



IOWA FINANCE
AUTHORITY

**Request for Proposals (RFP) for
Call Center Customer Service
RFP: CSCC2020-0520**

from the

**IOWA FINANCE AUTHORITY
1963 Bell Ave., Suite 200
Des Moines, IA 50315**

ARTICLE 1 -- INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is to solicit proposals for call center customer services as may be required by the Iowa Finance Authority (“Authority”). The Authority intends to award a three-month contract beginning on or about May 27, 2020. Nothing in this RFP or any contract which may result is intended to provide exclusive rights or obligations on behalf of either party.

1.2 Background Information

This RFP is designed to provide firms with the information necessary for the preparation of competitive bid proposals. The RFP process is for the Authority’s benefit and is intended to provide the Authority with competitive information to assist in the selection process. This RFP is not intended to be comprehensive. Each firm is responsible for determining all factors necessary for submission of a comprehensive bid proposal.

Iowa’s statewide eviction and foreclosure moratorium provides short-term relief to thousands of Iowa renters and homeowners who have been economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, many of these Iowans will face significant housing hardships in the months ahead when the moratorium ends on May 27, but the effects of job loss, economic distress and past due payments linger.

The new Iowa COVID-19 Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention program will provide short-term financial relief to income-eligible renters and homeowners who are at eminent risk of eviction or foreclosure. The program has funding available to assist approximately 20,000 Iowans although the anticipated volume of applicants and inquiries is much higher, with estimates as high as 100,000.

For more information about the Iowa Finance Authority’s programs, please visit: iowafinance.com.

ARTICLE 2 -- ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

2.1 Issuing Officer

The Issuing Officer, identified below, is the sole point of contact regarding the RFP from the date of issuance until selection of the successful firm.

Ashley Jared, Communications Director
Iowa Finance Authority
1963 Bell Ave., Suite 200
Des Moines, Iowa 50315
ashley.jared@iowafinance.com

2.2 Restriction on Communication

From the issue date of this RFP until announcement of the successful firm, firms may contact only the Issuing Officer in writing (via e-mail) with questions related to the interpretation of the RFP and the procurement process. Written responses to all questions received will be provided to all potential firms. If a firm or someone acting on a firm's behalf attempts to discuss this RFP orally or in writing with any members of the evaluation committee, or any employee of the Authority, other than Ashley Jared, the firm may be disqualified.

2.3 Downloading the RFP from the Internet

Any amendments will be posted on the Authority's web site at: iowafinance.com. The firm is advised to check the Authority's web site periodically for amendments to this RFP.

2.4 Procurement Timetable

The following dates are set forth for informational and planning purposes; however, the Authority reserves the right to change the dates.

Issue RFP	May 20, 2020
Questions, if any, due to IFA	May 21, 2020
Responses, if any necessary will be posted	May 22, 2020
Closing date for receipt of bid proposals	May 26, 2020
Announce Successful firm, if awarded	May 27, 2020

2.5 [Reserved]

2.6 Amendment to the RFP and Bid Proposal and Withdrawal of Bid Proposal

The Authority reserves the right to amend the RFP at any time. The firm shall acknowledge receipt of any and all amendments in its proposal. If the amendment occurs after the closing date for receipt of bid proposals, the Authority may, in its sole discretion, allow firms to amend their bid proposals in response to the amendment if necessary.

The firm may amend its bid proposal. The amendment must be in writing, signed by the firm and received by the time set for the receipt of proposals. Firms who submit proposals in advance of the deadline may withdraw, modify, and resubmit proposals at any time prior to the deadline for

submitting proposals. Firms must notify the Issuing Officer in writing if they wish to withdraw their proposals.

