

	VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions	25-Jan-21
	Question	Answer
Questions regarding IT and Telephony		
1	What are the operating system requirements?	Windows 10 with continually updating OS updates and patches enabled.
2	Will all outbound/inbound calls be handled off the State's dialer/telephone platform?	We use a State vendor to provide this service. All clients use the Cisco IP communicator softphone and the existing State VOIP service via VPN.
3	If we are to use the State's telephone platform, will there be admin access granted for reporting purposes and the ability to live monitor agents for coaching and training purposes?	Probably, but not certain at this time.
4	Please provide a complete list of the means of inbound and outbound communication the call center must accommodate	We use a State vendor to provide this service. All clients use the Cisco IP communicator softphone and the existing State VOIP service via VPN.
5	Is previous experience with any specific customer information systems, phone systems, or software required?	No
6	Laptops: We understand that the state will not be supplying computers- what is the Vermont expectation for the definition of "contractor issued laptop"?	Laptop/desktop supplied by the vendor running Windows 10 with all the normal competent security and management practices applied such as enforced strong login passwords, Full Disk Encryption and Anti-virus/Anti-malware/Anti-ransomware. Must be configured for HIPAA compliance with your organization's HIPAA security officer. Must be on a Vendor network. Each client must have the state-supplied Cisco IP Softphone installed. Not a client specific item, but that vendor network must have point to point VPN with State to allow the IP softphone traffic to pass through the tunnel back and forth.
7	To meet demand, and avoid delays due to hardware procurement- we have 1000s of Contact Tracers across the country using their own computer devices securely – would the state accept this approach and consider it a "successful and secure desktop"?	This would be very difficult as the organization's laptops must be on a Vendors network which is connected to the State via VPN so the VOIP traffic can occur.
8	IT Systems Clarification: Will the vendor need to provide any IT systems, CRM, or case tracking systems, or will the vendor use state systems for all these purposes? Will the vendor need to provide a telephony system, or will the state provide a means by which to make phone calls?	None
9	What software will require licensing purchases by the Contractor? (eg Salesforce or other CRM, AWS or Twilio telephony)	Nothing beyond the Windows and security software noted in other responses.
10	Can contact tracers use their own hardware?	This would be very difficult as the organization's laptops must be on a Vendors network which is connected to the State via VPN so the VOIP traffic can occur.
11	Are there specific systems the Contractor will need to provide? If so, please identify	None

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
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12	Please provide more information regarding the telephone platform. Specifically, will the Contractor use the telephone platform, or will the Contractor need to provide their own telephone platform? If the Contractor will use the telephone platform, please confirm that includes all channels for support (i.e., video conferencing and online chat capabilities)?	No, we use a State vendor to provide this service. All clients use the Cisco IP communicator softphone and the existing State VOIP service via VPN.
13	Regarding technology requirements, is there a checklist or technology security profile that the Contractor will need to abide by?	See RFP Attachment 7.7
14	What are the system requirements for desktops or laptops to be used by the Contact Tracers/Supervisors?	Windows 10 with continually updating OS updates and patches enabled.
15	Will the Contact Tracers, Supervisors, and Contractor be fully integrated into the State's systems and telephony platform or is there any requirement for the Contractor to provide such services separately?	No, we use a State vendor to provide this service. All clients use the Cisco IP communicator softphone and the existing State VOIP service via VPN.
16	What telephony platform is the State using for case investigation and contact tracing calls?	We use a State vendor to provide this service. All clients use the Cisco IP communicator softphone and the existing State VOIP service via VPN.
17	Are there any requirements for the Contact Tracers' and Supervisors' computers so that they can access the State's systems and telephony platform?	Each client must have the state-supplied Cisco IP Softphone installed.
18	Does the State require that the Contractor provide Contact Tracers and Supervisors with computers or may Contact Tracers and Supervisors use their personal computers subject to meeting all State requirements for computers?	This would be very difficult as the organization's laptops must be on a Vendors network which is connected to the State via VPN so the VOIP traffic can occur.
19	The RFP states (pages 3-4) that "The Contractor shall ensure that Contact Tracers:...Use a Contractor issued computer with appropriate access to required applications, databases, and /or web-based platforms." Please explain what "appropriate access" means.	Laptop/desktop supplied by the vendor running Windows 10 with all the normal competent security and management practices applied such as enforced strong login passwords, Full Disk Encryption and Anti-virus/Anti-malware/Anti-ransomware. Must be configured for HIPAA compliance with your organization's HIPAA security officer. Must be on a Vendor network. Each client must have the state-supplied Cisco IP Softphone installed. Not a client specific item, but that vendor network must have point to point VPN with State to allow the IP softphone traffic to pass through the tunnel back and forth.
20	Will contact tracers use contractor equipment for the work? Will computer equipment be the contractor's? Can the State confirm what VPN will be used for by the contractor? If so, can you provide specifics on the platform and confirm the contractor will use the state's CRM and QA system?	Laptop/desktop supplied by the vendor running Windows 10 with all the normal competent security and management practices applied such as enforced strong login passwords, Full Disk Encryption and Anti-virus/Anti-malware/Anti-ransomware. Must be configured for HIPAA compliance with your organization's HIPAA security officer. Must be on a Vendor network. Each client must have the state-supplied Cisco IP Softphone installed. Not a client specific item, but that vendor network must have point to point VPN with State to allow the IP softphone traffic to pass through the tunnel back and forth.

