

SOLICITATION NUMBER: 97499 O3 – Nebraska WIC Program	RELEASE DATE: March 29, 2023
OPENING DATE AND TIME: May 1, 2023	PROCUREMENT CONTACTS:
@ 2:00 PM Central Time	René A. Botts

SCOPE OF WORK RELEASE

I. PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

The State of Nebraska (State), Department of Health and Human Services Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (NE WIC), issued Request for Qualification (RFQ) Number 97499 O3 for the purpose of selecting Qualified Contractors to provide System Evaluation to DHHS.

This document presents a set Scope of Work being released related to that RFQ. This Scope of Work is specific to DHHS who will engage a nationally recognized consultant to provide an evaluation of the NE WIC Program's vendor peer groups in order to examine how the NE WIC can better group its authorized vendors for the purpose of cost containment and fair pricing for NE WIC-eligible purchases.

Throughout this Scope of Work, the following applies:

1. Bidder – a Qualified Contractor that is submitting a bid in response to this Scope of Work
2. Contractor – the Vendor that has been awarded this Scope of Work
3. Qualified Contractor – a Vendor that submitted a proposal in response to RFQ 97499 O3 and met the evaluation thresholds to be admitted into the pool

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS		
The State expects to adhere to the procurement schedule shown below, but all dates are approximate and subject to change.		
ACTIVITY		Date/Time
1.	Release Scope of Work	March 29, 2023
2.	Last day to submit written questions	April 11, 2023
3.	State responds to written questions through Scope of Work "Addendum" and/or "Amendment" to be posted to the Internet at: https://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/bidopps.html	April 18, 2023
4.	<p>Proposal Opening WebEx:</p> <p>Join from the meeting link https://sonvideo.webex.com/sonvideo/j.php?MTID=m5d4b97ff89</p> <p>Join by meeting number Meeting number (access code): 2494 962 4467 Meeting password: WAbs9JsiV89</p> <p>Tap to join from a mobile device (attendees only) +1-408-418-9388,24949624467## United States Toll</p> <p>Join by phone +1-408-418-9388 United States Toll Global call-in numbers</p> <p>Join from a video system or application Dial 24949624467@sonvideo.webex.com You can also dial 173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number.</p> <p>If you are a host, click here and login site to view host information.</p> <p>Need help? Go to https://help.webex.com</p>	May 1, 2023 @ 2:00 PM Central Time
5.	Evaluation period	May 1 – 10, 2023
6.	Post "Intent to Award" to Internet at: https://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/bidopps.html	May 15, 2023
7.	Anticipated award date	May 29, 2023
8.	Estimated start date	June 1, 2023

B. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

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

1. For Bidders submitting electronic responses:

- a. Responses must be uploaded via ShareFile using the following link:
<https://nebraska.sharefile.com/r-rc99b5493dec4482f996b04378f72a787>
- b. ShareFile works with Firefox, Internet Explorer and Chrome. It does not work with Microsoft Edge.
- c. If multiple proposals are submitted, the State will retain only the most recently submitted response. It is the Bidder's responsibility to submit the proposal by the date and time indicated in the Schedule of Events. Electronic proposals must be received by DHHS by the date and time of the proposal opening per the Schedule of Events. No late proposals will be accepted.
- d. When a response has been successfully submitted Bidder will receive an email confirming receipt of the file. If a confirmation email is not received the file did not successfully upload.
- e. ELECTRONIC PROPOSAL FILE NAMES
The Bidder should clearly identify the uploaded Scope of Work proposal files. To assist in identification please use the following naming convention:
 - i. NE WIC Program
 - ii. If multiple files are submitted for one Scope of Work proposal, add number of files to file names: NE WIC Program file 1 of 2
 - iii. If multiple Scope of Work proposals are submitted for the same Scope of Work, add the proposal number to the file names: NE WIC Program Proposal 1 File 1 of 2.

