

Vermont Department of Corrections



Request for Proposals

Project Title: Supportive Housing for Individuals Returning to the Community from Incarceration

Anticipated Grant Period: July 1, 2017- June 30, 2019

Date RFP Issued: October 25, 2016

Bidders Conference: November 1, 2016

Date of Bid Closing: December 16, 2016

Single Point of Contact: Elizabeth Whitmore, Housing Coordinator

Contact Address: Vermont Department of Corrections
NOB 2 South, 280 State Drive
Waterbury, VT 05671-2000

Phone: (802)241-0063

Email: Elizabeth.Whitmore@vermont.gov

1. Overview

1.1 Requests for Proposals

The Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC) is seeking proposals for programs that provide supportive housing for individuals reentering the community from incarceration. The anticipated grant period will be July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2019, with the option to renew for an additional two-year period. The option to renew will be based upon the performance of grantee and continued funding.

Grantees will be expected to work closely with local Department staff to integrate the housing and services outlined in the proposal with the local Probation and Parole office (P&P).

1.2 Background and Need Statement

Currently, there are approximately 1800 individuals incarcerated in Vermont correctional facilities and through out-of-state contracts. Many individuals who are eligible for release lack appropriate housing to return to the community, and could benefit from services that support successful reintegration and provide links to permanent housing opportunities. The DOC recognizes the need to develop community partnerships in order for the men and women leaving its facilities to successfully transition back to the community and avoid homelessness.

Individuals returning to the community from incarceration are the target population. Grantees must serve moderate to high-risk offenders as determined by DOC risk assessment tools, including, but not limited to those who have been convicted of violent and sexual crimes and are encouraged to partner with local restorative justice programs.

Bonus points will be awarded to any proposal that includes connections to Permanent Supportive Housing, or Housing Choices Vouchers.

For the purpose of this RFP, the following definitions apply:

Housing Search and Placement

Education and recruitment of landlords who are willing to work with the reentry population, coordination of move-in, utility set-up, signing of the lease agreement, etc.

Housing Retention Case Management

Post-move in supportive services to help maintain housing. Includes landlord-tenant support and assistance with meeting rental obligations.

Rental Assistance

Full or partial financial assistance with rent (and sometimes utilities)

- Short Term, up to 3 months (plus security deposit)
- Medium Term, up to 24 months (plus security deposit)

Scattered Site

Single or shared apartments located in the community with full or partial rental assistance. Regular case management shall occur, with at least weekly visits made to the apartment by grantee staff. Participants may participate in programming within the community.

Supportive Housing

Single or shared rooms within a transitional housing site or emergency shelter. The house must be staffed during regular business hours, with optional overnight staff. Regular activities shall occur onsite (house dinners, AA meetings, life skills education, etc.).

Transitional Housing

Temporary (generally up to twenty-four (24) months) housing for re-entering individuals who are in need of a stable living environment and support in the transition to permanent housing.

Based on a recent Needs Assessment completed by the Department of Corrections, we are requesting proposals for the following:

Supportive Housing for Moderate to High-Risk Offenders

Bennington

Up to six (6) beds of scattered site housing with short to medium term rental assistance, specifically for men who have previously been convicted of sexual offenses.

Burlington

Up to ten (10) beds of scattered site housing with short to medium term rental assistance, specifically for men who have previously been convicted of sexual offenses.

Hartford

Up to four (4) beds of scattered site housing with short to medium term rental assistance, specifically for men who have previously been convicted of sexual offenses.

Middlebury

Up to four (4) beds of scattered site housing with short to medium term rental assistance.

Morrisville

Up to five (5) beds of scattered site housing with short to medium term rental assistance.

Newport

Up to four (4) beds of scattered site housing with short to medium term rental assistance, specifically for men who have previously been convicted of sexual offenses.

Rutland

Up to four (4) beds of scattered site housing with short to medium term rental assistance, specifically for men who have previously been convicted of sexual offenses. Housing must be located outside the City of Rutland.

Saint Johnsbury

Up to four (4) beds of supportive housing for women (congregate or scattered site).

Up to six (6) beds of supportive housing for men (congregate or scattered site).

Programs should be equipped to serve individuals with complex mental health, and/or substance abuse needs.