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
Question	Answer	
21	How would phone systems be handled? Does the State already have a phone system in place? If so, would the contractor use the State's phone system or would the contractor need to use its own system? Can you provide specifics on the phone platform if the contractor will use the State's phone system?	We use a State vendor to provide this service. All clients use the Cisco IP communicator softphone and the existing State VOIP service via VPN.
22	Supplier understands that the State will provide all systems and telephone platforms necessary to operate the program, will you be able to share what telephone platform and other systems are currently being used? Any additional technology needed?	We use a State vendor to provide this service. All clients use the Cisco IP communicator softphone and the existing State VOIP service via VPN.
23	Please confirm if the State will be providing voice/data circuits to the Supplier's Points of Presence (POP)? If this will be handled by the Supplier instead, please provide your data center locations/address	We use a State vendor to provide this service. All clients use the Cisco IP communicator softphone and the existing State VOIP service via VPN.
24	What is the bandwidth allocation requirement per agent/workstation?	Unsure, estimated low though. We have never estimated this but thus far we have not encountered any issues with existing contact tracers. SIP traffic is not very heavy nor is Citrix. Office 365 is likely the largest bandwidth consumer and that varies widely with type of use.
25	Will we be accessing the state through VPN or Citrix type environment and will we have to set up technology?	Yes, VPN. We have Citrix set up for use already.
26	Are there any special system requests such as Analytics, IVR, CRM & KB? Is it correct to assume that the client supplies circuits for delivery of calls and/or data to vendor's USA POP?	Each client machine must be on a Vendor network. Each machine must have the State-supplied Cisco IP Softphone installed. Not a client specific item, but that vendor network must have point to point VPN with State to allow the IP softphone traffic to pass through the tunnel back and forth. Check section 6 of https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/td/docs/voice_ip_comm/cucm/admin/11_5_1/sysConfig/11_5_1_SU1/cucm_b_system-configuration-guide-1151su1/cucm_b_system-configuration-guide-1151su1_chapter_01010101.html to understand the traffic that would need to pass through.
27	How will vendor agents access the clients applications (VPN, Internet, Point to Point, etc	VPN for IP telephony, Citrix for Contact Tracing application, Office.com for Email and Teams.
Questions regarding Call Center Metrics		
1	What is the minimum required total call capacity?	The unit of effort in the scope of work is FTE, not call capacity. The RFP contains no performance requirements for call capacity
2	What is the minimum simultaneous inbound call capacity?	See above
3	What is the maximum wait time?	See above
4	What is the maximum hold time?	See above
5	What percentage of inbound calls must be answered by a live operator?	See above
6	What percentage of calls must be resolved without a transfer, second call, or a return call?	See above
7	What is the maximum percentage of calls that can be terminated by the caller without resolution?	See above

