

**State of Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

RETURN TO:
Dana Crawford-Smith / Carrie Olson
301 Centennial Mall S, 5th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68508

SOLICITATION NUMBER	RELEASE DATE
RFI SNAP	March 31, 2022
OPENING DATE AND TIME	PROCUREMENT CONTACT
April 28, 2022, 2:00 p.m. Central Time	Dana Crawford-Smith / Carrie Olson

This form is part of the specification package and must be signed in ink and returned, along with information documents, by the opening date and time specified.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

SCOPE OF SERVICE

The State of Nebraska (State), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is issuing this Request for Information RFI SNAP for the purpose of gathering information for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) regulation re-writes and guidance document creation.

Written questions are due no later than April 7, 2022, and should be submitted via e-mail to dhhs.procurement@nebraska.gov.

Bidder should submit one (1) original of the entire RFI response. RFI responses should be submitted by the RFI due date and time.

BIDDER MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING

By signing this Request For Information form, the bidder guarantees compliance with the provisions stated in this Request for Information.

FIRM: _____

COMPLETE ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ FAX NUMBER: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

TYPED NAME & TITLE OF SIGNER: _____

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I. SCOPE OF THE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The State of Nebraska, DHHS, is issuing this Request for Information, RFI SNAP for the purpose of gathering information for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) regulation re-writes and guidance document creation.

ALL INFORMATION PERTINENT TO THIS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTERNET AT: <http://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/purchasing.html>

A. SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The State expects to adhere to the tentative procurement schedule shown below. It should be noted, however, that some dates are approximate and subject to change.

	ACTIVITY	DATE/TIME
1	Release Request for Information	March 31, 2022
2	Last day to submit written questions	April 7, 2022
3	State responds to written questions through Request for Information “Addendum” and/or “Amendment” to be posted to the internet at: http://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/purchasing.html	April 21, 2022
4	RFI opening Location: DHHS Central Procurement Services 301 Centennial Mall S., 5 th floor Lincoln, NE 68508 Via Webex: https://sonvideo.webex.com/sonvideo/j.php?MTID=ma622537c176	April 28, 2022 2:00 PM Central Time
5	Conduct oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations (if required)	To Be Determined

II. RFI RESPONSE PROCEDURES

A. OFFICE AND CONTACT PERSON

Responsibilities related to this Request for Information reside with the State Purchasing Bureau. The point of contact for the RFI is as follows:

Name: Dana Crawford-Smith / Carrie Olson
Agency: DHHS Central Procurement Services
Address: 301 Centennial Mall S., 5th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68508
Telephone: 402-471-7575
E-Mail: dhhs.procurement@nebraska.gov

B. GENERAL INFORMATION

A subsequent Request for Proposal (RFP) may not be issued as a result of this RFI. There will not be a contract as a result of this RFI and the State is not liable for any cost incurred by vendors in replying to this RFI. If an RFP is issued, the information provided will assist the State of Nebraska in developing the Request for Proposal. This RFI does not obligate the State to reply to the RFI responses, to issue an RFP, or to include any RFI provisions or responses provided by vendors in any RFP.

C. COMMUNICATION WITH STATE STAFF

From the date the Request for Information is issued and until RFI opening (as shown in the Schedule of Events), contact regarding this RFI between potential vendors and individuals employed by the State should be restricted to written communication with the staff designated above as the point of contact for this Request for Information.

The following exceptions to these restrictions are permitted:

1. Written communication with the person(s) designated as the point(s) of contact for this Request for Information;
2. contacts made pursuant to any pre-existing contracts or obligations; and
3. State-requested presentations, key personnel interviews, clarification sessions, or discussions.

Violations of these conditions may be considered sufficient cause to reject a vendor's response to the RFI. No individual member of the State, employee of the State, or member of the Interview Committee is empowered to make binding statements regarding this RFI. The State of Nebraska will issue any clarifications or opinions regarding this RFI in writing.

D. WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Any explanation desired by a vendor regarding the meaning or interpretation of any Request for Information provision should be submitted in writing to the DHHS and clearly marked "RFI Number SNAP; Questions". It is preferred that questions be sent via e-mail to dhhs.procurement@nebraska.gov.

It is recommended that Bidders submit questions sequentially numbered, include the RFI reference and page number using the following format.

<u>Question Number</u>	<u>RFI Section Reference</u>	<u>RFI Page Number</u>	<u>Question</u>

Written answers will be provided through an addendum to be posted on the Internet at <http://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/purchasing.html> on or before the date shown in the Schedule of Events.

E. ORAL INTERVIEWS/PRESENTATIONS AND/OR DEMONSTRATIONS

DHHS reserves the right to conduct oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations if required at the sole invitation of DHHS.

Any cost incidental to the oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations shall be borne entirely by the vendor and will not be compensated by DHHS.

