March 6, 2025

To: All Potential Respondents
From: Katelyn Howells, Purchasing Agent
Subject: 005-RFP-1449-2025 Iowa Individual Assistance Grant Program

Addendum Two

Please amend the subject RFP to include answers to the following timely received questions:

Q1.   In section 7.3.2.1 on page 23, it lists that the contract maximum is $1,000,000 for compensation. Please confirm that is program administration costs and does not include dollars reimbursed to agencies that were grants to Iowans?

A1.   The contract maximum of $1,000,000 includes contractor program administration costs and grants to Iowans. Funding is provided in accordance with Iowa Code § 29C.20A.

Q2.   Given the transition outlined for discussion in Exhibit 9, will Iowa identify the incumbent Contractor?

A2.   The current contract holder for State Fiscal Year 2025 is the Iowa Community Action Association.

Q3.   Section 1.2, relevant definitions: "Contractor" means the awarded business/person to provide the contractual services agreed upon. "Local administrative entity" means a countywide provider, or a provider of a statewide program with local offices throughout the state, contracted for the administration of the disaster aid individual assistance grant program and the disaster case advocacy program. Section 1.4 "The Agency may contract with one or more local administrative entities to perform the administrative functions necessary to carry out duties associated with the program." Question: is the State looking to contract with only local or Iowa-based entities for this opportunity?

A3.   Per Addendum No. 1: HSEM is looking to ensure 100% coverage for the state. HSEM does recognize that to achieve this goal HSEM may have to contract with organizations that reside outside the borders of the state.
        Prospective bidders should indicate in the RFP how they will meet all RFP requirements including General Obligations for All Services in Section 5 to provide successful services in any county designated in their service area.

Q4.   Is it a requirement that the Contractor disburse funds for DHSEM or are they open to a Contractor that can process applications and claims, provide payment information to DHSEM, and track disbursements, but DHSEM issues the payments?

A4.   HSEM will only reimburse the contractor. HSEM will not make payments to individuals for claims.

Q5.   Is there an onsite requirement for this program?

A5.   To successfully serve clients, an onsite presence is needed. IIAGP services are to be provided in the counties specifically named by the Governor in an emergency proclamation of disaster emergency. Contractors must meet the definition of a local administrative entity as defined in Iowa Code § 29C.2(6) as "a countywide provider, or a provider of a statewide program with local offices throughout the state, contracted for the administration of the disaster aid individual assistance grant program and the disaster case advocacy program." Prospective bidders should indicate in the RFP how they will meet all RFP requirements including General Obligations for All Services in Section 5 to provide successful services in any county designated in their service area.

Q6.   What, if any, software is currently being used for application intake and review, and is this software expected to be of continued use?

A6.   HSEM is currently working with DOM for the purpose of obtaining a more robust data management system. HSEM will make notification to the selected contractor when such a purchase is made. HSEM currently uses Google-based tools for program tracking between contractors. This will continue until a more robust system is obtained. Until the data management system is in place, the preference is for client files to be maintained by the contractor in a digital format. A combination of paper and digital will also be accepted.

Q7.   There is a small portion of the RFP dedicated to staff trainings and community engagement. Training and engagement would be separate functions from the financial scope. Can you please provide more information on the scope required for staff trainings and community engagement?

A7.   Initial onboarding of new contractor(s) will include training from HSEM. Contractor(s) are expected to ensure all staff are trained and provide ongoing training during the year to their staff based on HSEM training materials. HSEM is in the process of developing a training team that may include contractor(s) who are interested.

Q8.   There is a small portion of the RFP dedicated to initial eligibility of an applicant. Application review determination would be separate from the financial scope. Can you please provide more information on the scope required for application reviews?

A8.   Application reviews are part of processing financial assistance applications and include but are not limited to reviewing and approving eligibility requirements, acquiring and verifying documentation, and communication with clients.

Q9.   Who currently conducts application reviews? Are review teams situated in one location?

A9.   Application reviews are completed by the contractor.

Q10. Is the intent of this RFP to include staff augmentation services to review applications?

A10. Prospective bidders should outline their surge plan in the RFP section 5, 4.1.6 to meet all RFP requirements including General Obligations for All Services in Section 5.

Q11. Who currently performs staff trainings? How frequently are trainings given? Are trainings in person or virtual?

A11. Under the current contract the contractor performs staff training. Prospective bidders should define what training schedule is needed for them to be successful. Initial onboarding of new contractor(s) will include training from HSEM. Contractor(s) are expected to ensure all staff are trained and provide ongoing training during the year to their staff based on HSEM training materials. HSEM is in the process of developing a training team that may include contractor(s) who are interested.

Q12. Are staff situated in one location?