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
Question	Answer	
8	What is the current average wait time for phone calls? See above	
9	What is the current average handle time for phone calls and other types of communications? This varies depending on total number of cases, type of call (case or contact), complexity of the call, and if others in the household are impacted	
10	What is the current average after-call work time for operators? This varies depending on total number of cases, type of call (case or contact), complexity of the call, and number of contacts identified	
11	What time of day, days of the week, or times of the year do calls typically peak? This is not predictable; there are many factors involved related to testing and lab results	
12	What is the average duration of a call with a case and the average duration of a call with a contact? We do not have this information.	
Questions regarding Language and Interpretation		
1	Are there language requirements? If so, which languages are needed? The State has a contract for telephonic interpretation.	
2	What are the required language options? The State has a contract for telephonic interpretation.	
3	Over the past year, what is the percentage of calls received in English versus non-English? We do not have this information easily accessible; the State has a contract for telephonic interpretation.	
4	Over the past year, what percentage of calls received were in Spanish? We do not have this information easily accessible; the State has a contract for telephonic interpretation.	
5	Does the State require contact tracers who speak languages other than English? If so, what languages are required? No. The State has a contract for telephonic interpretation.	
6	Are any Languages needed outside of English? If so, please share which ones and % of anticipated call volumes for each No. The State has a contract for telephonic interpretation.	
Questions about Staffing and Training		
1	Is there a minimum or maximum number of operators and supervisors? This is included in the RFP scope of work.	
2	Are there any specific skillsets or experience parameters surrounding our in-house tracers other than ensuring HIPPA compliance measures and scripting is being followed without deviation? Strong interpersonal and interview skills; data entry and attention to detail; ability to manage conflict and difficult situations; ability to escalate issues when not able to address	
3	Training: Does the state have a contact tracing training program in place already? Yes.	
4	If so, how much content is already in existence/what is the expectation for added content creation? All content is created. Additional protocols are developed by the State on an as needed basis. Training is provided to all Case Investigators and Contact Tracers on new protocols.	
5	How many days/hours is the current training program for tracer? Minimum of 1 week; varies based on experience and comfort level	
6	What is the state's expectation for duration of the training and topics to be covered? Minimum of 1 week; varies based on experience and comfort level; training encompasses the Case Investigation/Contact Tracing protocol and database requirements; training includes shadowing and role playing.	
7	What are the expected minimum qualifications of Contact Tracer/Supervisors Strong interpersonal and interview skills; data entry and attention to detail; ability to manage conflict and difficult situations; ability to escalate issues when not able to address	

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
Question	Answer	
8	RFP mentions that the State will provide initial training, will Contact Tracers onboarded after the initial group have access to the same training resources?	Yes.
9	The RFP states throughout (e.g., pages 3 and 5) that the State will provide training for Contact Tracers except on page 2: "Contractor will provide the State with Contact Tracers. These Contact Tracers will be trained, equipped, and supervised by the Contractor..." Does the State require the Contractor to provide any training to Contact Tracers and Supervisors?	The State will provide all required training for Case Investigators and Contact Tracers, as well as Supervisors.
10	What does the State mean by "trained and equipped"? What training and equipment will be provided by the State?	The State will provide all required training for Case Investigators and Contact Tracers, as well as Supervisors.
11	Please provide additional information about the expected qualifications of Contract Tracers, including licensure	Strong interpersonal and interview skills; data entry and attention to detail; ability to manage conflict and difficult situations; ability to escalate issues when not able to address. No licensure is required.
12	Supplier understands that Contractor shall conduct and receive clear background checks for all Supervisors and Contact Tracers prior to that person performing work under this contract. May the State please clarify what level of background check is required? Is fingerprinting required? Should we assume background checks be completed prior to launch of training?	The vendor may determine the type(s) of pre-employment screening required of supervisors and contact tracers. These must be conducted in compliance with The Fair Credit Reporting Act of 1970 (FCRA). The RFP states: "Contractor shall conduct and receive clear background checks for all Supervisors and Contact Tracers prior to that person performing work under this contract."
13	What is the expected on-going / continuous education training required per agent per month? Is there a Trainer certification process? Will the Train the Trainer be conducted virtually? Or are you expecting vendors to recommend or decide on these requirements?	Initial training is a minimum of 1 week; varies based on experience and comfort level; training encompasses the Case Investigation/Contact Tracing protocol and database requirements; training includes shadowing and role playing. Ongoing training is on an added-needed basis. Team leads meet weekly with the team (approx. 1 hour) to review protocols or share new expectations. There is no official training certification, but State trainers do sign off on readiness to begin independent work. Training is conducted virtually.
Questions about Contract terms and Form of Bidder Response		
1	Is it mandatory to provide clean energy and climate change certifications in order to bid?	No
2	Can staff be fully remote?	Yes
3	Is staff required to be Vermont residents?	No
4	Regarding the Bidder Response Form, Part 1, item 4, the table is requesting information for the offeror's primary contact. In the "Phone Number" row, the State is requesting a landline. Is a cellphone number acceptable to include if the primary contact does not have a landline?	Yes
5	Regarding the Bidder Response Form, Part 2, item f, does the State have a preference as to how many references are submitted?	At least one is required

