Addendum No. 1 to REBID RFP 24-63

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Procurement and Contracting Services
KATJANA BALLANTYNE
MAYOR

To: All Parties on Record with the City of Somerville as Holding REBID RFP 24-63 Consolidated Inclusionary Rental Housing Waitlist – Phase III Implementation

From: Felisa Gárate, Procurement Analyst

Date: 8/20/2024

Re: Questions and Answers

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Please acknowledge receipt of this Addendum by signing below and including this form in your proposal package. Failure to do so may subject the proposer to disqualification.

NAME OF COMPANY / INDIVIDUAL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE/FAX/EMAIL: _____

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED INDIVIDUAL: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ADDENDA:

Addendum #1 _____ **#2** _____ **#3** _____ **#4** _____

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#	Question	Answer
1.	If we subcontract a language interpreter, do we need to provide their names/resumes in the proposal as well?	No, that is not necessary.
2.	What are the expected hours for availability (business hours, 24/7, etc.)? Also, what will the division of labor between the vendor and the Housing Division staff look like?	The expected hours for availability should align with the City's business hours (Monday-Wednesday 8:30am-4:30pm, Thursday 8:30am-7:30pm, and Friday 8:30am-12:30pm). Beyond that, it is expected that the vendor will schedule some presentations and additional outreach with the public during nights and weekends. This vendor will be responsible for content and campaign creation, leading marketing efforts, and assisting with inquiries. The Housing Division will provide support for those efforts through communication resources, coordination with other City divisions, staffing at events, etc. More information on the division of labor can be found in the "Specifications" section of the RFP.
3.	What is the role of Emphasys Computer Solutions? Are they there to just build the software, or will they be providing input as well?	Emphasys is our contracted vendor for the database. We are engaging in regular meetings with them to build out the application, lottery module, housing locator page, etc. It is expected that there will be some collaboration between the successful vendor of this contract and Emphasys. Within the database RFP process, Emphasys was made aware that the City would be working with an additional vendor to assist with community outreach.
4.	Is there a target budget range that the City of Somerville is hoping to meet for this contract?	Yes, the maximum budgeted amount is $67,000.00.
5.	How many families are currently on the City's waitlist?	The waitlist does not currently exist. We currently have between 10,000-15,000 households on our Inclusionary Housing ListServ. We are anticipating a similar volume for this waitlist.
6.	Does the City already have a protocol in place for tracking and resolving escalations?	The City does not have an established protocol for tracking and resolving escalations, beyond an appeals process. For the Consolidated Rental Waitlist, it is expected that the appeals process will have guide higher level application eligibility escalations. Beyond that, a protocol around escalations will be established between the Housing Division, the successful vendor for this RFP, and Emphasys (as necessary).

7.	Does the City already have a translation service/relationship in place, if so, whom? Would the City prefer vendor collaborate with that established service?	The Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs (SOIA) has established partnerships with translation vendors. We can share that list of vendors with the successful vendor for this RFP. While it is not necessary that the successful vendor of this RFP partners with translation vendors from that list, it is the preference of the Housing Division that there is some amount of collaboration between the successful vendor and SOIA to ensure that community needs are being met.
8.	Are there any subsidized programs attached to the developments that need to be considered as part of the outreach? (Ex. LIHTC, Multifamily, PBV (Project Based Voucher), etc.? If so, can you please list the subsidies per development?	There are not specific subsidized programs that are attached to individual developments that need to be considered as a part of the outreach. The Consolidated Rental Waitlist is a waitlist for the Inclusionary Housing Program (Ordinance-driven program that allocates a percentage of private market-rate units per development to be income-restricted; the program does not receive federal or state funding). With that said, the outreach efforts should be varied and diversified to best reach eligible households within the Somerville community. We do regularly partner with local advocacy organizations which should also be a consideration.
9.	As part of the Emphasys implementation does the City already have a portal that provides waiting list status to all applicants?	Yes, that is a feature that is being built out via Emphasys.
10.	Is the expectation that Emphasys will document and track client communications (email, online chat, phone calls, social media) and will it be used as the CRM (Customer Relationship Management)? • If not, what is the designated CRM? • If no CRM exists, is it the expectation that the vendor will recommend one for implementation?	The Emphasys Call Center/IT support will be tracking client communications directly to them. The Housing Division is working with internal City divisions to partner effectively using resources already being utilized by the City such as SmartSheet and Somerville HUB Connect. There is not a designated CRM.
11.	What phone, chat and email platforms will the City provide to communicate with applicants?	In terms of phone, chat and email platforms, the City utilizes Zoom and Outlook. The City would provide support to utilize Housing Division accounts for this implementation.

