**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**

**DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES**

**BUREAU OF EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR THE BLIND**

**DeafBlind Support Services For Community Inclusion Request for Proposals**

**RFP: ADS-BESB-DeafBlind Community Inclusion-RFP-2024 ADDENDUM 1**

The State of Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services (“ADS”), Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (“BESB”) has issued Addendum 1 to the **RFP: ADS-BESB-DeafBlind Community Inclusion-RFP-2024 (“RFP”).**

# Addendum 1 contains:

1. **Changes to the Procurement Notice –** Please note ADS-BESB has amended Section

I.B.7 (Minimum Qualifications of Proposers), and Section II.C.5.d of the RFP, as follows:

* 1. **Section I.B.7 Minimum Qualifications of Proposers** is hereby deleted and replaced with the following:

**“7. Minimum Qualifications of Proposers.** Proposers must have the following

minimum qualifications for ADS-BESB to review their proposals:

Must have a minimum of five (5) years of demonstrated experience with:

* communicating with individuals who are DeafBlind, utilizing various communications methods based on each individual’s abilities and preferences;
* providing and coordinating community inclusion support services to individuals who are DeafBlind in a variety of settings, including transportation to and from community inclusion activities; and
* educating or informing Consumers about the availability and uses of assistive technology relevant to individuals who are DeafBlind.”
  1. **Section II.C.5.d** is hereby deleted.

1. **Questions and Answers –** The following are ADS-BESB’s responses to the questions received by proposed bidders who submitted a letter of intent by November 22, 2024.
2. Can we apply once for the whole state or must 5 applications for each region?

**Answer**: Proposed bidders must submit an RFP for each region on which they are bidding, as stated in Section I.B.12 of the RFP.

1. Will the essential living services we now provide be excluded from this award?

**Answer**: This RFP addresses community inclusion activities for individuals who are DeafBlind. Community inclusion activities include activities and events in recreation and leisure settings, health care and counseling settings, shopping settings and at senior and community centers, restaurants and other locations to help to reduce social isolation and create opportunities for Consumers to interact with others, as stated on page eight of the RFP.

1. We currently transport to medical appts to shopping and other living service. Is this going to cover that too?  Or how will the state provide that? Different contract?

**Answer**: This RFP is for DeafBlind community inclusion activities. Community inclusion activities include activities and events in recreation and leisure settings, health care and counseling settings, shopping settings and at senior and community centers, restaurants and other locations to help to reduce social isolation and create opportunities for Consumers to interact with others, as stated on page eight of the RFP.

1. Is there someone we can contact to ask about the portal where the electronic version of the ADS BESB RFP 2024 pages are that can be filled in online?

**Answer**: Proposals in response to the RFP cannot be filled online.  Proposed bidders must submit an electronic copy of their proposals, compatible with Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel (if submitting spreadsheets), to the Official Contact for this procurement, Jon Slifka, at BESBRFP@ct.gov, as specified in Section I.B.11 and Section III.A.6 of the RFP.

1. I am using windows 11 and the most recent fire fox browser. Does the portal require other software platforms? Who can we ask for help?

**Answer**: No, the State of Connecticut contracting portal, CTSource, <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/Registration>, where the public can find the RFP and all solicitation changes and where proposed bidders must register, should not require other platforms. However, if proposed bidders encounter problems using CTSource, please:

* call the Department of Administrative Services Bureau of Information Technology Solutions (DAS/BITS) Service Desk at 860-622-2300, Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.; or
* request help at [BITS Service Portal - Home](https://ctgov-dwp.onbmc.com/dwp/app/#/page/gvm7hr8b), <https://ctgov-dwp.onbmc.com/dwp/app/#/page/gvm7hr8b>.

1. We would like to know if SSPs and CFs and deafBlind instructors who are contracted 1099 employees are considered to be **subcontractors** as defined on p 18  number 3e **Staff Expectations**?

**Answer**: Support service providers (“SSPs”), communications facilitators (“CFs”) and DeafBlind instructors who proposed bidders contract or will contract as 1099 employees are subcontractors.

1. Currently, ADS-BESB provides community inclusion support services to approximately twenty-five (25) adults who are DeafBlind. This means ADS-BESB has yet to serve approximately one hundred seventy-five (175) more adults who are DeafBlind. Through its register of people who are blind in Connecticut, ADS-BESB has identified approximately two hundred (200) people, aged twenty-one (21) years and older, who are DeafBlind.
2. Will ADS share this information with the providers to ensure we can connect with previously identified eligible consumers?

**Answer:** ADS-BESB will provide information about adults, twenty-one (21) years and older, who are DeafBlind and who ADS-BESB have identified as eligible for services in the region(s) served by a vendor awarded a contract under this RFP to the successful vendor after ADS-BESB and the vendor have executed their contract. Such disclosure shall be consistent with the confidentiality requirements specified in the contract.

1. What will the referral process be for the approximately 175 DeafBlind adults?

**Answer:** ADS-BESB shall specify the referral process in each contract awarded to a successful vendor.

1. Service Expectations
2. Will the selected provider be expected to provide service over a holiday?

**Answer:** ADS-BESB does not require or expect vendors to work on holidays observed by the United States federal government or the State of Connecticut. However, a vendor may choose to provide services to eligible Consumers on such holidays.