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
Question	Answer	
6	If an offeror will not be utilizing subcontractors, should they still complete and submit Attachment 7.4 Worker Classification Compliance Requirement, Subcontractor Reporting Form?	No
7	Please confirm that Attachment 7.5, Standard Contract for Technology Services, does not need to be signed and returned with the offerors response.	It does not
8	Attachment A, Specifications of Work to Be Performed, is currently blank. Is this to be completed by the State after award of proposal with the finalized specifications?	Yes
9	What is the date by which you will answer these questions?	When Posted
10	Can you please provide greater details on how proposals will be evaluated and how the selected vendor(s) will be chosen?	No
11	Are bidders permitted to deviate in any way from any manner of quoting fees you may be expecting? For example, if there is a pricing page in the RFP, can bidders submit an alternate fee structure? If there is no pricing page in the RFP, do you have any preference for how bidders should quote fees or can bidders create their own pricing categories?	No. Part 5 of the Bidder Response Form specifies the only acceptable form of price proposal
12	Do you have a preference for minority or women owned suppliers?	No
13	This opportunity looks to be solely centered around a Contact/Call Center Environment. Can you clarify for us if there is any expectation that field work or field tracing would be required? To clarify from our end we expect this to be a Contact Center environment expectation and not an opportunity for any of the tracers to perform in person tracing efforts with possible exposure to infected individuals?	No field work or field tracing required.
14	Workforce: How many tracers total is the state seeking to onboard, and if one company can provide that capacity would the state still seeks to contract with more than one entity?	This is a procurement for 75 FTE contact tracers. The state expects to fill this need with a single vendor.
15	Tracer Assignments: Will individual tracers / investigators be assigned to a specific county or area of Vermont?	No
16	Residency: We understand the importance of hiring Vermonters to connect with the individuals we will be reaching out to, but would the state allow for onboarding tracers or tracer supervisors that do not live in Vermont?	Yes
17	Remote: Can you confirm that all work will be done remotely, and this scope will not include any onsite or home visits?	All remote, no field work
18	If all costs are all built in to single contact tracer role, how will materials such as licenses, printing/mailing, loaner computers be addressed in the budget. Many of these will be variable costs that will be impossible to budget precisely into a labor rate	Part 5 of the Bidder Response Form specifies the only acceptable form of price proposal, an hourly rate inclusive of all costs.

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
Question	Answer	
19	Would the State consider a full T&M budget rather than all costs built in to one labor rate?	No. Part 5 of the Bidder Response Form specifies the only acceptable form of price proposal
20	The RFP notes that the security standard under this contract is NIST 800-53, and that a SOC2 audit is also required. If we can demonstrate high security standards – including receiving Authorizations to Operate from DHHS and other federal agencies – would that suffice to meet the state’s standards?	See instructions in Bidder Response Form - Part 6
21	1.2 Contract Period of 80 This section states, “The State anticipates the start date will be March 1, 2021.” Is this the date of contract execution or the date the Contractor is to provide operational services (i.e., Go-Live)?	This is the planned Go-Live date
22	Regarding Section 6. Bid Submission Checklist, can you please confirm if “IRS Form W-9 signed on or after September 1, 2020” is required to be submitted with the proposal? This information is typically provided upon contract award.	Yes, it is required to be submitted
23	Regarding Section 6. Bid Submission Checklist, can you please confirm if “Certificate of Insurance with evidence of minimum coverage required by Attachments C and D” is required to be submitted with the proposal? This information is typically provided upon contract award.	Yes, it is required to be submitted
24	Since we are not currently licensed to do business with State of Vermont, what are the licenses and certifications (if any) required by a ‘foreign’ Vendor (outside Vermont) to bid for this opportunity?	You can find more information about business registration at the Vermont Secretary of State's office https://sos.vermont.gov/corporations/
25	How long does it take to register as a ‘foreign’ entity in Vermont?	You can find more information about business registration at the Vermont Secretary of State's office https://sos.vermont.gov/corporations/
26	Can the State expedite the registration if the contractor is providing critical services such as related to fighting COVID-19?	No, but this isn't usually necessary. Registration is not usually time consuming
27	Does the out-of-state contractor need to be registered in Vermont at the time of submitting the proposal or only once awarded the contract?	At time of award, but the intent is to move quickly after 2/1 to complete award
28	Does the State have any small business or other set-asides goals for this RFP award?	No
29	What are any set asides for Small Business, XXXXXXX, etc	None
30	How many companies will be awarded to perform the required scope of services?	This is a procurement for 75 FTE contact tracers. The state expects to fill this need with a single vendor.
31	If more than one company is awarded this opportunity, will the requirement to onboard 25 FTEs within 10 days still apply or the State intends to distribute the FTEs by each selected Contractor, and if so, how will the allocation be made?	This is a procurement for 75 FTE contact tracers. The state expects to fill this need with a single vendor.
32	Also, in case of multiple Contractors selected, how will the weekend schedule be allocated in case of overlap?	This is a procurement for 75 FTE contact tracers. The state expects to fill this need with a single vendor.

