NCDHHS

NCDHHS Extends Deadline for Questions for Request for Qualifications to Expand Testing and Contact Tracing for COVID-19

Raleigh, N.C.

Jun 2, 2020

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) is extending the deadline (https://www.ips.state.nc.us/IPS/AGENCY/PDF/13710801.pdf) for questions for its Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that seeks to create a pool of qualified vendors to support the response to COVID-19. **Vendors may now submit questions in writing until 2 p.m. on June 4, 2020.**

The RFQ was issued on May 29 for diagnostic and antibody testing including specimen collection and laboratory processing, reserving potential laboratory capacity and contact tracing.

The Department is prioritizing working with minority-owned business vendors or vendors who retain a diverse workforce. All vendor applicants must be able to demonstrate the ability to support focused testing and tracing efforts for historically marginalized populations. African Americans and LatinX/Hispanic communities make up a disproportionate number of North Carolina's COVID-19 laboratory confirmed cases and deaths due to long standing health inequities that must be addressed proactively as we respond to this pandemic.

This is a rolling qualification process and vendors will be able to submit a response by the first of very month through December. In addition, the Department anticipates issuing future RFQs for other functions beyond testing, lab capacity, and contact tracing.

Background
A RFQ prequalifies vendors to work with the Department. By screening in advance, NCDHHS will have a pool of vendors that it can rapidly engage to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants that meet the RFQ requirements and demonstrate that they can provide the services described in the Scope of Work will be considered for work on specific projects in the future.

Testing and tracing are part of North Carolina's strategy to responsibly ease restrictions, while slowing the spread of COVID-19 and protecting North Carolinians. Vendors can apply to be qualified for individual or multiple components to support:

- **Testing and Lab Capacity**. Knowing who has COVID-19 is critical to slowing the spread of COVID-19. New guidance recommends that clinicians test anyone suspected of having COVID-19 as well as people who are at higher risk of exposure, higher risk for serious illness or disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 regardless of symptoms. Among the areas of focus are supporting historically marginalized populations, testing in congregate living facilities, testing in areas with outbreaks, addressing low-tested counties or communities, and supporting businesses and their workforce.
- **Contact Tracing**. Contact tracing is a proven, effective way to help slow the spread of diseases like COVID-19. Contact tracing identifies people who have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. This helps North Carolina more rapidly identify those who may have been exposed and quickly get them the necessary supports and resources that can help protect them and their loved ones. To meet the scale needed to respond to COVID-19, NCDHHS is seeking vendors who represent the communities and people impacted by COVID-19 to build on the work of local health departments through vendors.

The addendum is online at https://www.ips.state.nc.us/IPS/AGENCY/PDF/13710801.pdf (https://www.ips.state.nc.us/IPS/AGENCY/PDF/13710801.pdf) .

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