



Updated April 29, 2021

RFP 21-9002 - Addendum 2 – Questions and Answers

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This Addendum updates the solicitation document to address questions submitted during the Pre-Proposal Conference on April 26, 2021 and all written questions received by end of day on April 27, 2021.

Please acknowledge receipt of this Addendum by completing the spaces below, and please return this acknowledgement with your proposal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ADDENDUM 2:

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Company Name

RFP #21-9002 - Idaho P-EBT Call Center Questions and Answers - Addendum #2

Question Number	RFP Section Reference Number	RFP Questions	SDE Answer
Questions from Pre-Proposal Conference Call			
1	Appendix C	There is a table that contains the scope of work and cost. Format has a 3 rd cell. Is the response supposed to go in that cell or can we insert it separately?	It is fine to put that in as an attachment. Please make sure you are numbering your solution to correspond with the question number.
2	General	Is the cut off time today for questions still 3:00 today?	We will take them until midnight on 4/27/2021.
3	General	If the contract award date is May 14 th , when does the State expect the call center to be fully operational?	We would like to have something up and running as soon as possible. Please include in your proposal the date you can start.
4	Appendix E	In appendix E there is a script for call center. Is it expected that the eligibility determination will be conducted entirely by the call center?	The eligibility determination will be conducted by the school. We will be giving the call center information that they can refer to such as name of eligible schools.
5	Appendix E	Information that is gathered in the call center, is that something that needs to be captured by the call center and sent to State?	The SDE is expecting the Contractor to maintain a call log with the information shown in Appendix E. The SDE does not have a call log or technology that it will be providing to the Contractors.
Written Questions Submitted by Email			
1	3.5	Please define answer/connection rate? Does that mean answered by a live customer service agent? Would leaving a voice mail message that is ultimately returned by the call center agent who provides the requested information be considered an answer/connection rate? Would vendors be required to report the answer/connection rate monthly?	The answer/connection rate is the number of calls answered including voicemails to the total number of calls received. Leaving a voice mail message would be considered an answer/connection rate. We are requesting the Contractors to report the answer connection rate monthly.
2	3.6	If the successful Contractor prices to a staffing level of five FTE and the calls greatly exceed 200 per day or the call handle times are excessively long (i.e. 30 to 50% more than expected), would SDE consider a contract amendment or an adjustment to the answer/connection rate?	If the calls greatly exceed 200 per day the SDE would consider a contract amendment.
3	38.4	For purposes of the security plan and audit, what state systems and student data, if any, will call center agents have access to?	The call center agents will have access to the SDE PEET software program containing student and parent personal information data.
4	Appendix C, Question 1.1	What is the expected "go live" date for this call center?	We would like to have something up and running as soon as possible. Please include in your proposal the date you can start.