1. How are providers expected to address service requests that exceed the $10,000 per person, per year budget?

**Answer:** ADS-BESB shall not expend more than $10,000 per fiscal year per person twenty-one years of age or older who is both blind or visually impaired and deaf for the purpose of providing community inclusion services and may expend less, depending on the demand for services by eligible Consumers during the fiscal year. ADS-BESB shall approve the budget for community inclusion services for each eligible Consumer; however, it is up to the vendor to address service requests that exceed the budgeted amount with such consumers.

1. Will the selected provider be expected to provide service if the service is outside of the providers service region?  For example, the individual lives in the Eastern Region but wants to attend an event in the South Central region.

**Answer:** Contracted vendors shall serve Consumers who reside in the region(s) they are contracted to serve and shall provide these Consumers with community inclusion support services throughout the State of Connecticut.

1. Regarding “Prioritizing Select Consumers” – How will these “select consumers” be identified to the service provider?  And what makes them a priority?

**Answer:** Pursuant to the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies § 10-295-1 (a), ADS-BESB will use funds for people who were included in the pilot study authorized by number 77-81 of the 1977 Special Acts (“Select Consumers”) before serving other adults who are DeafBlind. ADS-BESBwill inform contracted vendors which of their referrals are Select Consumers.

1. Performance Measures
2. Is there a percentage required to be met with the stated increase quarterly?

**Answer:** Not at this time; however, ADS-BESB reserves the right to determine the number of additional eligible Consumers to whom contracted vendors must offer or provide support services for community inclusion activities each quarter.

1. Are we required to survey each consumer?

**Answer:** Yes, contracted vendors must survey each eligible consumer it and its employees, subcontractors, agents, etc. contacts for community inclusion activities.

1. Minimum qualifications;
2. What do you mean by “providing health information and screenings and updates” on the development and use of assistive technology? Do you mean access to telehealth using assistive technology?

**Answer:**  Please see Addendum 1 (A) (1), change to Section I.B.7 (Minimum Qualification of Proposers) of the RFP, which provides that “[p]roposers must have a minimum of five (5) years of demonstrated experience educating or informing Consumers about the availability and uses of assistive technology relevant to individuals who are DeafBlind.” Thus, bidders do not need to have a minimum of five (5) years of demonstrated experience providing health information and screenings and updates on the development of assistive technology.

1. Please clarify “providing and coordinating” community inclusion support services.  Are providers asked to come up with activities and coordinate them, or is the provider to implement what the individual wants to do?

**Answer:** Yes, contracted vendors must come up with activities and coordinate them, if Consumers choose to participate, and implement eligible Consumers’ reasonable requests for community inclusion activities. Contracted vendors must also provide or coordinate access to peer mentoring programs for eligible Consumers.

1. Are the individual SSPs paid by the providers for these services considered subcontractors?

**Answer:** An individual SSP is a subcontractor if the SSP is an independent contractor and the SSP’s earnings are subject to self-employment tax. If an employer-employee relationship exists between a contracted vendor and an SSP and the SSPs earnings are not subject to self-employment tax, then the SSP is an employee, not a subcontractor.

1. Is there a BESB or ADS definition of “Select Consumer” as mentioned in the RFP?

**Answer:** Select Consumers are individuals who were included in the pilot study authorized by number 77-81 of the 1977 Special Acts**.**

1. Will reimbursement rates be any different for Select Consumers as opposed to rates for non-select consumers?

**Answer:** No, reimbursements rates will be the same for all eligible Consumers.

1. Regarding page 10, item 5D “one payment for same service”, can we continue to include payment for mileage within this single payment?

**Answer:** Please see Addendum 1 (A) (2), deletion of Section II.C.5.d.  Contracted vendors may request mileage reimbursement payable to their SSPs or co-navigators.  ADS-BESB shall limit mileage reimbursement to direct travel between Consumers’ residences and the community inclusion activities it authorizes. ADS-BESB shall not reimburse mileage for travel between contracted vendors’ places of business or SSPs’ residences and Consumers’ residences or Consumer meeting locations.

1. If we are accepted for serving each of the five regions will we be required to attend different regional meetings throughout the year?

**Answer:** No, but contracted vendors must attend the quarterly DeafBlind Advisory Committee (DBAC) meetings and report to DBAC about their performance metrics in each region they are contracted to provide services.

16. If BESB approves more customers during the year will the agency provide more funding for greater number of customers?

**Answer**: No, funding terms are set in each contract for community inclusion support services. However, if ADS-BESB secures more funding and there is a greater demand for community inclusion support services by eligible Consumers, ADS-BESB reserves the right to provide more funding if ADS-BESB and the affected vendor(s) mutually agree in a written contract amendment.

1. Will BESB provide the numbers of BESB qualified persons by Region to Applicants?

**Answer:** ADS-BESB will provide information about adults, twenty-one (21) years and older, who are DeafBlind and who ADS-BESB have identified as eligible for services in the region(s) served by a vendor awarded a contract under this RFP to the successful vendor after ADS-BESB and the vendor have executed their contract. Such disclosure shall be consistent with the confidentiality requirements specified in the contract.

1. Will the SSP provided for a region one to a region 2 appointment be paid from both budgets or from a single customer region?

**Answer:** Contracted vendors must pay their SSPs for community inclusion support services from the budget approved by ADS-BESB for each eligible Consumer.

Date: December 16, 2024