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
Question	Answer	
33	We understand that the RFP specifies the need for deploying 1 Supervisor for up to 20 Contact Tracers, are the Supervisors to be billable directly as individual line items or are their costs to be factored into the Contact Tracers?	Part 5 of the Bidder Response Form specifies the only acceptable form of price proposal, an hourly rate inclusive of all costs.
34	Please confirm that the proposal should provide hourly rates for Contact Tracers and/or Supervisor by factoring bundled rates for weekend and/or holiday work, no separate line-item is required to account for weekends or holiday billable time?	That is correct.
35	Can the state provide a pricing template to be filled by the vendors so it ensures consistency across submitted proposals?	No
36	Are the # of Contact Tracers for a weekend or holiday schedule expected to be the same as for a working day?	Yes.
37	How will the work load by day determined?	Work is assigned to case investigators and contact tracers through the data team based on new lab reports and identified contacts. This is done within the COVID-19 data system.
38	RFP mention that the training times for initial Contact Tracers is billable, will the same apply to additional Contact Tracers ramped up after the initial deployment?	Yes.
39	Will the training time for Supervisors be also billable?	Part 5 of the Bidder Response Form specifies the only acceptable form of price proposal, an hourly rate inclusive of all costs.
40	Is there any requirement or expectation of the Contact Tracers and/or Supervisors to meet with State Officials on any planned basis?	Contact Tracers have a daily huddle. A regular meeting time with State leads and supervisors, managers will be determined as mutually agreed upon by State and vendor.
41	RFP mentions that a Contact Tracer maybe requested to be either retrained or removed from the project. What is the expected notice period of each of these requests?	
42	For Contract Tracers undergoing re-training, is there any expected duration of such retraining?	This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
43	The Contact Tracer and Supervisor work is dependent on availability of the State's NEDSS, NBS and telephony systems. In case of any downtime or non-availability of these, how will that factor into the Contractor Employee performance?	If the contractor has staff resources scheduled and is unable to perform work because of unplanned outages of State systems, the schedule time will be billable and will not affect contractor performance requirements.
44	The RFP states (page 4) that the operating hours are at a minimum seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Does the State seek to expand the operating hours into early evening?	It is possible. We are shifting right now to a 830a to 515p schedule. Subject to change.
45	The RFP states (page 5) that the contract services must be priced based on dollars per Contact Tracer hour on duty and working. Does the State require the breakdown of the dollars per Contact Tracer per hour, for example, contact tracer hourly rate, supervisor hourly rate, background checks, and management fee or does the State require only the dollars per Contact Tracer per hour?	No breakdown is required.

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
Question	Answer	
46	Would the State accept (1) an hourly rate for Contact Tracers and Supervisors and (2) other hourly rates for management oversight (i.e., Project Director and Project Manager) billed based on hours worked?	No. Part 5 of the Bidder Response Form specifies the only acceptable form of price proposal, an hourly rate inclusive of all costs.
47	The RFP states (page 2) that “The State may reduce the FTE Contact Tracers required to be supplied by the Contractor in increments of five (5) FTE after providing at least ten (10) calendar days’ notice in writing to the contractor. The State agrees to work with the Contractor to plan for anticipated FTE requirements based on COVID-19 case modeling, but such cooperation does obligate the State to modify the notice terms contained herein for either increases or reductions in FTE Contact Tracers.” (emphasis added) Please clarify the italicized clause. Does it mean that the State can provide less than 10 calendar days’ notice to increase staffing based on case modeling?	No, the 10 calendar day notice is a minimum. If reliable modeling can provide more notice, the state will attempt to do so.
48	How many vendors the department is actually planning to select for this contract?	One.
49	Would the agency be accepting commercial references for this project?	Yes
50	Are we allowed to use subcontractors for this RFP?, If yes, Can we use subcontractors outside of Vermont State?	Yes
51	Do we need to provide the hourly rates for the Supervisors?	No - Part 5 of the Bidder Response Form specifies the only acceptable form of price proposal, an hourly rate inclusive of all costs.
52	How quickly is the State wanting to ramp up the services after contract award?	The requirement is to supply 25 FTE Contact Tracers to begin initial training within 10 days of contact execution. The bidder's proposal must address their capability and capacity to meet this requirement.
53	Per Part 3 of vendor proposal solutions, is the State wanting the implementation plan as part of the vendor proposal?	Yes.
54	Under Work environment there is mention of the 8-4:00 PM Monday through Sunday schedule. It then speaks to “non standard” schedules. Can the State please advise what the desired coverage hours should be?	Currently moving to a 830a to 515p schedule. This is subject to change the situation evolves.
55	Under Scheduling of Contact Tracers, a 2 week schedule is provided prior to actual work schedule. Using unanticipated absenteeism as an example, is there a means to correct the schedule once it has been provided?	Yes.
56	Would the agency be accepting commercial references for this project?	Yes
57	Are we allowed to use subcontractors for this RFP?, If yes, Can we use subcontractors outside of Vermont State?	Yes