2. For Bidders submitting paper/hard copy responses:

- a. Bidders who are submitting a paper response should submit one proposal marked on the first page: "ORIGINAL". If multiple proposals are submitted, the State will retain one copy marked "ORIGINAL" and destroy the other copies. The Bidder is solely responsible for any variance between the copies submitted. Proposals must reference the Scope of Work number and be sent to the specified address. If a recipient phone number is required for delivery purposes, 402-471-0524 should be used. The Scope of Work number should be included in all correspondence. DHHS will not furnish packaging and sealing materials. It is the Bidder's responsibility to ensure the solicitation is received in a sealed envelope or container and submitted by the date and time indicated in the Schedule of Events. Sealed proposals must be received by DHHS by the date and time of the proposal opening per the Schedule of Events. No late proposals will be accepted.

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

ATTN: René A. Botts
DHHS - Central Procurement Services
PO BOX 94926
Lincoln, NE 68509

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

ATTN: René A. Botts
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 1/2" x 11" paper, except that charts, diagrams and the like may be on fold-outs which, when folded, fit into the 8 1/2" by 11" format. Pages may be consecutively numbered for the entire proposal 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. DHHS will not furnish packaging or sealing materials. It is the Bidder's responsibility to ensure the solicitation 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 proposals must be received in by DHHS by the date and time of the proposal opening per the schedule of events.

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

Emphasis should be concentrated on conformance to the solicitation instructions, responsiveness to requirements, completeness, and clarity of content. If the Bidder's proposal is presented in such a fashion that makes evaluation difficult or overly time consuming DHHS reserves the right to reject the proposal as non-conforming.

B. QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

Bidders will be given an opportunity to clarify the intent and scope of the requested Scope of Work during the Question and Answer period prior to submission of their response. Questions regarding the meaning or interpretation of any Scope of Work provision must be submitted in writing to DHHS and clearly marked "OIG Audit Questions". DHHS is not obligated to respond to questions that are received late.

It is preferred that questions be sent via e-mail to dhhs.rfpquestions@nebraska.gov, but may be delivered by hand or by U.S. Mail. It is recommended that Bidders submit questions using the following format.

Scope of Work Section Reference	Scope of Work Page Number	Question

Written answers will be posted at <https://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/bidopps.html> per the Schedule of Events.

C. ORAL DEMONSTRATIONS

DHHS may request bidders to prepare and deliver Oral Demonstrations of their Scope of Work responses.

II. SCOPE OF WORK

Project Name: Peer Group Assessment and Restructuring for WIC Program

Term of Project: June 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024.

Payment Structure: Contractor shall invoice DHHS upon successful completion of deliverables as determined by DHHS. Cost for each deliverable shall be net, including all personnel expenses.

Project Background:

DHHS seeks a contractor to provide program evaluation services to DHHS regarding WIC Vendor Peer Groups.

- The NE WIC Program partners with grocery stores and pharmacies across the State to deliver WIC-eligible foods to our participants. Vendors must sign an agreement and follow the terms of the agreement and [vendor handbook](#). All WIC programs that partner with vendors must create peer groups [\[7 CFR 246.12\(g\)\(4\)\]](#) as one method of cost containment. Peer groups, and some of their defining criteria, must be created according to 7 CFR 246.12(g)(4)(ii). State agencies are at liberty to define their own criteria for creating peer groups as long as the federal regulations are followed. Vendors are then sorted into these peer groups based on the defined criteria.
- The NE WIC Program must also define competitive price criteria that their vendors must adhere to. Further, NE WIC must create a method for evaluating their vendor's prices for WIC-eligible items according to that competitive price criteria. NE has created a procedure for this
- The NE WIC Program currently sorts its authorized vendors into one of eight peer groups. Peer groups 1-5 & 7 are designated for grocery vendors. All special purchase (pharmacy) vendors are grouped into peer group 6. Peer group 8 is reserved for A50 vendors. An A50 vendor is a store that derives 50% or more of its total sales from WIC transactions. The NE WIC Program does not authorize any A50 stores.
- NE WIC uses the following criteria for creating peer groups:
 - Geography: vendors are sorted based on their location as either "Urban" or "Rural". Urban vendors are located in either the Omaha or Lincoln metropolitan areas. Rural vendors are located outside of these metropolitan areas
 - Number of checkout lanes. Currently, only regular checkout lanes with an attendant are counted
 - Store size based on total square footage
 - Store type defined in two ways: first, whether the vendor is classified as a grocery vendor or a pharmacy vendor. Second, the store's legal structure: independent, regional chain, national chain, or commissary

Contractor will consult with NE WIC Program staff on:

1. Federal regulations outlining WIC peer group structuring
2. Nebraska's current peer group structure and method for sorting authorized vendors
3. NE WIC's competitive price criteria procedure
4. The WIC Vendor Peer Group Study conducted by USDA in 2017
5. Any data necessary to complete the project, including accessing and reading reports

Details about the NE WIC Program can be found at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/WIC.aspx>.