5	Appendix C, 2 nd paragraph	This section states that "the SDE will equip the contracted call center with scripts and FAQs to streamline outbound messaging"? Please clarify what this refers to call center agent responses to inbound calls and does not mean outbound calls in addition to the 200 expected inbound calls per day?	The scripts and FAQ's are to equip the agents to respond to inbound calls and responding to call backs. There will be no expectation of cold calls.
6	Question 3.3	This question appears to be missing words - end with "how will your call center . . ." Please provide the full question.	The question is, "how will your call center manage the confidential PII student information.
7	Appendix D	Would SDE allow Contractors to submit an all-inclusive hourly rate for Call Center agents as the fixed price for Item #2? The hourly rate would include management, training, and quality assurance. This structure would benefit SDE in that it would support payment for just the productive agent hours and the number of agents and hours can be varied based on the call volumes after discussion with SDE, a review of the historical call volumes, and agreement on the estimated workforce need for a defined period.	The SDE would accept the Contractors submitting an all-inclusive hourly rate for Call Center agents as the fixed price for Item #2.
8	Appendix E, Call Script and Procedures	Will the call log referenced in Appendix E and underlying technology be accessible to the contractor call center agent so that they can use it to report on call reasons?	The call log listed in Appendix E is a Word document, listing the types of information to be collected. The SDE is expecting the Contractor to maintain a call log with the information shown in Appendix E. The SDE does not have a call log or technology that it will be providing to the Contractors.
9	Appendix E, Troubleshooting	How will contracted agents access the DHW file referenced in the section on Troubleshooting? If this is a file sent to the contractor, in what format will it be provided?	The SDE will be providing contracted agents the information through the SDE PEET software program. There agents will not have any access to DHW files.
10	8.1 Cost Proposal	Is SDE looking for a rate or fixed price for the second and third line items on the cost form? Requirement 8.1 on page 10 specifies a 'fully-burdened rate' but the cost form structure indicates that it sums up the cost column for a total project cost. Please advise.	The SDE requests a fully burdened rate, however we did allow the Contractor to provide other costs if they are required.
11	38.4	This section requires a detailed data security plan that includes privacy and security audits. Would the State consider removing the requirement for a privacy and security audit as this is only a four-month contract?	When dealing with student PII it is critical that the Contractor have a detailed security plan for their own system that includes both privacy and security audits. The State cannot and would not be able to remove this requirement.
12	Reporting/Data	Regarding data transmission methods and the requirement for vendors to describe how you plan to track and report data points: Question - Can the state support SFTP (FTP over SSH) for secure data transmission? If not, what methods are currently in place for accepting vendor data transmissions?	The State can support SFTP for secure data transmission.

