Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

April 18, 2014
RFP for a Qualified Contractor to Conduct the Gaps Analysis Surveys with the Counties and Collect Stakeholder Input for the 2014 Home and Community-Based Services Gaps Analysis Study

Responses to Questions

1. You shared expectations around the final report in the RFP. Are there other milestones or deadlines we should be aware of as we develop our suggested approach?

   Response: No.

2. Who will be our key liaison for the project? How available (frequency, duration) will that liaison be for meetings?

   Response: The key liaison for this project will be Mary Olsen-Baker, DHS Continuing Care Administration, Aging and Adult Services Division. Mary will be available as needed to support the contractor in the implementation of the project. Mary will develop a meeting schedule with the contractor to ensure regular communication.

3. Will anyone else in your organization be available to contribute ideas for the evaluation? What should we know about them and their level of availability?

   Response: A staff team consisting of one representative from each of the following divisions will provide input to the contractor on a regular basis: Aging and Adult Services Division (a representative in addition to Mary), Disability Services Division, Children's Mental Health Division and Adult Mental Health Division. Mary will develop a meeting schedule with the contractor to ensure regular communication.

4. Organizations have varying expectations and needs for final products. Do you have any examples of reports or products you can share that exemplify your expectations for the quality and style of the final report?

   Response: Please refer to the products available on the 2012 Long-Term Services and Supports Gaps Analysis website for examples of similar types of products. A compilation of

Responses to Questions (continued)

the Gaps Analysis survey data, by county and population, must be included as a part of the final report.

5. Do you have any lessons learned from your prior work that we should know as we develop a suggested approach?

   Response: The primary lesson learned from previous work is the importance of taking enough time to hear from and engage the key staff and stakeholders in the review and development of the survey instruments and survey process (primarily lead agencies) and the stakeholder input process (primarily the HCBS Partners Panel and lead agencies) to ensure a successful outcome. This RFP was released several months earlier than the RFP for the previous work in order to ensure there is adequate time for these processes as well as adequate time for the contractor to compile the results.

6. We are thinking through the sequencing of the different activities, and thought the results of the Gaps survey could help us refine our questions for the stakeholder input. Do you have any concerns about this sequencing – with Gaps survey coming first, followed by stakeholder input – that would inform our approach?

   Response: We do not feel that there is enough time to implement these activities sequentially and prepare the final report by the end of the project period. However, we do feel there is enough time to gather the input of key staff and external stakeholders to inform the Gaps Analysis survey as well as the stakeholder input process, including identifying priorities for both.

7. Would the group convened for the Critical Access study be available to answer questions and share suggestions at one of their scheduled meetings?

   Response: The grantee selected to conduct the Critical Access Study will primarily work with the HCBS Partners Panel to gather external stakeholder input. This will also be the primary group with whom the grantee selected to conduct the Gaps Analysis Study will work.

8. Are there any font or format requirements for our proposal?

   Response: No.

9. Does the proposal itself need to be accessible (format)? If so, what accessibility standards should we use (i.e., screen-reader accessible only; or some other standard)

   Response: No.

Responses to Questions (continued)

10. Are resumes included in the 15 page limit?

    Response: No.

11. Will you accept letters of recommendation as an attachment?

    Response: Yes.

12. What is the expected response rate for a valid sample? Does it vary by group?

    Response: In any study, the expected response rate does vary by group as does the definition of a valid sample. Applicants are encouraged to provide a thorough explanation for their proposed methods and the anticipated results.

13. Will additional questions be added to the survey for the traumatic brain injuries and corporate foster care studies?

    Response: Yes, but the breadth and depth of questions will be determined by the selected contractor and staff.

14. Will the outside information use a survey instrument or will it be meeting based to gather the information?

    Response: If the term “outside information” refers to external stakeholder input, the methods by which this information will be gathered have not been determined. Applicants are asked to propose a method or methods for this aspect of the study.

15. What is the valid number of responses for a statistically accurate sample?

    Response: We cannot answer that question with the information provided at this time.

