other entity within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services under M.G.L. c. 6A § 16. Any direct service program that contracts with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) or the constituent agencies of EOHHS must comply with 101 CMR 19.00, including having a plan that meets the criteria set forth in 101 CMR 19.04, which is updated annually, available electronically and provided to any human service worker upon request. The regulations and response plan guidelines are available at the following web site: www.mass.gov/hhs/HSW-safety-regs

10. Instructions for Execution and Submission of Commonwealth Standard Forms

The purpose of this appendix is to provide guidance to Bidders on the Commonwealth Standard forms to be submitted (in addition to the other forms and documents required) and how they must be executed and submitted. Please note that these instructions are meant to supplement the Instructions found on each of these forms. It is advisable to print this document first so that it may be referenced when filling out these forms.

Some of the forms listed below can be electronically signed by the Bidder, see [Electronic Signatures](#). However, online Bidders must, if notified of Contract award, submit the following four (4) forms on paper with original ink signatures unless otherwise specified below, within the timeframe referenced in the RFR section entitled [Ink Signatures](#): the Commonwealth Standard Contract Form, the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, the Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification (Mass. Substitute W9 Form) and the Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing.

10.1 Commonwealth Standard Contract Form

Sign electronically as described above; **if notified of Contract award**, complete as directed below and submit on paper with original ink signature and date.

By executing this document or signing it electronically, the Bidder certifies, under the pains and penalties of perjury, that it has submitted a Response to this RFR that is the Bidder's Offer as evidenced by the execution of its authorized signatory, and that the Bidder's Response may be subject to negotiation by the EOEA. Also, the terms of the RFR, the Bidder's Response and any negotiated terms shall be deemed accepted by the Operational Services Division and included as part of the Contract upon execution of this document by the State Purchasing Agent or his designee.

If the Bidder does not have a Vendor Code beginning with "VC," or does not know what their Vendor Code is, the Bidder should leave the Vendor Code field blank. The Bidder should NOT enter a Vendor Code assigned prior to May 2004, as new Vendor Codes have been assigned to all companies since that time.

Signature and date MUST be handwritten in ink, and the signature must be that of one of the people authorized to execute contracts on behalf of the Contractor on the Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing (See below).

10.2 Commonwealth Terms and Conditions

The standard contract form incorporates the terms and conditions of service provision by reference. By signing the standard contract form the successful bidder signifies acceptance of the applicable terms and conditions.

10.3 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification (Mass. Substitute W9 Form)

Sign electronically as described above; **if notified of Contract award**, complete as directed below and submit on paper with original ink signature and date, or submit a copy of a previously executed, up-to-date copy of the form as directed below.

If a Bidder has already submitted a Request for Taxpayer Identification and Certification Number (Mass. Substitute W9 Form) and has received a valid Massachusetts Vendor Code, an original W-

9 form is not required. A copy of the form as filed may be included in place of an original. If the Bidder's name, address or Tax ID Number have changed since the Mass. Substitute W9 Form was executed, a new Mass. Substitute W9 Form is required. The information on this form will be used to record the Bidder's legal address and where payments under a State Contract will be sent. The company's correct legal name and legal address must appear on this form, and must be identical to the legal name and legal address on the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions. Please do not use the U.S Treasury's version of the W9 Form.

10.4 Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing

Sign electronically as described above; **if notified of Contract award**, complete as directed below and submit on paper with original ink signature and date.

In the table entitled "Authorized Signatory Name" and "Title," type the names and titles of those individuals authorized to execute contracts and other legally binding documents on behalf of the Bidder. Bidders are advised to keep this list as small as possible, as Contractors will be required to notify the Procurement Manager of any changes. If the person signing in the signature block on the bottom of the first page of this form will also serve as an "Authorized Signatory," that person's name must be included in the typed table.

With regard to the next paragraph, which begins "I certify that I am the President, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Fiscal Officer, Corporate Clerk or Legal Counsel for the Contractor..." if your organization does not have these titles, cross them out and handwrite the appropriate title above the paragraph.