Housing for Individuals Who Has Been Designated SFI

Serious Functional Impairment (SFI) is defined as an inmate with the following:

1. *A disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation, or memory, as diagnosed by a qualified mental health professional, which substantially impairs judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality, or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life and which substantially impairs the ability to function within the correctional setting, **OR***

2. *A developmental disability, traumatic brain injury, or other organic brain disorder, or various forms of dementia or other neurological disorders, as diagnosed by a qualified mental health professional, which substantially impairs the ability to function within the correctional setting.*

While the SFI designation applies only during incarceration, these individuals frequently encounter additional challenges and have complex needs associated with re-entering the community. The housing needs of these individuals will vary greatly and may include increased need for daily structure, social interaction, case management and behavioral support. The Department is seeking proposals from the following districts that can flexibly address these needs:

District	Requested Capacity
Barre/Morrisville	4

Rutland/Middlebury	3
St Johnsbury/Newport	2

Grantees should have expertise in working with individuals who have developmental disabilities, difficulty with emotional and /or behavioral regulation and/or who may have been incarcerated for long periods of time.

For this population, shared housing with full-time onsite staffing would be the preference of the Department. Grant funds can only support individuals who are currently being supervised by DOC, so transition planning is crucial.

Assisted Living

This type of housing provides **on-site services to help people** with their daily living when they are not able to live on their own. *Examples include: nursing homes, long-term care facilities, assisted living facilities, special care facilities, adult family care homes, and hospice/respite care facilities.*

The need for this services varies regionally and from year-to-year. The Department is interested in proposals from any part of the state, not to exceed ten placements statewide per year. Grant funds are meant to enhance Medicaid/Medicare funding and must be available to individuals who have been convicted of sexual offenses.

2. Scope of Work

DOC may provide funding for the following activities: housing search and placement, housing retention case management, rental assistance, and/or Transitional Housing program operations, including accompanying supportive services. Proposals may include any combination of these activities.

Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of core correctional practices and include evidence-based services which align with and support DOC's community supervision and risk reduction programming.

All proposals and subsequent grantee performance shall align with the following DOC principles:

- That people can change
- That community participation and support are essential for the successful delivery of correctional services
- In the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals
- In treating people with respect and dignity
- In teamwork and the process of continuous improvement
- In professional self-improvement
- In the placement of offenders in the least restrictive environment consistent with public safety and offense severity
- In fairness throughout decision-making

- In respect for the liberty interests, rights and entitlements of the individual
- In individual empowerment
- In non-violent conflict resolution
- In maintaining a safe and secure environment
- In the value of individual, cultural and racial diversity
- That victims have the right to have an active role in determining how their needs can best be met
- That offenders are responsible, to the extent possible, to repair harm done to victims and the community

3. General Provisions

3.1 Grant Terms

The selected grantee will sign a grant with the DOC to carry out the specifications and provide the activities detailed in the proposal. Terms and conditions of this RFP and grantee's response may become part of the grant. This grant will be subject to review throughout its entire term. The DOC will consider cancellation upon the discovery that a grantee is in violation of any portion of the agreement, including an inability by the grantee to provide the products, support and/or service offered in their response.

3.2 Grant Award

The DOC may award one or more grants and reserves the right to make additional awards to the same vendor or other vendors who submitted proposals at any time during the first year of the grant if such award is deemed to be in the best interest of the DOC.

3.3 Subgrantees

Any subgrantees hired by the primary grantee must adhere to the same standards and grant provisions applicable to the primary grantee. The primary grantee retains overall responsibility for grant performance. The primary grantee must advise the DOC of intent to hire a subgrantee and provide the name of the company, the name of president/owner and location of the company. The DOC reserves the right to reject the hiring of subgrantee during the term of the grant.

3.4 Invoicing

All invoices are to be submitted by the Grantee on the Grantee's standard invoice. The invoice must include the following: an authorized signature, name and address for remittance of payment by the state, the grant number, date of performance and a brief description of the service or product provided.

3.5 Grantee Performance Guidance

All bidders will be held to specific performance review criteria over the life of the grant to ensure that project deliverables as outlined in the RFP and attested to in the Scope of Work are being met. Review of project deliverables, using a Results Based Accountability framework, will occur at intervals agreed upon by both the State and the Grantee and designated in the grant.