2.7 [Reserved]

2.8 Submission of Bid Proposals

The Issuing Officer must receive the bid proposal at the address set forth in section 2.1 before 4:30 p.m., central time, May 26, 2020. **This is a mandatory requirement and will not be waived by the Authority. Any bid proposal received after this deadline will be rejected and returned unopened to the firm.** Firms mailing bid proposals must allow ample mail delivery time to ensure timely receipt of their bid proposals. It is the firm's responsibility to ensure that the bid proposal is received prior to the deadline. Postmarking by the due date will not substitute for actual receipt of the bid proposal. Electronic mail and faxed bid proposals will not be accepted. Firms must furnish all information necessary to evaluate the bid proposal. Bid proposals that fail to meet the mandatory requirements of the RFP will be disqualified. Verbal information provided by the firm shall not be considered part of the firm's proposal.

2.9 Bid Proposal Opening

The Authority will open bid proposals at 4:30 p.m., central time, May 20, 2020. The bid proposals will remain confidential until the evaluation committee has reviewed all of the bid proposals submitted in response to this RFP and the Authority has announced a notice of intent to award a contract. See Iowa Code Section 72.3.

2.10 Costs of Preparing the Bid Proposal

The costs of preparation and delivery of the bid proposal are solely the responsibility of the firm submitting such proposal.

2.11 Rejection of Bid Proposals

The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, in whole and in part, received in response to this RFP. Issuance of this RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by the Authority to award a contract. This RFP is designed to provide firms with the information necessary to prepare a competitive bid proposal. This RFP process is for the Authority's benefit and is intended to provide the Authority with competitive information to assist in the selection of a firm to provide services. This RFP is not intended to be comprehensive and each firm is responsible for determining all factors necessary for submission of a comprehensive bid proposal.

2.12 Disqualification

The Authority may reject proposals outright for any one of the following reasons:

2.12.1 The firm fails to deliver the bid proposal by the due date and time.

2.12.2 The firm states that a service requirement cannot be met.

2.12.3 The firm's response materially changes a service requirement.

2.12.4 The firm's response limits the rights of the Authority.

2.12.5 The firm fails to include information necessary to substantiate that it will be able to meet a service requirement. A response of "will comply" or merely repeating the requirement is not sufficient. Responses must indicate present capability; representations that future developments will satisfy the requirement are not sufficient.

2.12.6 The firm fails to respond to the Authority's request for information, documents, or references.

2.12.7 The firm fails to include any signature, certification, authorization, stipulation, disclosure or guarantee requested in section 4 of this RFP.

2.12.8 The firm presents the information requested by this RFP in a format inconsistent with the instructions of the RFP.

2.12.9 The firm initiates unauthorized contact regarding the RFP with state employees.

2.12.10 The firm provides misleading or inaccurate responses.

2.13 Nonmaterial and Material Variances

The Authority reserves the right to waive or permit cure of nonmaterial variances in the bid proposal if, in the judgment of the Authority, it is in the Authority's best interest to do so. Nonmaterial variances include minor informalities that do not affect responsiveness; that are merely a matter of form or format; that do not change the relative standing or otherwise prejudice other firms; that do not change the meaning or scope of the RFP; or that do not reflect a material change in the services. In the event the Authority waives or permits cure of nonmaterial variances, such waiver or cure will not modify the RFP requirements or excuse the firm from full compliance with RFP specifications or other contract requirements if the firm is awarded the contract. The determination of materiality is in the sole discretion of the Authority.

2.14 Reference Checks

The Authority reserves the right to contact any reference to assist in the evaluation of the bid proposal, to verify information contained in the bid proposal and to discuss the firm's qualifications.

2.15 Information From Other Sources

The Authority reserves the right to obtain and consider information from other sources concerning a firm, such as the firm's capability and performance under other contracts.

2.16 Verification of Bid Proposal Contents

The content of a bid proposal submitted by a firm is subject to verification. Misleading or inaccurate responses shall result in disqualification.

2.17 Bid Proposal Clarification Process

The Authority reserves the right to contact a firm after the submission of bid proposals for the purpose of clarifying a bid proposal to ensure mutual understanding. The Authority will not consider information received if the information materially alters the content of the bid proposal. An individual authorized to legally bind the firm shall sign responses to any request for clarification. Responses shall be submitted to the Authority within the time specified in the

request. Failure to comply with requests for additional information may result in rejection of the bid proposal as noncompliant.