The signature and date should be handwritten in ink. Title, telephone, fax and eMail should be typed or handwritten legibly.

The second page of the form (entitled "Proof of Authentication of Signature") states that the page is optional. However, the "optional" aspect of the form is that Commonwealth Departments are not required to use it. In the case of Statewide Contracts, this page is REQUIRED, not optional. The person signing this page must be the same person signing the Standard Contract Form, the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, and the RFR Checklist.

Please note that in two places where the form says "in the presence of a notary," this should be interpreted to mean "in the presence of a notary or corporate clerk/secretary." Either a notary or corporate clerk/secretary can authenticate the form; only one is required.

Organizations whose corporate clerks/secretaries authenticate this form are not required to obtain a Corporate Seal to complete this document.

10.5 Supplier Diversity Program Plan Form

Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Forms are REQUIRED for procurements over \$150,000. The form can be accessed here: [https://www.mass.gov/lists/osd-forms#supplier-diversity-program-\(sdp\)-plan-forms-](https://www.mass.gov/lists/osd-forms#supplier-diversity-program-(sdp)-plan-forms-).

Download this form and complete as directed below; include with online submission. Ink signature is not required.

The specific SDP requirements for this procurement can be found earlier in this document. Bidders are required to state a specific percentage of contract revenues that will represent the SDP commitment for the entire contract period, including any renewals.

10.6 Additional Environmentally Preferable Products / Practices

In line with the Commonwealth's efforts to promote products and practices which reduce our impact on the environment and human health, Bidders are encouraged to provide information regarding their environmentally preferable/sustainable business practices as they relate to this Contract wherever possible. Bidders must complete this form and submit it with their RFR Response.

10.7 Prompt Payment Discount Form

Download this form and complete as directed below; include with online submission. Ink signature is not required.

Pursuant to the Prompt Payment Discount terms set forth in the RFR Required Specifications for Contracts and on the Prompt Payment Discount Form itself, all Bidders must execute this form. After entering the "Bidder Name" and "Date of Offer for Prompt/Early Payment Discount", the Bidder must identify the prompt payment discount(s) terms by indicating the "Percentage Discount off of the Proposed Pricing" and the "Turn-around-time for Payments." In the event of a hardship that prevents the Bidder from offering a prompt payment discount, the Bidder must document this fact and provide supporting information. If awarded a contract, the final negotiated prompt payment discounts should be reflected on the Commonwealth Standard Contract Form.

10.8 Business Reference Form

Download this form and complete as directed below; include with online submission. Ink signature is not required.

Bidders must provide all requested information on this form for three (3) business references. In completing this form, note that the "Bidder" is the name of the company submitting a Quote in response to this RFR and the "RFR Name/Title" and the "Agency Document Number" can be found on the cover of the RFR document and in the Short Description field in the Header Information of the Bid record in COMMBUYS. Also, please note that: "Reference Name" is the name of the organization (if not applicable, then name of the individual) that is providing the reference; "Contact" is the name of the individual inside the organization that will provide the reference; and the "Address," "Phone #" and "Fax/Internet Address" are those of the "Contact" so that the EOEA may be able to reach them.

11. Instructions for Vendors Responding to Bids Electronically through COMMBUYS

Introduction

COMMBUYS refers to all solicitations, including but not limited to Requests for Proposals (RFP), Invitations for Bid (IFB), Requests for Response (RFR), Requests for Quote (RFQ), as “Bids.” All responses to Bids are referred to as “Quotes.”