A12. IIAGP services are to be provided in the counties specifically named by the Governor in an emergency proclamation of disaster emergency. Contractors must meet the definition of a local administrative entity as defined in Iowa Code § 29C.2(6) as "a countywide provider, or a provider of a statewide program with local offices throughout the state, contracted for the administration of the disaster aid individual assistance grant program and the disaster case advocacy program."

Q13.   Does the department have a current list of community partners? If so, how many partners?

A13.   The current contractor and HSEM will share with the new contractor information on current community partners.

Q14.   What kind of engagement currently takes place with community partners and how frequently? (i.e., community partner meetings, webinars, email listservs)

A14.   Community engagement is completed by the contractor on an ongoing basis and as part of establishing relationships. HSEM may also engage with community partners as part of HSEM programming and IIAGP administration to create connections between contractors and community partners as part of disaster recovery efforts in communities.

Q15.   Who currently communicates with community partners?

A15.   Community engagement is completed by the contractor on an ongoing basis and as part of establishing relationships. HSEM may also engage with community partners as part of HSEM programming and IIAGP administration to create connections between contractors and community partners as part of disaster recovery efforts in communities.

Q16.   Who currently manages staff referenced in this RFP? How are their hours currently being tracked?

A16.   Contractor staff hours and management is completed by the provider.

Q17.   Does the department currently work with staffing agencies?

A17.   HSEM does not currently work with staffing agencies. Per Iowa Code § 29C.2(6) HSEM contracts with a local administrative entity defined as "a countywide provider, or a provider of a statewide program with local offices throughout the state, contracted for the administration of the disaster aid individual assistance grant program and the disaster case advocacy program."

Q18.   Will the Iowa Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management accept subcontractor experience in addition to the proposer's experience?

A18.   Yes

Q19.   Pertaining to Form 22 – can IA HSEMD please clarify if this form is required ONLY if an offeror is requesting confidentiality, or do all respondents need to include a copy of this signed form to acknowledge the existence of the form?

A19.   Form 22 is only required if a Respondent is requesting confidential treatment of any portion of the proposal.

Q20.   Pertaining to Section 3 page 27, Response Check List – can IA HSEMD please clarify if this check list needs to be included in an offeror's response, and if so where in the response should it be included?

A20.   This check list is provided for reference purposes only and does not need to be included in the response.

Q21.   Can IA HSEMD please confirm sample surge plan should be similar to that as defined in section 5.1.6 [vs. the current instruction of 5.1.7] as that section requires a Contractor develop a surge staffing plan to meet the need of each emergency individual disaster?

A21.   Yes, that is correct. RFP should cite section 5, 4.1.6 for sample surge plans.

Q22.   Can IA HSEMD please confirm sample reports should meet the standards described in Section 5.1.7 [vs. the current instruction of 4.1.6] as that section requires a Contractor to provide weekly, monthly, quarterly and end of disaster reports and daily reports as requested by the Agency?

A22. Yes, that is correct. RFP should cite section 5.1.7 for sample reporting.

Q23. What are the State's expectations regarding closeout of the bank account (will remaining funds be transferred to another account)?

A23. HSEM pays primarily with reimbursement based on actual costs. As a result, there should not be any remaining funds. If for some reason funds remain in an account at closeout those funds should be returned to HSEM.

Q24. With regards to reporting and ongoing costs, the initial term of the contract is 1 year with possible extension, however what is the expectation for disasters that may require multiyear support? If awarded would the contractor retain the support after 1 year, or may it be transferred to another vendor mid-project?

A24. HSEM would prefer to retain the contractor across the fiscal year for continuity. However, HSEM does recognize that exigent situations may dictate transfer of program to another contractor.

Q25. Does the State anticipate covering returned check fees, transaction fees, or Pcard costs as a separate unit cost during implementation or within the implementation fee? If this is to be included in the implementation fee, should pricing assume a volume of 400 households similar to prior to disasters in Section 1.4?

A25. The state will not have a separate account for the contractor to use. There should not be any returned check fees, transaction fees or Pcard costs. The state will reimburse the contractor via a warrant or EFT.

Q26. Is the 1099 reporting requirement in 3.1.4 regarding only payments disbursed through the system of record proposed by the contractor within this proposal?

A26. No, for payments made from the State to a contractor, the State of Iowa sends out 1099s to its vendors at the end of the year. The 1099 amount includes all payments made to the vendor during the fiscal year and is subject to 1099 reporting rules.

Q27. Does the State expect staff in-person either for training or afterwards in any service areas? (pg 16, Section 4.1.2)

A27. To successfully serve clients, an onsite presence is needed. IIAGP services are to be provided in the counties specifically named by the Governor in an emergency proclamation of disaster emergency. Contractors must meet the definition of a local administrative entity as defined in Iowa Code § 29C.2(6) as "a countywide provider, or a provider of a statewide program with local offices throughout the state, contracted for the administration of the disaster aid individual assistance grant program and the disaster case advocacy program." Prospective bidders should indicate in the RFP how they will meet all RFP requirements including General Obligations for All Services in Section 5 to provide successful services in any county designated in their service area.