16. Is there an incumbent?

    Response: There is no current contract in place for this work. The most recent contract ended July 15, 2013.

17. Who is responsible for sending out the questionnaire and receiving the responses from the recipients?

    Response: If the term “questionnaire” refers to the Gaps Analysis survey of the counties, the grantee selected to conduct this study will be responsible for sending out the questionnaire and compiling the responses.

Responses to Questions (continued)

18. How long did the process take in 2012? Were extensions needed?

    Response: The Gaps Analysis survey of the counties took approximately nine months. That work was completed by internal DHS staff so extensions were not an issue. The external stakeholder input process took approximately eight months and no extensions were given.

19. How much travel will be required?

    Response: It is expected that the external stakeholder input process will require the selected grantee to travel to multiple areas of the state. The extent of this travel will depend on the methods used to gather the input.

20. Have stakeholders been identified?

    Response: The primary stakeholder groups have been identified and are represented on the HCBS Partners Panel.

21. Who do we work with to close gaps?

    Response: The grantee selected to conduct this study is not expected to close gaps identified in the study.

22. Would the state consider an arrangement other than the program line item budget structure outlined in the contract? Our contracts typically involve fixed rate reimbursement and we structure our hourly rates to include all project expenses.

    Response: No, the state will not consider an alternative arrangement for the budget structure.

23. Regarding the conflict of interest provisions, would an association with a Medicaid provider be considered a conflict of interest?

    Response: Not on the face of it. If there is a potential conflict, the selected grantee must identify it and address it before completion of the contract.

24. Required Statement #5, p. 11 of the RFP: Can we submit a compiled financial statement with proof of substantial cash reserves from our bank instead of an audited financial statement? How many years of financial statements are required?

    Response: Depending on the applicant’s most recent annual income or how long the applicant has been in business, an applicant is required to submit either a certified financial audit, IRS Form 990, or most recent board-reviewed financial statements.

Responses to Questions (continued)

25. Since this analysis includes surveys for mentally ill and youth and adolescents and those with diminished mental capacity, will the project be covered by Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol? Our firm has a relationship with a University to obtain an evergreen IRB. Will this be acceptable?

    Response: The Gaps Analysis Study is program evaluation and, as such, does not need IRB approval for gathering consumer input. A decision has not been made regarding the best method(s) to gather consumer input.

26. Does this survey also include the intellectually and developmentally disabled?

    Response: Yes, the survey of the counties will ask county staff to gauge the availability of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

27. Are gift incentives permitted and, if so, what vendor and amount do you recommend?

    Response: Yes. We do not have a recommended vendor. The amount for the gift incentive will need to be approved by the Department of Human Services.

28. What languages do we need to accommodate for? We have full language capability.

    Response: This has not yet been determined. However, in order to be able to potentially engage the full range of stakeholders in the input process the selected contractor will need to have the ability to accommodate multiple languages.

29. Can you say a bit more about the deliverables for the project? Is there one comprehensive report that is expected or one for each of the four sub-populations? Do each of the 87 counties and tribes need a report for their area?

    Response: We expect to receive one narrative report for each of the four sub-populations, one narrative report that highlights the themes that cut across the four surveys, as well as the data compilations for each of the 87 counties and tribes that includes the data by population.

30. How much direct consumer data collection is involved? For example, do you have an idea of how many consumers across the state that you would like to receive input from?

    Response: We do not have a set number of consumers in mind that we would like to receive input from. The consumer input should augment the consumer data we already have access to and provide a qualitative picture of the availability of home and community-based services for the four populations and barriers to accessing these services. Applicants are encouraged to consider the use of technology to provide the opportunity to give input to the broad populations of consumers statewide as well as in-person methods that provide an

Responses to Questions (continued)

opportunity for a smaller set of consumers to provide more in-depth input. The input should be representative of the statewide population and take into account the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity as well as the different regions of the state, including urban and rural communities."