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
Question	Answer	
58	RFP: "supply twenty-five (25) FTE Contact Tracers for initial training by the State within 10 calendar days of contract execution..." Which of the following hiring milestones must be completed within 10 days: accepted job offer, first day on job, or vendor's onboarding completed? Will exceptions be allowed for external circumstances, including illness, quarantine, employees who wish to provide a customary 2 weeks' notice to prior employers, National Guard activation / drafts, or background checks delayed by state agencies?	The requirement is to supply 25 FTE Contact Tracers to begin initial training within 10 days of contact execution. The bidder's proposal must address their capability and capacity to meet this requirement.
59	In the BAA, there is reference to "report to Covered Entity." Is the intent more clearly stated as the Party will "Notify Covered Entity in writing"?	The language of the BAA should be read as written, with no intent inferred. Bidders wishing to propose exceptions to any terms and conditions must do so as outlined in Part 6 of the bidder response form.
60	180. Is the State seeking 75 FTEs to provide 3,000 hours of work spread across a 7-day work week or the number of FTEs required to ensure 75 FTEs are actively working each day of the 7-day work week?	We are seeking 75 FTEs to actively work daily (7 days/week).
61	2 p. 2 of 8 2 Is it permissible to assume more than 25 FTEs at Go-Live if the bidder has trained staff already in place and ready to perform the work?	Yes.
62	Are there required spans of control outside of the required Supervisor ratios outlined in the RFP? Is the State expecting suppliers to propose their own support structure model?	No
63	Is there a client-defined systems disaster recovery requirement?	No
Questions about Current State		
1	Who is doing this work today? Are they employed by the state of Vermont or a vendor?	Case investigation and contact tracing is currently done by Health Department and other state and municipal employees, temporary employees, the National Guard, and a contracted vendor.
2	Will we be taking work on from another vendor	A contract for these services is in effect through 2/28/21.
3	Why has this bid been released at this time?	To replace the contract expiring on 2/28/21
4	Please describe your level of satisfaction with your current or recent vendor(s) for the same purchasing activity, if applicable	The current vendor is fulfilling all contract requirements.
5	Has the current contract gone full term?	A contract for these services is in effect through 2/28/21.
6	Have all options to extend the current contract been exercised?	The contract to be awarded through this solicitation will replace the current contract.
7	Who is the incumbent, and how long has the incumbent been providing the requested services?	A copy of the current contact is provided along with these responses.
8	How are fees currently being billed by any incumbent(s), by category, and at what rates?	A copy of the current contact is provided along with these responses.
9	What was your average monthly call volume over the past year?	Cannot be determined.

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
Question	Answer	
10	What is the current number of seats for operators and supervisors at your existing call center?	A copy of the current contact is provided along with these responses.
11	Are there any incumbents?	A copy of the current contact is provided along with these responses.
12	Do you have any existing contingent workers/contractors that you are currently payrolling internally that you would like to transition to an EOR Payrolling provider?	No
13	Is there an incumbent currently providing contact tracing for Vermont Residents?	A copy of the current contact is provided along with these responses.
14	If there's an incumbent(s), are they eligible to bid for this opportunity?	Yes
15	Are there any incumbents in this contract? If yes, Please share their names	A copy of the current contact is provided along with these responses.
16	Is agency not satisfied with incumbent contractors for these services?, If yes, Please share the reasons	The current vendor is fulfilling all contract requirements.
17	Can you please share incumbent contractors proposals and proposed pricing?	A copy of the current contact is provided along with these responses.
18	How many resources are currently engaged in the current contract?	A copy of the current contact is provided along with these responses.
19	Are there any incumbents in this contract? If yes, Please share their names	A copy of the current contact is provided along with these responses.
20	Is agency not satisfied with incumbent contractors for these services?, If yes, Please share the reasons	The current vendor is fulfilling all contract requirements.
21	Can you please share incumbent contractors proposals and proposed pricing?	A copy of the current contact is provided along with these responses.
22	How many resources are currently engaged in the current contract?	A copy of the current contact is provided along with these responses.
23	How many vendors the department is actually planning to select for this contract?	One.
24	Has the State been conducting contact tracing or has this work been bid out in the past? Is there an incumbent for this contract?	Case investigation and contact tracing is currently done by Health Department and other state and municipal employees, temporary employees, the National Guard, and a contracted vendor.
Questions about Scope of Work and performance requirements		
1	Other than the responsibilities to accept phone calls from cases or individuals potentially exposed to COVID-19 (e.g., for individuals who could not be contacted during a first attempt), will the Contractor have any responsibilities for inbound calls? If so, please clarify.	Yes. Case Investigators and Contact Tracers leave messages when they are not able to reach an individual. Case Investigators and Contact Tracers will need to receive call backs from these individuals--they may either be calls made either by the Case Investigator or Contact Tracer who made the original call or to another Case Investigator or Contact Tracer, depending on availability and shift.
2	From the outbound calls being performed, are you anticipating any inbound and if so, what is the percentage?	Yes, see above.
3	If Inbound is required, are there metrics available pertaining to call volume, call length	No.
4	How should calls be handled after hours if there is an inbound component?	Inbound calls are received via voicemail and checked the following day at the opening on a shift.