Steps for Bidders to Submit a Quote

1. Launch the COMMBUYS website by entering the URL (www.COMMBUYS.com) into the browser.
2. Enter Bidder login credentials and click the **Login** button on the COMMBUYS homepage. Bidders must be registered in COMMBUYS in order to submit a Quote. Each Vendor has a COMMBUYS Seller Administrator, who is responsible for maintaining authorized user access to COMMBUYS.
3. Upon successful login, the Vendor home page displays with the Navigation and Header Bar as well as the Control Center. The Control Center is where documents assigned to your role are easily accessed and viewed.
4. Click on the **Bids** tab
5. Clicking on the Bid tab opens four sections:
 - a. Request for Revision
 - b. Bids/Bid Amendments
 - c. Open Bids
 - d. Closed Bids
6. Click on the blue **Open Bid** hyperlinks to open and review an open bid
7. A new page opens with a message requesting you acknowledge receipt of the bid. Click **Yes** to acknowledge receipt of the bid. Bidders should acknowledge receipt to receive any amendments/updates concerning this bid.
8. After acknowledgement, the bid will open.

The top left half of the page contains the following information:

- a. Purchaser
- b. Department
- c. Contact for this bid
- d. Type of purchase
 - i. Open Market
 - ii. Blanket
- e. Pre-Bid Conference details (if applicable)
- f. Ship-to and Bill-to addresses
- g. Any attachments to the bid, which may include essential bid terms, response forms, etc.

The top right half of the bid includes the following information:

- h. Bid Date

- i. Required Date
 - j. Bid Opening Date – date the bid closes and no further quotes will be accepted
 - k. Informal Bid Flag
 - l. Date goods/services are required
- 9. The lower half of the page provides information about the specific goods/services the bid is requesting.
- 10. Click **Create Quote** to begin.
- 11. The General tab for a new quote opens. This page is populated with some information from the bid. Fields available to update include:
 - a. Delivery days
 - b. Shipping terms
 - c. Ship via terms
 - d. Is “no” bid – select if you will not be submitting a quote for this bid
 - e. Promised Date
 - f. Info Contact
 - g. Comments
 - h. Discount Percent
 - i. Freight Terms
 - j. Payment Terms

It is important to note that the bid documents (RFR and attachments) may specify some or all of these terms and may prohibit you from altering these terms in your response. Read the bid documents carefully and fill in only those items that are applicable to the bid to which you are responding.

Update these fields as applicable to the bid and click **Save & Continue** to save any changes and create a Quote Number.

- 12. The page refreshes and messages display. Any message in **Red** is an error and must be resolved before the quote can be submitted. Any message in **Yellow** is only a warning and will allow processing to continue.
- 13. Click the **Items** tab. The Items tab displays information about the items requested in the bid. To view additional details about an item, click the item number (blue hyperlink) to open.
- 14. The item opens. Input all of your quote information and click **Save & Exit**.
- 15. Click on the **Attachments** Tab. Follow the prompts to upload and name all required attachments and forms and bid response documents in accordance with the instructions contained in the solicitation or bid documents. After uploading each individual file or form, click **Save & Continue**. After you have uploaded all required documents click **Save & Exit**. Be sure to review your attachments to make sure each required document has been submitted.
- 16. Click on the **Terms & Conditions** Tab. This tab refers to the terms and conditions that apply to this bid. The terms and conditions must be accepted before your quote can be submitted. If your acceptance is subject to any exceptions, those exceptions must be identified here. Exceptions cannot contradict the requirements of the RFR, or required Commonwealth standard forms and attachments for the bid. For instance, an RFR may specify that exceptions may or will result in disqualification of your bid.

17. Click the Summary tab. Review the information and update/correct, as needed. If the information is correct, click the **Submit Quote** button at the bottom of the page.
18. A popup window displays asking for verification that you wish to submit your quote. Click **OK** to submit the quote.
19. The Summary tab redisplay with an updated Status for the quote of **Submitted**.
20. Your quote submission is confirmed only when you receive a confirmation email from COMMBUYS. If you have submitted a quote and have not received an email confirmation, please contact the COMMBUYS Help Desk at COMMBUYS@state.ma.us.