2.18 Disposition of Bid Proposals

All proposals become the property of the Authority and shall not be returned to the firm unless all bid proposals are rejected or the RFP is cancelled. Otherwise, at the conclusion of the selection process, the contents of all bid proposals will be in the public domain and be open to inspection by interested parties subject to exceptions provided in Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other applicable law.

2.19 Public Records and Requests for Confidential Treatment

The Authority may treat all information submitted by a firm as public information following the conclusion of the selection process unless the firm properly requests that information be treated as confidential at the time of submitting the bid proposal. The release of information is governed by Iowa Code Chapter 22. Firms are encouraged to familiarize themselves with Chapter 22 before submitting a proposal. The Authority will copy public records as required to comply with the public records laws. Any request for confidential treatment of information must be included in the transmittal letter with the firm's bid proposal. In addition, the firm must enumerate the specific grounds in Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other applicable law which support treatment of the material as confidential and explain why disclosure is not in the best interest of the public. The request for confidential treatment of information must also include the name, address, and telephone number of the person authorized by the firm to respond to any inquiries by the Authority concerning the confidential status of the materials. Any bid proposal submitted which contains confidential information must be conspicuously marked on the outside as containing confidential information, and each page upon which confidential information appears must be conspicuously marked as containing confidential information. Identification of the entire bid proposal as confidential may be deemed non-responsive and disqualify the firm. If the firm designates any portion of the RFP as confidential, the firm must submit one copy of the bid proposal from which the confidential information has been excised. This excised copy is in addition to the number of copies requested in section 4 of this RFP. The confidential material must be excised in such a way as to allow the public to determine the general nature of the material removed and to retain as much of the bid proposal as possible. The Authority will treat the information marked confidential as confidential information to the extent such information is determined confidential under Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other applicable law by a court of competent jurisdiction. In the event the Authority receives a request for information marked confidential, written notice shall be given to the firm seven calendar days prior to the release of the information to allow the firm to seek injunctive relief pursuant to Section 22.8 of the Iowa Code. The firm's failure to request confidential treatment of material will be deemed by the Authority as a waiver of any right to confidentiality, which the firm may have had.

2.20 Copyrights

By submitting a bid proposal, the firm agrees that the Authority may copy the bid proposal for purposes of facilitating the evaluation of the bid proposal or to respond to requests for public records. The firm consents to such copying by submitting a bid proposal and warrants that such copying will not violate the rights of any third party. The Authority shall have the right to use ideas or adaptations of ideas that are presented in the bid proposals.

2.21 Release of Claims

By submitting a bid proposal, the firm agrees that it will not bring any claim or cause of action against the Authority based on any misunderstanding concerning the information provided herein or concerning the Authority's failure, negligent or otherwise, to provide the firm with pertinent information as intended by this RFP.

2.22 [Reserved.]

2.23 Evaluation of Bid Proposals Submitted

Bid proposals that are timely submitted and are not subject to disqualification will be reviewed in accordance with Article 5 of the RFP.

2.24 Choice of Law and Forum

This RFP and the resulting contract are to be governed by the laws of the state of Iowa. Changes in applicable laws and rules may affect the award process or the resulting contract. Firms are responsible for ascertaining pertinent legal requirements and restrictions. Any and all litigation or actions commenced in connection with this RFP shall be brought in the appropriate Iowa forum.

2.25 Restrictions on Gifts and Activities

Iowa Code Chapter 68B restricts gifts which may be given or received by state employees and requires certain individuals to disclose information concerning their activities with state government. Firms are responsible to determine the applicability of this Chapter to their activities and to comply with the requirements. In addition, pursuant to Iowa Code section 722.1, it is a felony offense to bribe or attempt to bribe a public official.

2.26 No Minimum Guaranteed

The Authority anticipates that the selected firm will provide services as requested by the Authority. The Authority will not guarantee any minimum compensation will be paid to the firm or any minimum usage of the firm's services.