F. SUBMISSION OF RESPONSE

The State is accepting either electronically submitted responses or hard copy, paper responses for this RFI.

1. For bidders submitting electronic responses:

- a. Bidders submitting electronically can upload the response via ShareFile here: <https://nebraska.sharefile.com/r-rb50d7897750f4fe59e5bdbeff32e8307>
- b. ShareFile works with Firefox, Internet Explorer and Chrome. It does not work with Microsoft Edge.
- c. Proprietary information should be uploaded as separate and distinct files. If multiple responses are submitted, the State will retain only the most recently submitted response. It is the bidder's responsibility to submit the response by the date and time indicated in the Schedule of Events. Electronic responses must be received by DHHS by the date and time of the response opening per the Schedule of Events. No late responses will be accepted
- d. **ELECTRONIC RESPONSE FILE NAMES**
The bidder should clearly identify the uploaded RFI response files. To assist in identification please use the following naming convention:
 - i. RFI SNAP ABC Company
 - ii. If multiple files are submitted for one RFI response, add number of files to file names: RFI SNAP ABC Company File 1 of 2.
 - iii. If multiple RFI responses are submitted for the same RFI, add the response number to the file names: RFI SNAP ABC Company Response 1 File 1 of 2.

2. For bidders submitting paper/hard copy responses:

- a. Bidders who are submitting a paper response should submit one response marked on the first page: "ORIGINAL". If multiple responses are submitted, the State will retain one copy marked "ORIGINAL" and destroy the other copies. The Contractor is solely responsible for any variance between the copies submitted. Responses should include the completed Form A, "Vendor Contact Sheet". Responses must reference the RFI number and be sent to the specified address. Please note that the address label should appear as specified in Section II A on the face of each container or contractor's response packet. If a recipient phone number is required for delivery purposes, 402-471-7575 should be used. The RFI number should be included in all correspondence. The State will not furnish packaging and sealing materials. It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure the response is received in a sealed envelope or container and submitted by the date and time indicated in the

Schedule of Events. Sealed responses must be received at DHHS by the date and time of the opening per the Schedule of Events. No late responses will be accepted.

United States Postal Services (USPS) delivered responses shall be mailed to:

ATTN: Dana Crawford-Smith/Carrie Olson RFI SNAP
DHHS - Central Procurement Services
PO BOX 94926
Lincoln, NE 68509

Hand delivered responses or responses delivered by Federal Express (FedEx), United Parcel Service (UPS), etc. shall be delivered to:

ATTN: Dana Crawford-Smith/Carrie Olson RFI SNAP
DHHS - 3rd Floor Reception Desk
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509

- b. Proprietary Information should be presented in separate sections (loose-leaf binders are preferred) on standard 8 ½" x 11" paper, except that charts, diagrams and the like may be on fold-outs which, when folded, fit into the 8 ½" by 11" format. Pages may be consecutively numbered for the entire response, or may be numbered consecutively within sections. Figures and tables should be numbered consecutively within sections. Figures and tables should be numbered and referenced in the text by that number. They should be placed as close as possible to the referencing text.
3. The State will not furnish packaging or sealing materials. It is the bidder's responsibility to ensure the response is received either electronically or in a sealed envelope or container and submitted by the date and time indicated in the Schedule of Events. Sealed responses must be received at DHHS by the date and time of the response opening per the Schedule of Events.

It is the responsibility of the contractor to check the website for all information relevant to this Request for Information to include addenda and/or amendments issued prior to the opening date. Website address is as follows:
<https://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/bidopps.html>.

The State shall not incur any liability for any costs incurred by contractors in replying to this solicitation, in the demonstrations and/or oral presentations, or in any other activity related to responding on this solicitation.

A separate sheet must be provided that clearly states which sections have been submitted as proprietary or have copyrighted materials. RFI responses should reference the request for information number and be sent to the specified address. Please note that the address label should appear as specified on the face of each container. If a recipient phone number is required for delivery purposes, 402-471-7575 should be used. The Request for Information number must be included in all correspondence.

G. PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

Data contained in the response and all documentation provided therein, become the property of the State of Nebraska and the data become public information upon opening the response. If the vendor wishes to have any information withheld from the public, such information must fall

within the definition of proprietary information contained within Nebraska's public record statutes. All proprietary information the vendor wishes the state to withhold must be submitted in a sealed package, which is separate from the remainder of the response. The separate package must be clearly marked PROPRIETARY on the outside of the package. Vendor may not mark their entire Request for Information as proprietary. Failure of the vendor to follow the instructions for submitting proprietary and copyrighted information may result in the information being viewed by other vendors and the public. Proprietary information is defined as trade secrets, academic and scientific research work which is in progress and unpublished, and other information which if released would give advantage to business competitors and serve no public purpose (see Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-712.05(3)). In accordance with Attorney General Opinions 92068 and 97033, vendors submitting information as proprietary may be required to prove specific, named competitor(s) who would be advantaged by release of the information and the specific advantage the competitor(s) would receive. Although every effort will be made to withhold information that is properly submitted as proprietary and meets the State's definition of proprietary information, the State is under no obligation to maintain the confidentiality of proprietary information and accepts no liability for the release of such information.

H. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OPENING

The sealed responses will be publicly opened and the responding entities announced on the date, time, and location shown in the Schedule of Events. Responses will be available for viewing by those present after the opening. Vendors may also contact the state to schedule an appointment for viewing RFI responses.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE OF WORK

The bidder should provide the following information in response to this Request for Information.

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is currently seeking information or demonstrations from potential vendors regarding re-writing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Nebraska Administrative Code (NAC) part 475 (<https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Title-475.aspx>), creating a worker manual for the program, and providing technical assistance regarding the creation of training documents and tools.

Regarding the NAC regulations, the purpose is to ensure that they can be understood by both Department employees and the public, while still maintaining the State's required formatting. Regarding the worker manual, DHHS must provide guidance for topics that were removed from the regulations, as well as provide guidance on a variety of procedural topics, as they relate to SNAP, that affect all programs administered by the DHHS Economic Assistance Unit.

Additionally, the Department is looking for assistance in how to effectively draft guidance for both Department employees and the public so that it is well understood and can be effectively implemented.

The RFI process is intended to help vendors gain an understanding of the Department's intent and for vendors to convey to DHHS their qualifications to assist in the development of these documents. Work may not be limited to part 475 of the NAC manual and the worker manual, depending on the services that can be provided.

B. CURRENT BUSINESS PRACTICES

SNAP Program staff are currently responsible for drafting regulations and creating guidance for field staff. Limited time and resources can affect the efficacy of such guidance. There is currently no specific technologic system through which this work is conducted. The Department does not have formalized best practices for providing guidance.

C. CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

All SNAP and DHHS guidance must be reviewed prior to be sent to the field and/or the public.

Regulatory Approval Process:

Prior to issuing revised regulations, the drafts must first be reviewed via an extensive approval process, as follows:

1. Identification – Identify what regulations need to be added, amended, or repealed
2. Authorization – Division's Regulations Coordinator approves/denies request
3. Preliminary Steps – Complete required pre-drafting documents and steps
4. Drafting – Draft the regulations
5. Legal Review – DHHS Legal Services reviews regulations
6. Governor's Policy Research Office (GPRO) Review – GPRO reviews regulations
7. Public Hearing & Comments – Public providers comments on proposed regulations
8. Adoption – Division reviews comments and either amends regulations or adopts them
9. Attorney General – AG reviews regulations and approves/denies them
10. Governor – Governor reviews regulations and approves/denies them
11. Secretary of State (SoS) – SoS reviews regulations and approves/denies them
12. Effective Date – Regulations become effective 5 days after approval by the SoS

Internal Guidance Review Process:

Unlike the regulations, different types of internal guidance created in the Economic Assistance Division require different levels of approval, depending on the type of document. For example,

internal informational memos, such as tips, only require approval up to the Deputy Director of Programs and Services (4 levels of approval), whereas external guidance documents require approval up to the Director of Children and Family Services (7 levels of approval)

D. VENDOR RESPONSE AND INFORMATION REQUESTED

Potential vendors are asked to provide a response to the requests of this section. There is not a page requirement or limit, but the information provided should meet sufficiently satisfy the request.

Minimum information requested in responding to the RFI:

1. Name, mailing address, email address, and a high-level overview of the services the vendor can provide.
2. Prior project examples, preferably those that involve taking complicated rules and/or regulations and making them understandable to the layman.
 - a. Examples are not limited to re-writes of state regulations
3. Description of the process regarding how the vendor could assist DHHS in the requested projects in subsection A of this section.
4. Examples of other guidance document drafting services that can be provided, if applicable.
5. Basic fee schedule for services, if available.

Form A

Vendor Contact Sheet

Request for Information Number SNAP

Form A should be completed and submitted with each response to this solicitation document. This is intended to provide the State with information on the vendor's name and address, and the specific persons who are responsible for preparation of the vendor's response.

Preparation of Response Contact Information	
Vendor Name:	
Vendor Address:	
Contact Person & Title:	
E-mail Address:	
Telephone Number (Office):	
Telephone Number (Cellular):	
Fax Number:	

Each vendor shall also designate a specific contact person who will be responsible for responding to the State if any clarifications of the vendor's response should become necessary. This will also be the person who the State contacts to set up a presentation/demonstration, if required.

Communication with the State Contact Information	
Vendor Name:	
Vendor Address:	
Contact Person & Title:	
E-mail Address:	
Telephone Number (Office):	
Telephone Number (Cellular):	
Fax Number:	