13	Appendix E – Call Script and Procedures	Regarding the Call Log and access to state system access: Question - How will contractor staff access the call log referenced in this section? Is it a web- based system that can be accessed via a state-provided username and password? If the call log is not accessed via a web browser, please provide method of access. What technology would a vendor use to access the system remotely? Will the state allow a network communication using an internet site secure VPN tunnel for accessing the state system?	The State will not be providing a system for the Contractor to access. The request is for the Contractor to provide their own secure system to maintain call logs and provide information back to the State Department of Education through a SFTP file transfer.
14	Appendix A – Contract Terms and Conditions	The contract is silent on Limitation of Liability. We propose the following new language to be added to the contract terms and conditions : The State agrees that Contractor’s total liability to the State for any and all damages whatsoever arising out of, or in any way related to, this Agreement from any cause, including but not limited to negligence, errors, omissions, strict liability, breach of contract or breach of warranty shall not, in the aggregate, exceed total contract value (TCV). In no event shall Contractor be liable for indirect, special, incidental, economic, consequential or punitive damages, including but not limited to lost revenue, lost profits, replacement goods, loss of technology rights or services, loss of data, or interruption or loss of use of software or any portion thereof regardless of the legal theory under which such damages are sought even if Contractor has been advised of the likelihood of such damages, and notwithstanding any failure of essential purpose of any limited remedy. Any claim by the State against Contractor relating to this Agreement must be made in writing and presented to Contractor within one (1) year after the date on which Contractor completes performance of the Services specified in this Agreement. Explanation: Placing a reasonable cap on our liability is a prudent business practice that we work with all of our clients to achieve in our contracts. It does not speak to our ability to, or confidence in, completing the services successfully. Further, bidding firms with a higher net worth are at a disadvantage and undertake higher risk than those firms of lower net worth. Limiting liability proportionally to the contract value does not create unreasonable risk for the State given Contractors extensive experience and success in providing similar services and its solid financial standing.	The SDE will not be adding in Limitation of Liability.
15	Appendix A – Contract Terms and Conditions, Section 11	Regarding Section 11, Indemnification, we propose the following new language: Contractor shall indemnify, defend, and save harmless the State, its officers, agents, employees, and volunteers from and against any and all third-party claims liability, claims, damages, losses, expenses, actions, settlements, attorneys’ fees, and suits whatsoever caused by, arising out of, or in connection with Contractor’s acts or omissions under this Agreement or Contractor’s failure to comply with any state or federal statute, law, regulation, or rule. Upon receipt of the State’s tender of indemnity and defense, Contractor shall immediately take all reasonable actions necessary, including, but not limited to, providing a legal defense for the State, to begin fulfilling its obligation to indemnify, defend, and save harmless the State. Contractor’s indemnification and defense liabilities described herein shall apply regardless of any allegations that a claim or suit is attributable in whole or in part to any act or omission of the State under this Agreement. However, if it is determined by a final judgment that the State’s negligent act or omission is the sole proximate cause of a suit or claim, the State shall not be entitled to indemnification from Contractor with respect to such suit or claim, and the State, in its discretion, may reimburse Contractor for reasonable defense costs attributable to the defense provided by any Special Deputy Attorney General appointed pursuant to Idaho Code Section 12.123 (3). Any legal defense provided by Contractor to the State under this section must be free of any conflicts of interest, even if retention of separate legal counsel for the State is necessary. Any attorney appointed to represent the State must first qualify as and be appointed by the Attorney General of the State of Idaho as a Special Deputy Attorney General pursuant to Idaho Code Sections 67-1401(13) and 67-1409(1). Explanation: Contractor wishes to limit our obligations to third party claims and proven direct damages resulting from negligence or willful misconduct.	The SDE does not have the authority to modify the Indemnification language set forth by the Idaho Constitution and Idaho law.
16	Appendix C	Appendix C- Item Number 3.3 states 'Describe your experience and knowledge with FERPA? The call centers will have access to personal private information how will your call center' Is this question incomplete?	The question is, "how will your call center manage the confidential PII student information.
17	Appendix C	Can you provide anticipated daily call volumes by intervals?	This is a new project, the SDE does not have historical information on calls.
18	Appendix C	Can you provide anticipated call volumes for an indicative week and seasonal fluctuations?	This is a new project, the SDE does not have historical information on calls.
19	Appendix C	What is the language requirement for the program?	The RFP is recommending both English and Spanish. We are looking for the Contractors to respond with their language translation abilities, as asked in RFP Appendix C, number 1.4.
20	Appendix C	How long is the new hire training?	The SDE will be providing talking points and a script, the expectation is for the Contractor to do the call center training. Please review RFP, Appendix C 3.1.
21	Appendix C	After new hire training, is there a period of nesting where the agents are taking calls in a classroom environment? If so, for how long?	The SDE will be providing talking points and a script, the expectation is for the Contractor to do the call center training. Please review RFP, Appendix C 3.1.
22	Appendix C	Are there expected ongoing training requirements? If so, please define.	The SDE will be providing talking points and a script, the expectation is for the Contractor to do the call center training. Please review RFP, Appendix C 3.1.