ARTICLE 3 -- SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Introduction

The Iowa Finance Authority is seeking a firm to provide customer service assistance for the Iowa COVID-19 Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Program. The selected firm will act as an extension of the Authority's team, serving as an ambassador of the program and a trusted, compassionate and professional resource for Iowans in their time of need.

3.2 Scope of Work

The current capabilities required and services to be performed by the selected firm include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Multilingual customer service for inbound calls to the Iowa COVID 19 Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Program to appropriately address questions regarding program eligibility, application process and timeline, per the program FAQ and script to be provided.
- Perform outbound calls in response to voicemail messages left after hours within one (1) business day.
- Phone services provided Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. with the ability to adjust hours to accommodate peak call volume periods. Please note the workload can vary from very light to very heavy throughout the life of the contract.
- Provide routine reports and hold status meetings with the Authority to track call volume, identify call trends and pinpoint areas for improvement.
- Management and escalation of complex issues or hostile callers through a reporting and resolution tracking system.
- Measures to protect data security and caller confidentiality.
- Adequate call center staff training with access to FAQs and scripts provided by the Authority.
- Quality assurance measures, including but not limited to a call recording policy.
- Detailed reporting including key metrics to measure the effectiveness of the services.

ARTICLE 4 -- FORMAT AND CONTENT OF BID PROPOSALS

4.1 Instructions

These instructions prescribe the format and content of the bid proposal. They are designed to facilitate a uniform review process. Failure to adhere to the proposal format may result in the disqualification of the bid proposal.

The proposals shall include the following information:

Response to the Iowa Finance Authority's Request for Proposals for Call Center Customer Service.

4.1.1 One emailed copy of the bid proposal shall be timely submitted to the Issuing Officer.

4.1.2 If the firm designates any information in its proposal as confidential pursuant to section 2.22, the firm must also submit one (1) copy of the bid proposal from which confidential information has been excised. The confidential material must be excised in such a way as to allow the public to determine the general nature of the material removed and to retain as much of the bid proposal as possible.

4.2 Technical Proposal

The following documents and responses shall be included in the bid proposal in the order given below:

4.2.1 Transmittal Letter

An individual authorized to legally bind the firm shall sign the transmittal letter. The letter shall include the firm's mailing address, electronic mail address and telephone number. Any request for confidential treatment of information shall be included in the transmittal letter in addition to the specific statutory basis supporting the request and an explanation why disclosure of the information is not in the best interest of the public. The transmittal letter shall also contain the name, address and telephone number of the individual authorized to respond to the Authority about the confidential nature of the information.

4.2.2 Background Information

The firm shall provide the following general background information:

4.2.2.1 Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the firm including all d/b/a's or assumed names or other operating names of the firm.

4.2.2.2 Identify and specify the location(s) and telephone numbers of the major offices and other facilities that relate to the firm's performance under the terms of this RFP.

4.2.2.3 Local office address and phone number (if any).

4.2.2.4 Firms not located in Des Moines should explain how the firm will have a presence in Des Moines for day-to-day activities.

4.2.2.5 Firms must provide a detailed breakdown of the expected costs for services as well as any ongoing fees, including hourly rates for services and any additional expenses for which the firm expects to be reimbursed. Please be precise regarding your expectations as to who covers the expenses of equipment, computers, supplies and other expenses as outlined in your proposal. Include hourly price by position title.

4.2.3 Experience

The firm must provide the following information regarding its experience:

4.2.3.1 Number of years in business.

4.2.3.2 Number of years experience with providing the types of services sought by the RFP.

4.2.3.3 Describe the level of technical experience in providing the types of services sought by the RFP.

4.2.3.4 List of at least three (3) current or previous clients knowledgeable of the firm's performance in providing services similar to the services described in this RFP and a contact person and telephone number for each reference.

4.2.3.5 Indicate whether the bidder is a small business or certified targeted small business as defined in Iowa Code (2001) section 15.102.