3.6 Grantee Staffing

Key staff member(s) should be assigned to this grant for the full duration proposed. The grantee should notify DOC of any changes in program staffing.

The Grantee must identify staff member(s) who will remain on this project until completion unless indicated otherwise in the Grantee's proposal. The Grantee may propose other staff members as "key" if desired. The Grantee will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the early removal of a key staff member has no adverse impact on the successful completion of this project.

All staff and volunteers must undergo a criminal background check and those who will have direct contact with program participants must complete DOC Training.

3.7 Key Grantee Responsibilities

The selected Grantee must assume primary responsibility for the implementation of the grant specifications and activities.

3.7.1 The Grantee will successfully implement the plan to accomplish the tasks described and defined in the Scope of Work.

3.7.2 The Grantee must abide by all State policies, standards and protocols as provided, and defined in this grant. Before commencing work on this Agreement the Party must provide certificates of insurance to show that the following minimum coverage is in effect. It is the responsibility of the Party to maintain current certificates of insurance on file with the state through the term of the Agreement. **No warranty is made that the coverage and limits listed herein are adequate to cover and protect the interests of the Party for the Party's operations. These are solely minimums that have been established to protect the interests of the State.**

Workers Compensation: With respect to all operations performed, the Party shall carry workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the laws of the State of Vermont. Vermont will accept an out-of-state employer's workers' compensation coverage while operating in Vermont provided that the insurance carrier is licensed to write insurance in Vermont and an amendatory endorsement is added to the policy adding Vermont for coverage purposes. Otherwise, the party shall secure a Vermont workers' compensation policy, if necessary to comply with Vermont law.

General Liability and Property Damage: With respect to all operations performed under this Agreement, the Party shall carry general liability insurance having all major divisions of coverage including, but not limited to:

- Premises - Operations
- Products and Completed Operations
- Personal Injury Liability
- Contractual Liability

The policy shall be on an occurrence form and limits shall not be less than:

- \$1,000,000 Each Occurrence
- \$2,000,000 General Aggregate
- \$1,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate
- \$1,000,000 Personal & Advertising Injury

Automotive Liability: The Party shall carry automotive liability insurance covering all

motor vehicles, including hired and non-owned coverage, used in connection with the Agreement. Limits of coverage shall not be less than \$500,000 combined single limit. If the performance of this Agreement involves construction or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, limits of coverage shall not be less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit.

Additional Insured: The General Liability and Property Damage coverages required for the performance of this Agreement shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. If the performance of this Agreement involves construction or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, then the required Automotive Liability coverage shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. Coverage shall be primary and non-contributory with any other insurance and self-insurance.

Notice of Cancellation or Change: There shall be no cancellation, change, potential exhaustion of aggregate limits or non-renewal of insurance coverage(s) without thirty (30) days written prior written notice to the State.

3.7.2 The Grantee must abide by all Federal Regulations if applicable to this Grant, including, but not limited to the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (28 C.F.R. Part 115, Docket No. OAG-131, R1N1005-AB34- Dated May 17, 2012), and with all applicable PREA Standards, VTDOC Policies and Directives related to PREA for preventing, detecting, monitoring, investigating, and eradicating any form of sexual abuse within VTDOC. Grantee acknowledges that in addition to “self-monitoring requirements” VT State staff will conduct announced or unannounced, compliance monitoring to include “on-site” monitoring. Failure to comply with PREA, including PREA Standards and VTDOC Directives and Policies may result in termination of the grant.

Link to the Final PREA Standards:

<http://www.prearesourcecenter.org/library/488/standards/departement-of-justice-national-prea-standards>

4. Management Structure and General Information

4.1 Project Management

The Grantee will be accountable to the Department of Corrections Community and Restorative Justice Executive and/or designee(s) and holds responsibility for the project deliverables, schedule and adherence to grant provisions. The Grantee must abide by all DOC standards and protocols as defined by the Housing Coordinator and his/her designee(s).