23	Appendix C	Does SDE require dedicated trainers and/or training managers?	The SDE will be providing talking points and a script, the expectation is for the Contractor to do the call center training. Please review RFP, Appendix C 3.1.
24	Appendix C	What is the expected Average Handle Time for calls?	This is a new project, the SDE does not have historical information on calls.
25	Appendix C	Can you provide more detail around your Quality Assurance expectations? (e.g. number of monitors per agent per week, quality assurance processes, quality scorecards, etc.)?	The RFP does not provide guidance on quality assurance expectations. Please provide your procedures on quality assurance.
26	Appendix C	What are the system requirements, will it be hosted by the supplier or provided by you, the client?	The Contractor is expected to have a hosted system that can meet the confidential requirements outlined in the RFP. The RFP requests information on the Contractors system as listed in Appendix C - Sections 2.1 through 3.4.
27	Appendix C	Will agents be working off SDE's system platform?	No, the Contractor will provide the system platform.
28	Appendix C	What technology will be provided by SDE?	The SDE will be providing a phone number, talking points, script and SFTP server to transfer data from the Contractors system to the SDE.
29	Appendix C	Please confirm if SDE will be providing voice/data circuits to the vendor's Points of Presence (POP)? If this will be handled by the vendor instead, please provide your data center locations/address.	The SDE does not have a call center, we will not be providing voice/data circuits to any Contractor.
30	Appendix C	What are the communication channels required? Voice, Chat, Email, Other? Can you provide anticipated contact volumes by channel?	The SDE expectations for communication channels is voice call center, including return call of any messages. The estimated call volume is shown in RFP on 3.6.
31	General Questions	a. Who is the incumbent?	The SDE does not currently have a call center provider.
32	General Questions	b. What is the contract amount with the incumbent?	The SDE does not currently have a call center provider.
33	General Questions	c. In addition to the stated objective to provide financial assistance to families who have lost access to school meals due to school closures, are there any other business reasons for posting this RFP?	There are no other reasons for posting the RFP outside of the PEBT program.
34	General Questions	d. What are the challenges that your agency hopes to resolve with this engagement?	To provide excellent customer service on questions related to the PEBT program.
35	General Questions	e. What are the pain points with the current processes and services?	This is a new program for the SDE and looking for an experienced call center provider to address questions or concerns regarding the PEBT program.
36	General Questions	f. What are the specific improvements your agency would like the next contractor to bring to your processes and services?	The SDE does not currently have a call center provider.
37	General Questions	g. What is the budget range that has been established for the duration of this engagement?	The SDE is requesting the Contractor to provide a quote for services.
38	General Questions	h. Is this opportunity to be funded with Federal monies?	It is anticipated to be funded with Federal monies.
39	General Questions	i. If so, will any federal responsibilities convey to the awardee?	Yes, as listed under Appendix B.
40	General Questions	j. Will the winning vendor be a subrecipient of the federal monies or a contractor to your agency?	The winning Contractor will be a contractor to the SDE.
42	Appendix A	a. 3.5 Service Standards: Please confirm or clarify whether "95% answer/connection rate" means 5% or fewer calls abandoned. Also, is this measured on an average monthly basis?	The answer/connection rate is the number of calls answered including voicemails to the total number of calls received. Leaving a voice mail message would be considered an answer/connection rate. We are requesting the Contractors to report the answer connection rate monthly.
43	Appendix A	b. 3.6 Estimated Call Volume: Regarding the estimated need of 3-5 staff fielding 200 calls daily, what is the total size of the population who are expected to call? Also, what is the estimated average call duration?	It is anticipated that 71,000 students that will be qualified to receive PEBT benefits. This is a new project, the SDE does not have historical information on calls.
44	Appendix A	a. Please define the pass/fail criteria applicable to this contract.	Please refer to Section 9.2 Evaluation Criteria in the RFP
45	Appendix A	b. "Said criminal background check results shall be submitted to the SDE prior to performance of this contract." Please clarify whether the full results of the background check must be submitted or if SDE requires only a confirmation that the background check has been passed based on the defined pass/fail criteria.	The SDE Criminal Background Check term only applies to contractors that may come into contact with Idaho public school children. The call center contract will not have interaction with Idaho public school children.
46	Appendix A	4. Section 38.5: If/when data is destroyed per State of Idaho requirements, is there any specific data destruction framework that will be required to be followed?	The expectation under Section 38.5 is that for digital copies, the contract will encrypt and erase and any physical copies should be permanently and securely destroyed.
47	5. Appendix C:	a. Regarding 1.4, are there any particular non-English language needs that are most common among the population to be served under this contract?	The common non-English language to be served under this contract is anticipated to be Spanish.
48	6. Appendix E:	a. Do the eligibility questions shown in Appendix E represent the full process for determining eligibility and is the call center solely responsible for making eligibility determinations?	The eligibility determination will be conducted by the school. We will be giving the call center information that they can refer to such as name of eligible schools.