4.2.3.6 List other government entity customer service contracts handled by your firm.

4.2.3.6 List clients from the past three years. Indicate whether these are current or former clients and why relationships with former clients ended.

4.2.4 Personnel

The firm must provide information for all key personnel who will be involved in providing the services contemplated by this RFP. The following information must be included:

4.2.4.1 Full name.

4.2.4.2 Education.

4.2.4.3 Years of experience and employment history particularly as it relates to the scope of services specified herein. Be sure to include the person's position title within your firm so their hourly rate may be assessed given their qualifications.

4.2.5 Overview of Services and Demonstration of Firm's Knowledge

The firm shall prepare an overview of the services it offers, including all of the following information:

4.2.5.1 Statements that demonstrate that the firm understands and agrees with the terms and conditions of the RFP and the proposed contract.

4.2.5.2 Statement through which the firm certifies that the contents of the bid proposal are true and accurate.

4.2.5.3 An overview of the firm's plans for providing the necessary services to the Authority.

4.2.5.4 A demonstration of the firm's knowledge of the areas described in this RFP by providing a listing of clients in which the firm has provided similar services.

4.2.5.5 An explanation as to why the firm should be awarded this engagement.

4.2.6 Acceptance of Terms and Conditions

The firm shall specifically agree that the bid proposal is predicated upon the acceptance of all terms and conditions stated in the RFP. If the firm objects to any term or condition, the firm must specifically refer to the RFP page, and section. Objections or responses that materially alter the RFP may be deemed non-responsive and disqualify the firm.

4.2.7 Certification of Independence and No Conflict of Interest

The firm shall sign and submit with the bid proposal the document included as Attachment No. 1 in which the firm shall certify that it developed the bid proposal independently. The firm shall also certify that no relationship exists or will exist during the contract period between the firm and the Authority that interferes with fair competition or is a conflict of interest. The Authority reserves the right to reject a bid proposal or cancel the award if, in their discretion, any relationship exists that could interfere with fair competition or conflict with the interests of the Authority.

4.2.8 Authorization to Release Information

The firm shall sign and submit with the bid proposal the document included as Attachment No. 2 in which the firm authorizes the release of information to the Authority.

4.2.9 Firm Bid Proposal Terms

The firm shall guarantee in writing the availability of the services offered and that all bid proposal terms, including price, will remain firm a minimum of 90 days following the deadline for submitting proposals.

ARTICLE 5 --EVALUATION OF BID PROPOSALS

5.1 Introduction

This section describes the evaluation process that will be used to determine which bid proposal provides the greatest benefits to the Authority. The evaluation process is designed to award the contract not necessarily to the firm of least cost, but rather to the firm with the best combination of attributes to perform the required services.

5.2 Evaluation Steps

The evaluation and award process shall consist of the following:

- a. Review of the bid proposals to assess compliance with mandatory requirements;
- b. Detailed evaluation of proposed services, programs, and solutions;
- c. Award decision by the evaluation committee

5.3 Evaluation Committee

The Authority intends to conduct a comprehensive, fair and impartial evaluation of bid proposals received in response to this RFP. The Authority will use an evaluation committee to review and evaluate the proposals.

5.4 Evaluation Criteria

The Evaluation Committee will evaluate all proposals and make an award decision using the following criteria, which are listed in no particular order.

5.4.1 Experience and Qualifications (40%)

The firm will be evaluated on their call center experience, especially as it relates to state government entities and related programs.

5.4.2 Expected Service (30%)

The firm will be evaluated on its ability to deliver services, as they relate to the above scope of work, affordably and efficiently.

5.4.3 Fees (30%)

The firm's fee proposal will be evaluated in relation to other fee proposals received. The winning proposal may not be the proposal with the lowest cost.

5.5 Recommendation of the Evaluation Committee

The final decision shall be made by the Evaluation Committee. This decision may include a firm selection or a decision that no firm be selected.