4.2 Status Reports

The Vermont Department of Corrections reserves the right to call meetings with the grantee either in person or by conference call to ensure that unresolved issues are resolved during this grant period. The grantee will be accountable in advising the Housing Coordinator of this grant or designee when/if performance measures agreed upon will not be met. The following status reports will become part of the grant. They include the following:

- Regular in-person meetings with local and central office DOC staff to discuss general program operation.
- Quarterly Performance Reports
- Regular data entry into the DOC's Offender Management System (OMS)

5. Proposal Requirements

5.1 Proposal Guidelines

This RFP defines the scope of work required and work/management structure within which the chosen Grantee must operate. In order to be considered for selection, bidders must complete all responses to this RFP in the format described in this document. Proposals not meeting the requirements described in this RFP will not be considered.

5.2 Single Point of Contact

All communications concerning this RFP are to be addressed in writing to the attention of Elizabeth Whitmore listed on a cover sheet of this proposal. Attempts by bidders to contact any other party could result in the rejection of their proposal as determined by the DOC.

5.3 Question and Answer Period

Any bidder requiring clarification of any section of this proposal or wishing to submit questions may do so according to the **5.5 Timetable** schedule listed in this section. Questions may be e-mailed to the contact person listed on page 1 of this proposal.

Bidders may submit written questions and discussion points in advance of the bidder's conference. Written copies of the submitted questions and answers will be distributed by the State to attendees of the bidder's conference. Information and answers to questions will **not** be transcribed for distribution to interested parties in attendance.

5.4 Bidders Conference

The bidder's conference will be held on November 1, 2016, at 10:00am in the Linden Conference Room at the Waterbury State Office Complex, 280 State Drive, Waterbury, Vermont. The State Office Complex is a secure building, which requires visitors to register prior to arrival. **Bidders should notify Elizabeth Whitmore at elizabeth.whitmore@vermont.gov by October 28, 2016, by 12:00pm if they plan to attend.**

Attendance at the bidder's conference is not mandatory but is strongly recommended. The conference is intended to be an interactive exchange of information, with appropriate Department of Corrections staff available to provide clarification and/or answers to questions.

5.5 Timetable

The table below presents the DOC schedule for this RFP and granting process. Please note that the DOC may change this schedule at any point.

RFP published	October 25, 2016
Written questions due	October 31, 2016 by 12:00pm

Bidders Conference/response to questions	November 1, 2016 at 10:00am
Proposal due (see Section 5.6 for detailed instructions on proposal format and submission instructions)	December 16, 2016 by 12:00pm
Grant negotiation period	To begin by February 1, 2017
Anticipated "Start Work Date"	July 1, 2017

The State reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals. Selected State staff will evaluate proposals. If a proposal is selected, the chosen Grantee or will be invited to negotiate a grant for all or part of the activities outlined in this RFP. Work to be completed under this grant will commence no later than July 1, 2017.

5.6 Proposal Submission

Bidders must submit an original and six (6) copies of the proposal with a signed cover letter.

The State reserves the right to eliminate from further consideration any proposal deemed to be substantially or materially unresponsive to the requests for information contained herein.

Please note that any and all pages of the bidder's proposal containing confidential and proprietary information must be clearly marked "Proprietary and Confidential." After completion of this bid process, all proposal materials are in the public domain. Proposals may not be marked "Proprietary and Confidential" in their entirety.

The proposal must be organized in the order described below. Use the numbering designations outlined.

Bidders will submit their proposal to:

**Elizabeth Whitmore
Vermont Department of Corrections
NOB 2 South, 280 State Drive
Waterbury, VT 05671-2000**

The closing date for the receipt of proposals is **December 16, 2016, at 12:00pm.**

The bid must be delivered to the contact at the address listed above prior to that time. Proposals or unsolicited amendments submitted after that time will not be accepted and will be returned to the bidder. There are no exceptions to the closing date conditions.

Delivery Methods:

U.S. MAIL:

Bidders are cautioned that it is their responsibility to originate the mailing of bids insufficient time to

ensure receipt by the State prior to the time of the bid opening.

EXPRESS DELIVERY: If bids are being sent via an express delivery service, be certain that the RFP designation is clearly shown on the outside of the delivery envelope or box.

HAND DELIVERY: Hand carried bids must be delivered to the address listed above.

ELECTRONIC/EMAIL: Electronic bids will / will not be accepted.

FAXED BIDS: Faxed bids will not be accepted.

5.7 Proposal Format

Proposals must be no longer than 20 pages, excluding staff résumés, the cost proposal, and references.