49	6. Appendix E:	b. Is there an existing system where eligibility data and other call disposition data must be entered or is the contractor expected to provide all necessary systems for data capture and reporting?	The call center agents will have access to the SDE PEPT software program containing student and parent personal information data. The contractor is expected to provide all necessary systems for data capture and reporting.
50	6. Appendix E:	c. Please explain how eligibility determination information will be accessed by the call center and the frequency at which this information is updated?	The call center agents will have access to the SDE PEPT software program containing student and parent personal information data. The SDE is not anticipating frequent changes, any modifications will be made on an ad hoc basis.
51	6. Appendix E:	d. "Caller must be the Primary Parent from uploaded list to give information" - What is the uploaded list? In addition to primary parents, is there a list of eligible children? Who generates the list(s) and what format is the list(s) in? How will the successful Contractor access or receive the list(s)?	The call center agents will have access to the SDE PEPT software program containing student and parent personal information data.
53	General Question	With a contract award date of May 14th, when does the State expect the Call Center to be fully operational?	We would like to have something up and running as soon as possible. Please include in your proposal the date you can start.
54	General Question	The RFP states that the contract end date is September 30, 2021. Is it possible that this call center will remain active beyond this date? If so, what would those reasons be, and for how much longer might the State want this call center to remain operational?	The September 30, 2021 date is the federal program expiration date. We do not anticipate a call center past this date.
55	Section 3.5	Regarding the standard of 95% answer/connect rate, what would be the number of minutes the calls need to be answered for 95%?	The answer/connection rate is the number of calls answered including voicemails to the total number of calls received. Leaving a voice mail message would be considered an answer/connection rate. We are requesting the Contractors to report the answer connection rate monthly.
56	Req. 1.2	What are the associated penalties for a missed standard?	The SDE has not defined penalties for any missed standard in the RFP.
57	Req. 1.2, 1.3	What is the anticipated average length of a call?	This is a new project, the SDE does not have historical information on calls.
58	Req. 1.3	What are the background hiring requirements for this program?	The SDE Criminal Background Check term only applies to contractors that may come into contact with Idaho public school children. The call center contract will not have interaction with Idaho public school children.
59	Req. 1.3	Is the Work at home (WAH) agent support available for this program?	If this question is asking if a call center agent can work from home, the contractor will need to outline the details in their proposal including managing security of data.
60	Req. 1.4	What languages will the call center need to support in addition to English?	The common non-English language to be served under this contract is anticipated to be Spanish.
61	Req. 1.9	Does the State require the capability for voice messages during off-hours?	The SDE is anticipating the contractor will allow for voice messages during off hours to be returned during the next business day. For example, if a voice message is received Friday at 7pm, it is expected to be returned on the following Monday.
62	Req. 1.9	Does the state require only an inbound call center, or does this requirement of a voicemail solution also mean there is a requirement for outbound calls?	The outbound call requirement is to return voice mail messages. There will be no expectation of cold calls.
63	Req. 1.9	Is there an current voice mail solution that exists today?	The SDE is anticipating the contractor to provide a voice mail solution.
64	Section 3.6	How will the calls be delivered to the Call Center team, through a different toll free number or thru the same SNAP number used today?	Reference RFP #3.4.
65	Section 3.6	Is there an IVR that is upfronting these calls before being delivered to the CSR?	No, there is not an IVR upfronting the calls.
66	Scope of Work Requirements	What system will the CSR's be using for verification and or referencing cardholder data when talking with the cardholders?	The call center agents will have access to the SDE PEPT software program containing student and parent personal information data.
68	Scope of Work Requirements	Are there specific implementation/setup requirements for this system?	The SDE is not able to address this question as asked.
69	Reporting/Data Requirements	What are the data access requirements for this system?	The SDE is not able to address this question as asked.
70	Reporting/Data Requirements	What are the tracking needs for these calls and where will that occur?	The call center agents will have access to the SDE PEPT software program containing student and parent personal information data. The contractor is expected to provide all necessary systems for data capture and reporting.
71	Reporting/Data Requirements	Will the CSR's be making updates in a system or just providing information?	The CSR's will not be updating any SDE system, the contractor is anticipated to have their own system for tracking and reporting requirements. At the conclusion of the project, the contractor data will be provided through a secure file transfer provided by the SDE.

72	Appendix D	Is cost for Item #2 - Inclusive Call Center Services Support - priced by agent, by hour, or by minute?	The SDE is asking for the contractor to provide their cost, details and an overall total project cost.
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