31. What existing consumer data do you already have access to?

    Response: Information on the consumer data that we already have access to can be found here:
    Medical Assistance Reform Data Analysis - Preliminary Analysis PPT – presented May 4, 2012 (PDF)
    Medical Assistance Reform Data Analysis - Secondary Analysis PPT – presented June 18, 2012 (PDF)
    Access Dashboard FFS Trends – August 1, 2013 (PDF)
    MCO Interviews Final Report – August 1, 2013 (PDF)
    MCO Encounter Data Analysis Report – March 31, 2013 (PDF)
    MN Access Dashboard Revised FFS Utilization Final – October 25, 2013 (PDF)

32. If there are survey instruments that you've used, can responders see examples?

    Response: The only surveys used to date are the Gaps Analysis surveys of the counties. Refer to the 2012 Gaps Analysis Reports for each of the four populations which provide a compilation of county responses by survey question.

33. How is the Critical Access Study being integrated into this study? Is it possible to get the name of vendor for that Study?

    Response: The contract has not been finalized with the contractor selected to conduct the Critical Access Study. The Critical Access Study will not be integrated into the 2014 Gaps Analysis Study. The methods by which the contractor conducts the analysis of the existing and newly collected data will get incorporated into future Gaps Analysis Studies, to the extent that these analyses can be replicated in order to provide longitudinal data.

34. Can you give an example of a county or counties that did an excellent job at previous gaps analysis? If there is a specific model /county, can you provide their report? Can we also see an example from the opposite end of the quality spectrum?

    Response: All county responses to the Gaps Analysis surveys, by population, can be found on the 2012 Gaps Analysis Reports website.

Responses to Questions (continued)

35. How has this analysis of gaps been done in the Children's Mental Health area in the past? What is the anticipated scope of the current Children's Mental Health gaps analysis: what types of services are covered; can you say more about the population that is included (e.g. is it children who are diagnosed as Serious Emotional Disturbance, a broader definition?)?

    Response: We anticipate the scope of the Children's Mental Health Gaps Analysis to be similar to the scope of the 2012 Gaps Analysis, which can be found on the 2012 Gaps Analysis Reports website. However, the primary purpose must be the documentation of gaps in the availability of home and community-based services that are needed by children with mental health conditions.

36. What stakeholders will be involved in evaluation planning? What stakeholders will be interested in the project outcomes?

    Response: The primary set of stakeholders that will be involved in evaluation planning and interested in project outcomes are members of the HCBS Partners Panel.

37. To what extent is there flexibility to modify the proposed study design once planning commences among the evaluators, project staff, and key stakeholders?

    Response: There will be substantial flexibility to modify the proposed study design in the first phase of the project period as long as the State can be assured that the contractor can deliver the final products by the end of the project period.

38. How firm is the timeline to complete the work/various phases of the work?

    Response: The timeline to complete the final deliverables of the study is very firm as there will be no extensions granted. The report to the legislature that will summarize findings from this study as well as the Critical Access Study is due on August 15, 2015. The deadlines for deliverables identified at other points in the project period are not as firm.

39. Regarding RFP Section VI, Subsection I, Nonvisual Access Standards (page 23 of the RFP). How do you see this requirement impacting the project?

    Response: All documents and electronic media used to communicate information about the study and to gather input from stakeholders for the study must be accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired.

40. On page 8 of the RFB, under B. Tasks/Deliverables, it mentions that there is a 15 page limit for items in that section. Is it okay to put in brief bios for key staff, and then put their resumes into the Appendix (not include resumes as part of the 15 page limit)?

    Response: Yes, resumes can be included in an Appendix.

Responses to Questions (continued)

41. The RFP states that pre-approval will be required for any travel expenses outside the state of Minnesota. Does this imply that preference will be given to in state vendors? Will there be a cap on allowable expenses for out of state travel?

    Response: Preference will not be given to in-state vendors. There will not be a cap on allowable expenses for out-of-state travel. However, all travel expenses must be deemed by DHS staff as reasonable, appropriate and necessary for successful completion of the study. Applicants are encouraged to describe their capacity to engage in meaningful dialogue with state agency staff as well as external stakeholders throughout implementation of the project.