		Beyond that, a lot of communication will occur via Emphasys where a user group will be created for this vendor.
12.	What hours are expected for customer service to be available? Is the City anticipating extended hours such as weekends or after-hours support?	Business hours that align with the City's business hours (Monday-Wednesday 8:30am-4:30pm, Thursday 8:30am-7:30pm, and Friday 8:30am-12:30pm), as well as some expanded night/weekend availability for scheduled presentations/outreach with the public.
13.	Is there any expectation of having any consultants onsite?	Yes, there is an expectation that the consultant will be onsite for specific events scheduled for community outreach. It is not expected that the vendor will regularly be onsite for planning meetings.
14.	If the consultant will be responsible for printed and mailed material, can the City provide an estimate and examples of how much print and mail will be incurred, number of pages and sizes?	It is difficult to provide an accurate estimate as the vendor will be doing this, but it is expected that the vendor will be spending in the range of $5,000-$8,000 for printing costs. It is expected that most printing will be using the size of 8.5 in x 11 in. There will at minimum be a flyer/infographic printed (1-pager), potentially with some info session materials printed (10 pages) and available upon request.
15.	Does the City have expectation on reporting requirements and any key performance indicators?	The purpose of this RFP is to promote the Consolidated Rental Waitlist to the community and provide opportunities to meaningfully engage through that outreach. The successful vendor should report regularly to the City on the following key performance indicators around Engagement: • Number of users registered to Emphasys Database • Number of attendees to public meetings • Number of applications received to Consolidated Rental Waitlist
16.	Who was the selected vendor/provider to complete Phase 1 and Phase 2?	The Phase I vendor was Maloney Properties, and the Phase II vendor was LDS Consulting.
17.	How would the City rate the success of previous phases (Phase 1 and 2)?	In that both phases accomplished the provided directive from the RFP and key elements of the scope, both the previous phases were successful. As this project has evolved, we have learned more about the necessary preparation to implement the Consolidated Rental Waitlist. That knowledge has caused the team working on this initiative to pivot and restructure the implementation.

18.	What are the primary success metrics for this phase of the project? How will the City measure the effectiveness of the implementation?	The primary success metrics for this phase of the project are: • Number of users registered to Emphasys Database • Number of attendees to public meetings • Number of applications received to Consolidated Rental Waitlist The City will measure the effectiveness of the implementation via the above quantified metrics related to engagement with the overall community. It is also a strong priority of the City that the launch occurs according to the timeline put forth by the successful vendor.
19.	What lessons were learned from Phases I and II that should inform the approach to Phase III? Are there any specific areas of improvement or focus?	The lessons that were learned from II are as follows: • Phase II specifically raised questions that have helped to shape what policies need to be created ahead of implementation. • Beyond that there were concerns raised by constituents in Phase II that indicated concern around the priorities of the Consolidated Rental Waitlist. It will be important for the successful vendor to effectively explain this aspect of the CRW. In terms of areas of specific focus or improvement, the next round of community engagement should have a clear action item for interested households to immediately apply.
20.	Can you provide more details about the systems with which the rental waitlist system must integrate? Are there specific APIs, databases, or software platforms that we need to consider?	The Consolidated Rental Waitlist will be completely monitored via Emphasys. That is the only database to consider. The successful vendor of this RFP will not be creating the Consolidated Rental Waitlist. The successful vendor of this RFP should be creating the marketing campaign, leading marketing efforts, and assisting with inquiries.
21.	Is there any data migration required from existing systems? If so, what is the volume and format of the data?	No.
22.	Are there any specific UI/UX guidelines or accessibility requirements that we need to follow? How diverse is the user base in terms of technical proficiency?	The vendor of this RFP will not be designing an interface. We have provided UI/UX guidelines to Emphasys as they are building out our database.

		In terms of the user base, we are serving the entire Somerville community and beyond. We are going to attempt to implement a paperless form and need to have strategies in place to help applicants who are not technically proficient.
23.	We pulled a list of languages that City of Somerville typically translates to but are there a list of required languages that we will need to translate to?	Materials will need to be translated from English into the following required languages: Spanish, Portuguese, Nepali, Haitian Creole, Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese. For events, language interpretation should be proactively scheduled per session. We typically have one Spanish only session and schedule interpreters for a couple of the other sessions in English (one night having Spanish/Portuguese/Haitian Creole interpreters, and one night having Nepali/Cantonese/Mandarin/ASL). We have typically also included some kind of messaging for translation upon request like this: "Interpretation in any language is available upon advance request by contacting the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs at somervillema.gov/ContactSomerViva or calling 311 at 617-666-3311." We expect that there will be some collaboration for these efforts between the successful vendor and SOIA, but some of the translation efforts will need to be solely completed by the vendor.
24.	Can you provide more details on the expected timeline for Phase III? Are there any critical milestones or deadlines we need to be aware of?	The expected timeline for Phase III is as follows: • October/November - Work with the successful vendor of this RFP to develop the marketing strategy for the Consolidated Rental Waitlist launch • November/December - Launch marketing • December/January - Launch the application • March - Close the application and conduct the lottery • April - Continue managing the Consolidated Rental Waitlist Note that we are still in the process of building out the database with Emphasys and this timeline is subject to change. We are anticipating that the successful vendor for this RFP will be assisting with the preparation for the marketing period, the marketing period and the application period.

		Until we are further along in the development of the database, it is difficult to identify a key milestone or deadline.
25.	Who are the key stakeholders that we will need to work with throughout the project? What is the process for stakeholder engagement and sign-off?	The key stakeholders for this project are: • Somerville community members • Somerville advocacy groups • Somerville elected officials and staff: City Council, Office of Housing Stability, Communications Division, Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs • Emphasys • Housing Division • Property Owners in lease up/property owners with vacancies Ultimately, the Housing Division team members will incorporate stakeholders throughout the planning in meetings with the successful vendor. The final materials will need to be reviewed by Housing Division, and Communications.
26.	What are the expectations for ongoing support and maintenance after Phase III is completed? Is there a specific service level agreement (SLA) that needs to be included?	A SLA does not need to be included. It is expected that the successful vendor will help design sustainable strategies for the Housing Division to manage future outreach regarding the Consolidated Rental Waitlist.
27.	What are the key criteria that the City will use to evaluate proposals? How important are factors like experience, technical capability, cost, and timeline in the evaluation process?	Proposals will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria, as well as price. The comparative evaluation criteria can be found on pages 15 and 16 of the RFP.