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
Question	Answer	
5	Coverage is seven days per week, including federal holidays. Are there specific timeframes?	Currently moving to a 830a to 515p shift. This is subject to change.
6	What is the current contact rate?	This information is not collected.
7	Are callers required or allowed to connect with a message verification system or pre-recorded message before connecting to a live operator, or must a live operator be the initial contact?	We do not have a message verification system. We do have a voicemail system for inbound calls if there is no staff available to receive the inbound call.
8	What are the recording requirements for inbound and outbound phone calls and how long must recordings be maintained?	Phone calls are not recorded.
9	What are the recording and storage requirements for non-phone communications?	Phone calls are not recorded.
10	What information is to be included in call logs?	A large volume of data points are collected during case investigation calls. This includes: personal information on the case, details about exposure, location of exposure and contact, clinical information and symptoms, medical history, contacts, and need for care coordination/supports
11	What is your existing strategy for contact tracing. If applicable, will these additional contact tracers be transitioned into an existing contact tracer workforce?	Case investigation and contact tracing is currently done by Health Department and other state and municipal employees, temporary employees, the National Guard, and a contracted vendor. The State is currently working on its long-term strategy related to the Contact Tracing workforce. We expect some of the existing workforce to transition out of these roles in the coming months.
12	Can the State / Your staff determine the expected call volume metrics for this opportunity or provide any insight as to current level expectations?	Case loads vary widely depending on number of daily COVID-19 cases, as well as contacts/case.
13	Are there any specific SLA's or KPI expectations regarding the contact center?	No. The State does aim to contact cases within 24 hours of receipt of the lab report.
14	Operational Hours: We understand the state would like tracers to work during the Vermont state employee hours, but our experience has shown evening hours are often the most successful time to reach people because they are more likely to be home and able to speak securely and for the time needed to complete the tracing/investigation. Would the state be open to suggestions for alternative operational hours?	The State would be open to this conversation, however, there are impacts on other parts of the system (data and clinical support) that will need to be considered.
15	Supervision of Calls: Will the State be monitoring, and auditing calls for quality assurance and notifying contractors of potential issues of certain employees for corrective action, or will the Contractor be responsible for identifying these issues on the State's telephone systems?	The State does monitor calls during training and may do this if issues/concerns emerge. The State is also currently improving our quality assurance systems--so this could change in the future.
16	What software/Case Management software products comprise the "contact tracing training technology platform" noted under State Responsibilities?	The State uses the National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NEDDS) Based System (NBS) as our Contact Tracing system.
17	Does the CT system utilize a centralized technology/telephony platform on which tracers can simultaneously receive new cases, dial out to that person, and enter relevant data into the system in real time?	Yes.

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
Question	Answer	
18	How will the state get feedback from the contractor on needed changes to protocol, scripts, software enhancements, or other needs determined through our on-the-ground experience in VT?	The vendor can submit this information at any time to the State. The vendor and State leads will likely meet regularly to discuss progress and possible enhancements.
19	2. State Responsibilities 5 of 8 Are there any fees associated with NEDSS or the telephone platform that the Contractor will need to factor into their solution?	No.
20	Are there any expected workload standards, e.g., # of Contact Tracers needed per contact per day, duration of each call based on call type, # of times to follow-up with a resident if not responding, etc.?	This varies depending on total number of cases, type of call (case or contact), complexity of the call, and if others in the household are impacted
21	The RFP talks about submitting work schedule for upcoming 2 weeks schedule. Please share the expected format of the schedule?	Currently done in an Excel spreadsheet, but the State is moving to a new scheduling system (details are still TBD).
22	If after a work schedule is approved, a change needs to be made due to extenuating circumstances such as employee sickness, what process needs to be followed to alert the State and to get approvals of the change(s)	Currently done through email to the Scheduling Unit; the State is moving to a new scheduling system (details are still TBD).
23	Are there any reporting requirements other than the shift schedules? For example, does the State require a monthly progress report or regular staffing performance reports? If so, please describe the type and frequency of reports required	No.
24	Will the Contractor work with each local health office or will this be a state run centralized program?	The State runs a centralized program.
25	If a state run centralized program, will this be in addition to local health office contact tracing efforts?	Contact Tracing is not done at the local level.
26	Could the Contractor transition current staff doing the contact tracing? If so, from what sources and how many?	No.
27	Can you share the Job description for the supervisors required?	We do not have one.
28	We have Director of Nursing and other Nurses as our internal employees. Can we assign them as supervisors for the project or do we need to have them on contract like the contract tracers?	The method of employing supervisors and contact tracers is for the vendor to determine.
29	Would the contractor be able to use its current platform developed for contact tracing purposes? If so, would those need to be updated and available within the 10 days of training that the State would conduct?	No
30	Will an initial positive test notification, symptom tracking, or system enrollment call occur or be required prior to the call when the vendor traces the person's contacts, or are these steps all part of the single call made to the person? Will vendor personnel be the first people to call each individual?	Positive test notification occurs through other mechanisms, not generally by the Case Investigator or Contact Tracer (although occasionally); generally speaking the Case Investigation and Contact Tracing call happens in a single call, but occasionally follow-up calls are required.