Invoices:

Deliverables should be submitted for review and approval. Once approved, Invoices shall be submitted to: DHHS.WICAdmin@nebraska.gov

DHHS – WIC Program
Attn: Peggy Trouba
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68509
Peggy.Trouba@nebraska.gov

Scope of Work: Contractor will:

1. Assess the current peer group structure:
 - a. Assess the effectiveness of NE WIC's current vendor peer group structure and competitive price criteria required to meet federal vendor cost containment requirements.
 - b. Review and analyze prices of WIC-eligible foods from vendors within each peer group for a period of time defined as agreed to by DHHS.
2. Provide recommendations for adjusting peer group criteria:
 - a. Determine the effectiveness of the criteria currently used for defining peer groups.
 - b. Consider the peer group models identified in the *WIC Vendor Peer Group Study* when developing recommendations for a new peer group model.
 - c. Identify data sources to be used for the peer group criteria.
 - d. Recommend the removal of ineffective criteria or addition of more effective criteria, and provide models of alternative peer group structuring.
3. Consult with the NE WIC Program prior to finalizing the new peer group structure as submitted on the plan.
4. Prepare and submit the vendor lists sorted into the new peer groups.
5. Submit report showing analysis of cost containment effectiveness in the new peer groups.
6. Provide recommendations and methodology for maintaining the new peer group structure to include determining the on-going effectiveness of the peer group structure.
7. Draft comprehensive report to include all items in the Scope of Work, vendor will supply the proposed due date subject to DHHS approval.

8. Final comprehensive report incorporating the feedback and questions provided by DHHS on the draft report, vendor will supply the proposed due date subject to DHHS approval. Entire project must be completed by September 30, 2024.

Deliverables:

Contracted bidder will deliver:

1. Draft assessment of current peer group structure and criteria and will include recommendations for final criteria for defining the peer group due by September 30, 2023.
2. Final peer group structure with sorted vendor list, vendor will supply the proposed due date subject to DHHS approval.
3. Report showing new peer groups and cost containment effectiveness analysis, vendor will supply the proposed due date subject to DHHS approval.
4. Final comprehensive report due before September 30, 2024 incorporating the feedback and questions provided by DHHS on the draft report.

Vendor SOW Response

Vendor Name	[enter text]
Deliverable 1 Cost: Assessment Report	[enter text]
Deliverable 2 Cost: Peer Group Structure	[enter text]
Deliverable 3 Cost: Cost Containment Analysis	[enter text]
Deliverable 4 Cost: Final Report	[enter text]

Technical Responses:

1. Provide a narrative on how the bidder will address the Scope of Work items listed on page 6.
<bidder response>
2. Provide a narrative on how bidder proposes to assess current peer group structure including the statistical analysis method(s) that will be used.
<bidder response>
3. Describe any experience the bidder has conducting similar evaluations. Provide example(s) of similar evaluations.
<bidder response>
4. Describe the bidder's experience working with WIC or similar government programs. Provide example(s) of WIC or similar government program evaluations.
<bidder response>

5. Describe the experience and expertise of the key staff the bidder will involve on this project.	
Evaluation Criteria:	
Proposals will be scored based on the following criteria:	
300 points	Technical Responses
100 points	Cost (Lowest Cost Submitted ÷ Cost Submitted x Maximum Possible Cost Points = Cost Points to Award)
400 points	Total

Provide position titles and hourly rates for Change Orders as specified in the table below:

Position Title	Rate
[enter text]	[enter text]
[enter text]	[enter text]
[enter text]	[enter text]
[enter text]	[enter text]
[enter text]	[enter text]
[enter text]	[enter text]

Vendor Contact for this project:

Name:	
Company:	
Email address:	
Office phone:	
Cell phone:	
Available hours: Include time zone	