The format of the vendor's proposal must include, at a minimum, the following chapters numbered as follows:

5.8 Response Section I: Cover Letter, Vermont Tax Certificate, and Insurance Certificate

The cover letter must be signed and dated by a person authorized to legally bind the vendor to a contractual relationship, e.g., the Board President. Priority will be given to Vermont-based non-profit organizations. This must be completed and submitted as part of the response for the proposal to be considered valid. See Attachment C.

Along with introductory remarks, the cover letter must include by attachment the following information about the vendor and any proposed subgrantees:

- Name, address, principal place of business, telephone number, and fax number/email address of legal entity or individual with whom grant would be written.
- Legal status of the vendor (sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, etc.) and the year the entity was organized to do business, as the entity now substantially exists.
- Disclose if you, your Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent), or any persons who may be directly involved in this funded agreement over the past five years has been convicted, imprisoned, placed on probation or under supervision, or fined for any violation of any law including motor vehicle violations.
- Disclose if you, Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent), or any persons who may be directly involved in this funded agreement has been convicted of a felony.
- Location of the facility from which the grantee would operate.

- A number of years' experience carrying out the activities of this grant.
- Demonstrate adequate financial resources and be financially sound as proven by furnishing balance sheet/financial statements, showing that the vendor has been in business continually for the last three (3) years.
- Provision of a single point managerial level contact to coordinate all State requirements and to be the point of contact for any problems/questions that may arise.
- Statement showing agreement that vendor's procedures shall be in compliance with all applicable Federal and State laws.
- Insurance Certificate must be included in Response Section I.
- Vermont Tax Certificate must be included in Response Section I.
- A statement outlining your acceptance of conditions outlined in the RFP and with the State's grant provisions.

Response Section II: General Background and Qualifications

Bidder must provide the following information about their company so that the DOC can evaluate the bidder's stability and ability to support the commitments set forth in response to the RFP. The DOC may require additional documentation to support and/or clarify requested information.

- A brief description of the company, including past history, present status, and if fitting future plans, etc.
- Company size and organization.
- Disclose any history of defaults, grant terminations, and bankruptcies.

Response Section III: Ability and Approach to Implement the Activities and Specifications of this Grant

The section of the proposal will contain the ability and approach that the vendor will take in implementing the activities and specifications described in this RFP (Section 2, Scope of Work). This section should include activities/tasks the grantee will accomplish along with measurable outcomes.

Proposals will provide a full description of the program to include:

- Population profile
- Site of proposed housing, with building description (if applicable)
- Number of offenders proposed to be housed (annually and general capacity)
- Eligibility and acceptance criteria as well as exclusionary criteria, if any

- Description of services to be provided and how they will be delivered (include specific evidence-based curricula or programming)
- Community partnerships that enhance the program
- Description of communication with the local Probation and Parole office related to the proposal
- Identification and description of stakeholder and community education
- Description of other potential resources for program enhancement
- Identification of start-up requirements
- Permitting status of the proposed housing program (if applicable)
- If applicable, describe the agency's experience with real estate development - if limited or no experience, describe how the agency will partner with affordable housing agencies or experienced real estate consultants
- Describe how the proposing agency intends to partner with housing entities (including local public housing authorities and/or housing development organizations) to foster connections to permanent housing opportunities. Provide details of how the experience of the partners applies to the project and how the partnership will work

Response Section IV: References

In order to validate the highest-ranking proposal, references may be contacted for further input. The results of the reference calls will be used by the evaluation team in developing its recommendation for awarding the grant.

Bidder must provide at least three (3) references including the name, title, phone number, and email address of the person who can speak to the bidder's work and experience.

Response Section V: Staffing

Response Section VI: Proposed Work Plan (Response to Requirements)

This section should contain the following information about how the bidder will implement the approach described in Responses Section III, to accomplish the goals of the project.

Response Section VII: Protected Information

Detail how protected information will be maintained and secured, as well as internal policies related to training, confidentiality, and hiring policies related to criminal background checks for current and potential employees.

Response Section VIII: Cost Proposal

This section should include:

- Identification of start-up costs
- Additional sources of funding/support, both cash and in-kind

- Total annual line item budget (including per capita costs) showing DOC funding and other sources of support

Response Section IX: Exceptions

If the vendor should choose not to address a certain Activity, Deliverable or Condition, the vendor’s proposal must clearly explain why and what the vendor proposes as an alternative.