Initial onboarding of new contractor(s) will include training from HSEM. The mode of training will be determined through conversation with the contractor. Contractor(s) are expected to ensure all staff are trained and provide ongoing training during the year to their staff based on HSEM training materials.

Q28. Does the State anticipate that payments will be disbursed on business days (Monday-Friday) or seven days a week?

A29. HSEM will disburse payments to the contractor on business days (Monday-Friday). The contractor will disburse funds at a minimum on business days but may disburse funds on other days.

Q30.   Is the reporting described in 3.1.6 to be completed as a separate report per disaster or a single report with information summarized by disaster?

A30.   Reporting should be provided as a separate report per disaster.

Q31.   Are the Staff Hours outlined in 3.1.6 inclusive of state personnel who will be accessing the system of record, or just the contractor hours that will be billed to the State?

A31.   Staff hours provided in reporting are for contractor hours.

Q32.   Does the State have any expectations around recoupment of funds? Does the State have an existing account to hold recouped funds separately from funds pending disbursement?

A32.   HSEM uses the Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing to conduct investigations and any needed recoupment of funds. Any funds returned or recouped will be put back into HSEM's fund used for the IIAGP program.

Q33.   If the account is already existing, what financial institution is the account held by? Is the State anticipating that the system of record will integrate directly with the financial institution? (Section 4.1.5)

A33.   HSEM will reimburse via a check or electronic funds transfer (EFT) to the contractor's bank account. If an electronic payment (EFT) is the preferred method of payment, the contractor is responsible for submitting the EFT paperwork directly to DAS. If the contractor has done business with the State of Iowa previously and has an EFT account already established, the State of Iowa will process electronic payments to the contractor's existing EFT account unless notified otherwise.

Q34.   Does the state anticipate that the 1099s will be prepared by the vendor, even if the account owned by the State? (pg 14)

A34.   The State of Iowa prepares and sends out 1099s to its vendors (contractors) at the end of the year. The 1099 amount includes all payments made to the vendor during the fiscal year. If the vendor hires any sub-contractors, the vendor must follow IRS guidelines for 1099 reportable payments to any sub-contractors. In that case, the 1099 reporting is the responsibility of the vendor.

Q35.   Does the State have an existing bank account or is the State requesting that the contractor open a new bank account that will be owned by the State (pg 4 - Claims and Payment Processing)?

A35.   HSEM will reimburse the contractor for expenses incurred and claims for individuals. HSEM will reimburse via check or EFT to the contractor's bank account. The preferred method of payment (check or EFT) is up to the contractor. EFT paperwork must be submitted to DAS.

Q36.   Does IA HSEMD have an existing system for application intake and case review or is that something that you are looking for the vendor to provide?

A36.   HSEM is currently working with DOM for the purpose of obtaining a more robust data management system that will include aspects such as the intake and review process. HSEM will make notification to the selected contractor when such a purchase is made. Until that time the contractor should provide a method for application and client information.

Q37.   Can IA HSEMD define the expected services to be provided as the fiscal agent? For example, is the expectation that the vendor will be issuing payments or that they will recommend payments to the state to be processes?

A37.   Per section 3.1.2, the Contractor shall issue accurate and timely payments to the individuals, vendors, businesses, and other entities. HSEM will reimburse the contractor for claims for individuals.

Q38.   Within the description of Exhibit 7 - Personnel, when providing a "brief resume of experience for all team members proposed to be assigned to the project," does this refer to the contractor, subcontractor, or both?

A38.   Both

Q39.   I would like to understand whether the contractor is expected to disburse funds through their own payment system or if there is an option to utilize the Iowa HSMED system for making payments after applications and other items are approved. For example, if the contractor were to use the Iowa HSMED system/I3, the process might involve the following steps: The contractor receives and processes applications for financial assistance. The contractor reviews and advances the applications based on the eligibility criteria. HSEMD provides final approval of the application and related payment Once approved, the contractor inputs the payment details into the Iowa HSMED system. The Iowa HSMED system/I3 then disburses the funds directly to the eligible individuals or entities. Could you please confirm if such a process is feasible, or if the contractor is required to handle all disbursements through their own payment system?

A39.   Yes, the contractor is expected to disburse funds through their own payment system. HSEM will reimburse via check or EFT to the contractor's bank account. The preferred method of payment (check or EFT) is up to the contractor. EFT paperwork must be submitted to DAS.

Please acknowledge receipt of this addendum by signing in the space provided below, and <u>return this letter with your proposal (do not send back separately).</u>

I hereby acknowledge receipt of this addendum.

Signature   Date

Typed or Printed Name