If you wish to revise or delete a quote after submission, you may do so in COMMBUYS: (1) for a formal bid, prior to the bid opening date, or (2) for an informal bid (which may be viewed upon receipt), prior to the opening of your quote by the issuing entity or the bid opening date, whichever is earlier.

Bidders may not submit Multiple Quotes in response to a Bid unless the Bid authorizes Multiple Quote submissions. If you submit multiple quotes in response to a bid that does not allow multiple quotes, only the latest submission prior to the bid opening date will be evaluated.

12. Procurement Glossary

In addition to the definitions found in 801 CMR 21.00, which apply to all procurements for goods and services, the definitions found below apply to this Solicitation. Those definitions below designated with an asterisk (“*”) are quoted directly from 801 CMR 21.00 and are included below for quick reference purposes.

Agency – The Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA).

Bid – While a bid may generally refer to an offer or response submitted in response to a Solicitation or Request for Response (RFR), in COMMBUYS, a “bid” refers to the solicitation, RFR or procurement.

Bidder * - An individual or organization proposing to enter into a Contract to provide a Commodity or Service, or both, to or for a Department or the State.

Commonwealth Contract Manager – See Strategic Sourcing Services Lead

Contract * - A legally enforceable agreement between a Contractor and a Department. ANF, OSD and CTR shall jointly issue Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, a Standard Contract Form and other forms or documentation that Departments shall use to document the Procurement of Commodities or Services, or both. COMMBUYS refers to Contract records as “Purchase Orders” or “Blanket Purchase Orders.”

Contractor * - An individual or organization which enters into a Contract with a Department or the State to provide Commodities or Services, or both.

Contractor Contract Manager – The individual designated by the Contractor to interface with the Commonwealth.

Department - For the purposes of this Solicitation, the terms “EOEA,” “Department,” “Eligible Entity,” “Agency,” “Commonwealth Agency,” and “Contracting Department” include all entities listed in the Eligible Entities section of this RFR. COMMBUYS refers to such entities as “Organizations.”

Eligible Entity – EOEA.

Environmentally Preferable Product (EPP) - A product or service that has a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose. Such products or services may include, but are not limited to, those which contain recycled content, minimize waste, conserve energy or water, and reduce the amount of toxic materials either disposed of or consumed.

Evaluation – The process, conducted by the Strategic Sourcing Team, of reviewing, scoring and ranking the submitted Quotes related to this Bid.

FY – See Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year - The year beginning with July first and ending with the following June thirtieth as defined in M.G.L. Chapter 4, Section 7. This may also be referred to as the “State Fiscal Year.”

Organization – See Department

Procurement Team Leader (PTL) – See Strategic Sourcing Services Lead

PTL – See Procurement Team Leader

Quote or Response - generally refers to the offer submitted in response to a Bid or Request for Response (RFR).

Request for Response (RFR) * – The mechanism used to communicate Procurement specifications and to request Quotes from potential Bidders. An RFR may also be referred to as a "Bid" or "Solicitation."

Response – The Bidder's complete submission (or "Quote" as referenced in COMMBUYS) in response to a Solicitation, in other words, a "Bid" or "Proposal."

Solicitation – See Request for Response (RFR)

EOEA – See Strategic Sourcing Team

SSSL – See Strategic Sourcing Services Lead

Strategic Sourcing Team (EOEA) – Representatives from various eligible entities and interested stakeholders that design procurements, develop specifications, conduct Solicitations, evaluate responses to Bids and award Statewide or Department Contracts. The EOEA also monitors Contractor performance through performance measures and the level of participant satisfaction throughout the life of the Contract. In some agencies, EOEA's are referred to as "Procurement Management Teams."

Strategic Sourcing Services Lead (SSSL) – Individual designated by the procuring Department to lead the Strategic Sourcing Team and the solicitation and resulting contract. In some agencies SSSLs are referred to as "Procurement Team Leads (PTL)." COMMBUYS Refers to the SSSL in the Header Information section of a Bid as the "Purchaser."