Response Section X: Bidder’s Review of RFP, State Grant Template, and Insurance Requirements.

The vendor has reviewed the terms and all provisions of the Request for Proposal, the State of Vermont grant template and insurance requirements and accepts conditions set forth.

6. Proposal Evaluation

The evaluation team will determine if each proposal is sufficiently responsive to the RFP to permit a complete evaluation of the individual/organization and experience. Proposals must comply with the instructions to bidders contained in **Section 5: Proposal Requirements**. Failure to comply with the instructions shall deem the proposal non-responsive and subject to rejection without further consideration. The State reserves the right to waive irregularities.

6.1 Minimum Requirements

Minimum requirements for a proposal to be given consideration are:

- The proposal must have been received by specified date, hour (Eastern Standard Time) and in the number and form of copies specified.
- The proposal must contain the following items in the following order:
 - Response Section I: Cover Letter and Insurance Certificate
 - Response Section II: General Background and Qualifications
 - Response Section III: Ability to Implement the Activities and Specifications of this Grant
 - Response Section IV: References
 - Response Section V: Staffing
 - Response Section VI: Proposed Work Plan
 - Response Section VII: Quality Control
 - Response Section VIII: Cost Proposal
 - Response Section IX: Exceptions

- Response Section X: Acceptance of RFP and State Grant Conditions

6.2 Finalists Presentations

The State reserves the right to request on-site demonstrations in Waterbury, Vermont from bidders prior to the selection of a grantee.

6.3 Method of Award

The State reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals. Upon completion of the evaluation process, the DOC will select one or more bidders based on the evaluation findings and other criteria deemed relevant for ensuring that the decision made is in the best interest of the DOC. The selected vendor will be requested to enter into negotiation with the State of Vermont on grant specifications, including detailed work plans, deliverables, and timetables.

In the event the DOC is not successful in negotiating a grant with a selected bidder, the DOC reserves the option of negotiating with another bidder.

Any grant negotiated must undergo review and signature according to statute and policy.

The Grantee will be paid bi-annually upon submittal of invoice for completed deliverables set forth in the grant.

Penalties and/or Retainage may be a condition of this grant.

Award of a grant and any renewals thereof are contingent upon the availability of funds.

The grant for is for two year(s): July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2019. The grant may be renewed without rebidding for one two-year period with approval from the Administration.

6.4 Scoring Information

The DOC evaluation review team will evaluate proposals based on the criteria listed in Section 6. Proposals will be evaluated and weighted using the following distribution between experience, technical and cost:

Experience (including references)	30%
Technical	40%
Cost	30%

The nine criteria below are listed in no particular order and will be given significant consideration by the evaluation team.

- Experience in providing the services required under this grant
- The quality of the housing environment
- The quality and completeness of the structured activities and behavioral expectations proposed for residents. Programming should be evidence-based and align with the framework of Risk Need Responsivity.
- The level of supervision proposed
- The number, quality, and collaborative alliance with partners involved, which includes but is not limited to volunteers, community providers, and funders

- The documentation of community education and involvement
- The evidence of sustainability of the housing and related program activities
- The per diem rate of the transitional beds
- The adequacy of the proposed budget and the certainty of the proposed funding to support the full proposed program

Although the criteria listed above are material factors, they are not the sole factors in proposal evaluation. A grant award will be made to the bidder(s) whose proposal(s) are determined to be the most advantageous to the State, taking into account cost and other evaluation criteria as set forth in this RFP. Additional consideration will be given to proposals that leverage multiple resource streams for on-going program operations and/or create strategic links to permanent housing options and/or Housing Choice Vouchers.

The staff of other departments, agencies and/or consultants may be involved in the evaluation of the proposals.

During the evaluation process, bidders may be contacted for the purpose of obtaining clarification of their response. However, no clarification will be sought if a bidder completely fails to address a feature contained in the RFP document. If the failure was in response to a mandatory feature, the bidder may be disqualified.

As part of its evaluation, the State may conduct interviews with one or more bidders. In such an event, bidders may be required to travel to Waterbury, Vermont, at their own expense, to participate in an on-site interview. Conversely, the State may elect to travel to the bidder's headquarters to conduct the interview, as well as tour its facilities.