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
Question	Answer	
31	Could the state of Vermont share their current contact tracing script / protocol with prospective bidders?	The State does not use a script to conduct contact tracing. We are not able to share the contact tracing protocol. A large volume of data points are collected during case investigation calls. This includes: personal information on the case, details about exposure, location of exposure and contact, clinical information and symptoms, medical history, contacts, and need for care coordination/supports. Education and support are also provided to ensure adherence to quarantine and isolation guidance.
32	The RFP does not list operational reporting as an obligation of the vendor. Does the state pull its own reporting from its telephone system and customer relationship management system?	The requirements of the vendor are defined in the scope of work.
33	What role does the state envision the selected vendor playing in the creation and or dissemination of letters or other communications with index cases or associated contacts?	The State has already developed these templates.
34	What State systems, if any, will be used to generate and send letters?	Letters are sent manually.
35	If the vendor is expected to create and disseminate communications, how many documents are anticipated and what are the associated timelines?	Not anticipated.
36	Is it the State's desire to include multi-channel capabilities including email, chat, and SMS, in addition to inbound and outbound calls? Does the State currently utilize these capabilities? If so, will they be provided to the Supplier? If so, can you please provide volume assumptions for each contact category?	The State currently utilizes an email to text function and texts all Contacts through a separate system.
37	Will call recording and screen capture be required? If yes, what total percentage of the total is required to be recorded/captured? How long with the recording/data need to be stored online and/or offline?	No
Questions about Location of Vendor Performance		
1	To what extent will the location of the bidder's proposed location or headquarters have a bearing on any award?	None
2	Will the State permit Contact Tracers or Supervisors to work remotely (work from home)?	Yes.
3	Can the Contact Tracers be based outside of the USA?	Yes, but note provisions of RFP attachment 7.7 regarding access, storage and transfer of state data to or from locations outside the United States.
4	Do the Contact Tracers and Supervisors have to be in-state residents?	No
5	Is there any preference for local businesses for this contract?	No
6	Can you please share the locations of services required under this RFP?	The location of services will be determined by the vendor, the state will not provide facilities or equipment.
7	Is there any preference for local businesses for this contract?	No
8	Can you please share the locations of services required under this RFP?	The location of services will be determined by the vendor, the state will not provide facilities or equipment.

VERMONT RFP - COVID-19 Contact Tracing Response to Bidder Questions		25-Jan-21
Question	Answer	
9	We understand the State's preference to hire Vermont-based resources. It is our experience that significant price advantages can be gained by leveraging alternative work locations. Does the State have any objections to agents located outside of the US, including Canada, as long as the data remains within the continental United States.	No
10	Can the State please confirm that a staff plan based on a 100% work at home model is acceptable?	Yes.
11	Can the State please confirm that a Vermont-based brick and mortar location is not required?	Correct.
Questions about Contract Funding		
1	What estimated or actual dollars were paid last year, last month, or last quarter to any incumbent(s)?	The incumbent began work 12/14/20, no cost history has occurred.
2	What is the anticipated value of this opportunity?	The maximum contract value will be the unit cost charged by the successful bidder to provide the required FTE for the contract period.
3	Is the Funding to the project covered by State Funds or is it supplemented by a Federal Grant?	The state expects to fund this contact with federal grant funds.
4	If there is Federal Funding, what is the budgeted amount and what are any restrictions tied to the funding?	The scope of work included in the RFP is an eligible activity for the use of federal funds.
5	When the existing contract was started, and what is the annual monetary spent value of the current contract since inception?	A copy of the current contract is provided along with these responses.
6	What will be the estimated budget for this project?	The maximum contract value will be the unit cost charged by the successful bidder to provide the required FTE for the contract period.
7	When the existing contract was started, and what is the annual monetary spent value of the current contract since inception?	A copy of the current contract is provided along with these responses.
8	What will be the estimated budget for this project?	The maximum contract value will be the unit cost charged by the successful bidder to provide the required FTE for the contract period.