ARTICLE 6 -- CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

6.1 Contract Terms and Conditions

The Authority will include the contract terms and conditions in the award letter sent to the winning firm or firms. The resulting contract will consist of the following: the terms and conditions of this RFP, the offer contained in the firm's proposal, and other terms necessary for completing the services outlined in this RFP. The Authority may negotiate compensation of the selected firm and may renegotiate such compensation if conditions warrant.

6.2 Contract Length

The Authority intends to award a three-month contract beginning on or about May 27, 2020. Nothing in this RFP or any contract which may result is intended to provide exclusive rights or obligations on behalf of either party.

6.3 Ownership of Work Product

Without qualification or limitation, any and all work product created as a result of this contract shall be the sole property of the Iowa Finance Authority.

Attachment #1

Date

Ashley Jared
Iowa Finance Authority
1963 Bell Ave., Suite 200
Des Moines, Iowa 50315
ashley.jared@iowafinance.com

Re: Request for Proposal for Call Center Customer Service

CERTIFICATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND NO CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Dear Ms. Jared:

By submitting a proposal in response to the Request for Proposals for call center customer service from the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA), the undersigned certifies the following:

1. The proposal has been developed independently, without consultation, communication or agreement with any employee or consultant to the Authority who has worked on the development of this RFP, or with any person serving as a member of the evaluation committee.
2. The proposal has been developed independently, without consultation, communication or agreement with any other firm or parties for the purpose of restricting competition.
3. Unless otherwise required by law, the information found in the proposal has not been knowingly disclosed and will not be knowingly disclosed prior to the award of the contract, directly or indirectly, to any other firm.
4. No attempt has been made or will be made by (Name of Firm) to induce any other firm to submit or not to submit a proposal for the purpose restricting competition.
5. No relationship exists or will exist during the contract period between (Name of Firm) and the Authority that interferes with fair competition or is a conflict of interest.

Sincerely,

Name and Title

Attachment #2

Date

Ashley Jared
Iowa Finance Authority
1963 Bell Ave., Suite 200
Des Moines, Iowa 50315
ashley.jared@iowafinance.com

Re: Request for Proposal for Call Center Customer Service

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE INFORMATION

Dear Ms. Jared:

[name of firm] (“**the Firm**”) hereby authorizes the Iowa Finance Authority ("Authority") to obtain information regarding its performance on other contracts, agreements or other business arrangements, its business reputation, and any other matter pertinent to evaluation and the selection of a successful firm in response to Request for Proposal for Call Center Customer Service.

The Firm acknowledges that it may not agree with the information and opinions given by such person or entity in response to a reference request. The Firm acknowledges that the information and opinions given by such person or entity may hurt its chances to receive contract awards from the Authority or may otherwise hurt its reputation or operations. The Firm is willing to take that risk. The Firm hereby releases, acquits and forever discharges the State of Iowa, the Authority, their officers, directors, employees and agents from any and all liability whatsoever, including all claims, demands and causes of action of every nature and kind affecting the undersigned that it may have or ever claim to have relating to information, data, opinions, and references obtained by the Authority in the evaluation and selection of a successful firm in response to the Request for Proposal.

The Firm authorizes representatives of the Authority to contact any and all of the persons, entities, and references which are, directly or indirectly, listed, submitted, or referenced in the undersigned's proposal submitted in response to the Request for Proposal. The Firm further authorizes any and all persons, entities, and references to provide information, data, and opinions with regard to the undersigned's performance under any contract, agreement, or other business arrangement, the undersigned's ability to perform, the undersigned’s business reputation, and any other matter pertinent to the evaluation of the undersigned.

The undersigned hereby releases, acquits and forever discharges any such person or entity and their officers, directors, employees and agents from any and all liability whatsoever, including all claims, demands and causes of action of every nature and kind affecting the undersigned that it may have or ever claim to have relating to information, data, opinions, and references supplied to the Authority in the evaluation and selection of a successful firm in response to the Request for Proposal. A photocopy or facsimile of this signed Authorization is as valid as an original.

Sincerely,

Printed Name of Firm

Name and Title of Authorized Representative Date